



January 8, 2025

Re: Dr. Keia Sanderson, Nomination for ASPN Equity, Social Justice, and Advocacy Award

To the members of the Awards Committee:

We are writing this letter to nominate Dr. Keia Sanderson as the 2025 recipient of the ASPN Equity, Social Justice, and Advocacy Award. There are few ASPN members who have done more to champion diversity and inclusivity in our Society, and we are excited to recognize her with this award.

Keia has been an active member of ASPN since 2010, and has occupied several leadership positions in our organization. She has been a member of the Research Committee since 2018, and served terms as co-Chair and Chair from 2020-2023. She also served as Chair of the Certification Committee from 2020-2022, and was asked to join the Program Committee in 2024. You will see that her CV lists her as the Co-Chair of the ASPN Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee from 2020-2023, but this understates Keia's pivotal role in the committee; she, together with Dr. Nicole Hayde, founded the ASPN JEDI Committee in the summer of 2020.

Looking back, it may be surprising that ASPN did not have a committee focused on diversity, equity and inclusion before 2020. However, when the need became especially apparent that summer, Keia jumped in to organize a brand-new committee from scratch, while juggling her other ASPN leadership responsibilities, on top of her clinical work and building her own research program. She led the development of a committee charge, and spent many hours recruiting members and organizing initial activities. It takes an enormous amount of energy to kick off new initiatives, but Keia brought her typical focus to the endeavor. It is a testament to her collegiality and the esteem in which she is held in our community that she was able to assemble an enthusiastic, capable committee in short order.

Among the many initiatives Keia innovated was the ASPN JEDI Speaker's Bureau: <https://aspneph.org/jedi-speakers-bureau/>. Recognizing that women and persons underrepresented in medicine face multiple barriers to promotion, and in light of studies that have shown that a more diverse conference/seminar faculty is generated when candidates are generated from a list rather than purely by recall, she led the Committee in developing a Diverse Pediatric Nephrology Speakers' List. This list allowed ASPN members from groups traditionally underrepresented in medicine to list themselves and their areas of expertise. This living-document has nearly 50 nephrologists listed currently, is utilized by the Program Committee when inviting speakers for the ASPN annual meeting, and has provided regional and national speaking opportunities for members who are invited for Grand Rounds and other conferences.

Keia also spearheaded ASPN's sponsorship of the New Century Scholars Program (<https://www.academicpeds.org/programs-awards/mentorship-program/new-century-scholars-program/>), for which she also serves on the Resident Selection Committee and as a Mentor. It is a mentorship program aimed at increasing the diversity of the academic pediatric workforce. In addition to the APA, the ABP, and the APS, ASPN is one of only two subspecialty societies (the other is the Society for Behavioral and Developmental Pediatrics) sponsoring, which has brought national visibility to ASPN's commitment to supporting a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. Keia's advocacy convinced the ASPN Foundation to sponsor one scholar each year for this program. This is an initiative of high value for our workforce and for our society, and Keia's vision made it possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to recognize the foundational contribution Keia has made to ASPN's equity and diversity initiatives. We can't wait to recognize her longstanding commitment with this award!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jodi Smith".

Jodi Smith, MD, MPH
Professor of Pediatrics
University of Washington

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Meredith Atkinson".

Meredith Atkinson, MD, MHS
Associate Professor of Pediatrics
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine