



UHealth Pediatrician to Head Federal Agency Assisting Children with Special Health Needs

Jeffrey P. Brosco, M.D., Ph.D., professor and associate chair, population health, in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, has been named division director at the Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs (DSCSHN), part of the federal government's Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).



Jeffrey P. Brosco, M.D., Ph.D.

According to Dr. Brosco, who also serves as associate director of the Miller School's Mailman Center for Child Development and director of population health ethics at the school's Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy, and as chair of the pediatric bioethics committee at Holtz Children's Hospital, Jackson Health System, the division is dedicated to improving health and quality of life for children and youths with special care needs.

"The majority of kids in the U.S. are healthy, but about 20% have chronic conditions, such as asthma, severe allergies, diabetes, cancer, or autism," said Dr. Brosco. "We'll be trying to make the health care system work better for these children and their families."



Division Supports Screenings, Critical Programs

Among its many functions, the DSCSHN, headquartered in Rockville, MD, supports state newborn screening programs to identify and treat infants with underlying medical conditions such as PKU, hypothyroidism, and sickle cell disease.

In addition to overseeing blood tests of about 4.5 million newborns screened each year in the U.S., the DSCSHN supports programs to detect and treat congenital heart conditions and hearing impairment. One critical set of programs funds health information centers that are led by families to support other families with children with special health needs; such centers are available in every state and territory in the U.S.

An important part of the new assignment, Dr. Brosco said, will be to focus on child development and behavior – similar to what he did as Florida’s Deputy Secretary of Health for Children’s Medical Services from 2017 to 2019.

Only about half of the approximately 400,000 Florida children with developmental-behavioral conditions such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, and autism are getting help, Dr. Brosco said. His department worked to fill the need by setting up a system that supports primary care clinicians to communicate directly with mental health experts to provide advice on diagnosis and treatment.

Past and Future of Children’s Health Care

Dr. Brosco, who began working as a pediatrician at UHealth in 1995, earned his M.D. at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and obtained a Ph.D. in history from UPenn because he was interested in the past of children’s health care. “I did my thesis on how we organized health care



services for children in the U.S. 100 years ago,” he said, “and now I’m getting the chance to help lead that effort.”

Dr. Brosco has held leadership posts in pediatrics at UHealth and worked in key positions at the Florida Department of Health’s Children’s Medical Services division. Currently, he teaches and practices general pediatrics and developmental behavior pediatrics at UHealth, seeing patients from newborns to young adults.

Since 2010, he directed the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities training program at the Mailman Center, a program financed by the federal government’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau, a branch of the HRSA.

Active in national health policy groups, Dr. Brosco focuses his research on history, policy, and ethics related to child health. He has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed publications and over 90 other publications.

Dr. Brosco is particularly proud of a recent study in which he and colleagues sought to measure the impact of community-academic partnerships on improving child health, education, and well-being in African American and Hispanic communities adjacent to the UM-Jackson medical campus. The study demonstrated improved outcomes at a population level, reflecting the success that is possible when academic medical centers work collaboratively with neighborhood organizations. The results of the study were published in 2021 in the *Maternal and Child Health Journal*.

Dr. Brosco begins his new assignment this month. He will continue to live in Miami and work for UHealth on a part-time basis.



Content Type Article