Dr. Glenn Flores Earns National Recognition for Mentorship Efforts in Pediatrics

The Academic Pediatric Association (APA) honored Glenn Flores, M.D., chair of the Department of Pediatrics and senior associate dean of child health at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, with the inaugural APA Miller-Sarkin Mentoring Holistic Award.

Initially, the Miller-Sarkin Mentoring Award only focused on research success in mentorship. This year, the APA created a new category in career/holistic mentorship to honor mentors who have demonstrated success and advancement in the professional careers of other individuals. By earning the award, Dr. Flores has become the first individual in APA history to receive all three of the APA’s significant recognitions, in research, policy and advocacy, and now mentoring.

“This award is especially meaningful and gratifying because of my passion for mentoring,” said Dr. Flores, who holds the George E. Batchelor Endowed Chair in Child Health. “As Jackie Robinson eloquently noted, ‘A life is not important except for its impact on other lives.’”
Mentoring Approach Includes ‘Attentive Listening’

Criteria for the award include evidence of high-quality mentoring skills by supporting and challenging mentees. Dr. Flores has successfully mentored more than 70 mentees over the past 27 years.

These qualities were first instilled in Dr. Flores by his influential mentors such as Ben Kirland, his high school biology teacher, and Ernest Williams, his college mentor who helped Dr. Flores obtain grants and publish multiple articles.

“My mentorship approach builds on this foundation and lessons from successful mentoring,” Dr. Flores said. “This includes a major emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion, while showing my mentees support through attentive listening, helping them find their passions and overcoming challenges. It has been amazing to help sponsor and develop their leadership skills as they work on achieving the highest level of excellence.”

Mentorship's Impact on Academic Medicine

As a mentor, Dr. Flores has impacted individuals from undergraduate students to faculty members at the Miller School and nationwide. Results from his mentorship efforts have yielded 92 publications, 65 poster presentations and 30 grants his mentees have collectively received throughout the years. Among these accolades, many of Dr. Flores' mentees have become prestigious researchers and leaders in pediatric institutions while becoming mentors themselves.
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“Dr. Flores was essential to my development in academic medicine,” said Leticia Shanley, M.D., division chief at Baylor Pediatric Medicine Hospital. “During my fellowship, he provided mentorship that helped me grow as a researcher and was always available to provide guidance. From developing a research protocol to responding to reviewer feedback and more, I'm incredibly grateful for that training, as it has served as a strong foundation for my academic career.”

Since many of Dr. Flores’ mentees are from backgrounds unrepresented in medicine, he has founded the APA Research in Academic Pediatrics Initiative on Diversity program with renewed funding from the NIH for an additional five years to support junior faculty. In addition, he also founded the APA Trainee Research Awards, which include certificates honoring mentors.

At the Miller School, Dr. Flores continues to lead the Department of Pediatrics to new heights as chair while also serving as a professor of pediatrics and public health sciences and physician-in-chief at Holtz Children’s Hospital. Still, of all the accolades he has garnered, NIH grants secured and papers published, it is cultivating and observing his mentees’ successes that gives Dr. Flores the greatest sense of pride.
“Dr. Glenn Flores was an extremely impactful mentor at just the right time,” added Joseph Skelton, M.D., M.S., professor of pediatrics at Wake Forest University. “Unlike my past mentors, he guided me in all aspects of career development and clinical research. Sixteen years later, I still remember his key lessons, including how to effectively interact with and manage study staff, budgeting, manuscript development, time management and overall career guidance. I would not be where I am without the trajectory he set me on.”