

**Executive Committee
(2025-2026)**

President:

Dawn Misra

Past-President:

Edwina Yeung

President-Elect:

Sarka Lisonkova

Secretary:

Stefania Papatheodorou

Treasurer:

Candice Johnson

Members-at-Large:

Stefanie Hinkle

Stephanie Leonard

Andrew Williams

Kari Weber

International Representative:

Neda Razaz

Trainee Representative:

Xuanxuan Zhu

Administrator:

Sue Bevan

SPER Newsletter (Fall 2025)

President's Corner

As I prepared to write the President's corner for our Fall 2025 SPER Newsletter, I reviewed past Fall newsletters. All of them reflected on the Annual Meeting, our society's hallmark activity, and expressed appreciation and thanks to all who worked together to deliver this opportunity for learning and networking with colleagues. I too want to recognize our Annual Meeting in Boston and the work that went into making sure it was inclusive, accessible, and filled with the very best science in our field. Thank you to the program committee, poster presenters, plenary speakers, symposia organizers and speakers! SPER is you and you are SPER. Everything we do is dependent on the generous time given to us by SPER members and committee members as well as those who were elected to serve – our committee chairs and our Executive Committee. Finally, congratulations to all our awardees!



Some of you stayed on for the Business Meeting and we had a chance to talk about the challenges we are experiencing in 2025. Our focus was on developing a statement from our society. I haven't forgotten about that discussion! Yet we are all aware of the speed and volume of what scientists, especially reproductive, perinatal, and pediatric epidemiologists, are facing. Many attendees raised the need to go beyond words and take actions. Many of you are taking actions as human beings and as scientists.

What then can we do as SPER? First, unlike in many crises, we can speak to the public about the many health topics in which we are experts. Just in the past few weeks, our communities heard misinformation about autism spectrum disorders. I am asking all of us to be open to speaking directly to our communities and to journalists. Start working on summaries of your work or your interpretation of current controversies so you are ready when you get an email or text. I'm not naïve but I am hopeful that we can give the public a reason to trust us. Many of you are tapped by journalists reaching out to your workplaces, but we can also use SPER to

provide journalists a list of epidemiologists who will speak up. More on this soon! Please email me (misradaw@msu.edu) if you would be interested.

We also need to act locally. It can be much easier to speak to journalists from national publications who have steeped themselves in the topics. But what about your city, county or state? Check out the Substack "Your Local

Epidemiologist” for an approach to taking the initiative. You can contact your local journalists or be open to answering when contacted.

How can we support the many amazing federal and state scientists who have lost their jobs? And what about those whose careers may fail to launch because of constrained research budgets and fear of the future by institutions? Few of us are in a position to provide our colleagues with a job. But we can listen, we can invite them to give talks at our institutions, and to teach guest lectures. We can also share our intellectual resources. Inviting these colleagues to attend our lab team meetings or seminars may provide a lifeline – not everyone will be interested but please consider reaching out to find out. If you are one of the affected researchers, don’t be shy about sharing your expertise! I speak from experience. Activating my networks and reaching out to friends sustained me during a difficult time in my career.

Some of you are also uniquely vulnerable at this time, by nature of your gender identity, racial identity, immigration status, or employer. You may belong to a group that cannot publicly speak up but I hope that SPER can provide a platform for speech that supports your work and identity.

Finally, we all know the importance of epidemiologic data. One of the most dangerous things to have happened this year has been the disappearance of existing data sets, along with the pausing of programs to collect new data. Without such data, public health workers and policy makers make decisions in the dark. I have been talking with colleagues about how we can help PRAMS to continue to produce data that can be shared across all states in the U.S. I am exploring how SPER can strategize with the Association of MCH Programs (AMCHP) to find a way forward together. If you are interested in actively supporting this effort, please contact me (misradaw@msu.edu).

Sincerely,

Dawn Misra

SPER President

SPER Newsletter Contents

President's Corner	1
39th SPER Annual Meeting	4
Demystifying SPER: Understanding Executive Committee Roles, Committees, and the Election Process	4
Nominate and Vote for Executive Committee Members!	5
38th SPER Annual Meeting Highlights	6
Annual Meeting Quick Stats	8
2025 Student/Trainee Poster Award Winners	9
Join an SPER committee!	9
Follow SPER on Social Media!	10
Membership Renewal	11
Give to SPER	11
Sponsor the SPER Annual Meeting	11

39th SPER Annual Meeting

June 22- 23, 2026 – Phoenix, AZ

Submission Deadlines

Symposium: October 28, 2025

Abstracts: January 26, 2026

All Award Nominations: February 3, 2026

<https://sper.org/annual-meeting-2/>

3rd Annual SPER Virtual Meeting

April 21, 2026

Submission Deadlines

Abstracts: January 26, 2026

<https://sper.org/virtual-meeting/>

Demystifying SPER: Understanding Executive Committee Roles, Committees, and the Election Process

Tuesday November 18, 2025

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM (EASTERN)

Register Today: bit.ly/4oiToMi

Ever wondered what it's like to serve on SPER's Executive Committee or participate in one of its committees? This webinar, the third in our Demystifying SPER series, will provide an inside look at the different Executive Committee positions—what the roles entail, the responsibilities involved, and the opportunities they offer for professional growth and service to the field. We'll also highlight SPER's standing committees, outlining what each one does and how members can get involved. In addition, the session will cover the elections process and share tips to help you feel more confident about running for office. Whether you're considering future leadership in SPER, exploring committee participation, or simply want to better understand how the organization operates, this webinar will give you a clear, accessible introduction.

Nominate and Vote for Executive Committee Members!

Executive Committee Nominations due March 13, 2026

Nominations are being sought for President (2026-2029), Treasurer (2026-2029), one Member-at-Large (2026-2030), International Representative (2026-2029) and Trainee Representative (2026-2027). All terms will begin at the close of the June 2026 Annual Meeting. Members of SPER are encouraged to nominate themselves or any other member of SPER to run for these positions and help our Society achieve continued success through this opportunity for professional service.

The President will serve as President Elect (2026-2027), President (2027-2028), and Past President (2028-2029). The main duties of the President Elect are to help the President develop plans for the Annual Meeting, organize and develop the plans for the Virtual Meeting, and to chair the selection of the Student Prize Paper Award Recipient. The President designs the program for the Annual Meeting and is responsible for the Executive Committee's decision-making. The Past President chairs the selection of the Heinz Berendes International Travel Award recipient and provides input as needed.

The Treasurer is involved in all Executive Committee activities and is responsible for overseeing the Society's finances, including making purchases, approving expenses, and advising the Executive Committee on financial matters. This member will replace Candice Johnson.

The Member-at-Large participates in all Executive Committee activities. The Member-at-Large elected this cycle will be responsible for leading the Equity Advisory Board. This member will replace Stephanie Leonard.

The International Representative participates in all Executive Committee activities. This representative serves as a link between SPER and the pediatric and perinatal epidemiologic research communities outside of North America, with a goal of increasing SPER membership across the globe. To be eligible, the individual must reside full-time in a country outside North America. This member will replace Neda Razaz.

The Trainee Representative participates in Executive Committee meetings, encourages and facilitates trainee participation in SPER and plans the Advanced Methods Workshop. Meeting and travel costs for the Annual Meeting will be covered for the Trainee Representative. This member will replace Xuanxuan Zhu.

This call for nominations is posted on the SPER website ([SPER Call For Nominations](#)). Nominations will be solicited starting December 1st, 2025, and are due by March 13, 2026. Nominations should be submitted online through the SPER website. Self-nominations are accepted. Nominees will be asked to submit a 250-word candidate statement by the above deadline. The statement should highlight prior engagement in the Society. Please contact Stefanie Hinkle with any questions: stefanie.hinkle@pennmedicine.upenn.edu. The slate of candidates and ballot will be presented to the SPER membership for electronic voting to take place in April 2026.

38th SPER Annual Meeting Highlights
June 9-10, 2025
Boston, MA

2025 SPER Award Recipients

Congratulations to the winners of the 2025 SPER awards!

Heinz Berendes Award



Eun-Young Choi
Sungyunkwan University, South Korea

Paper: *Exposure to antibiotics during pregnancy or early infancy and the risk of autoimmune disease in children: A nationwide cohort study with sibling matched analyses.*

Student Prize Paper



Sharonda Lovett
Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health,
Boston University, Boston, MA

Paper: *Racialized economic segregation and fecundability*

Rising Star Award



Giulia M. Muraca, PhD
McMaster University

Mentoring Award



Carolyn Drews-Botsch, PhD, MPH
George Mason University

Travel Award to Promote Equity



Chidinma Oli, MPH
University of Florida

Travel Award to Promote Equity



Michelle Tam, PhD
Harvard University

Annual Meeting Quick Stats

- Submitted Abstracts:
 - 338 total submissions
 - 178 trainee submissions
- Advanced Methods Workshop:
 - 290 registrants
- Annual Meeting Program:
 - 5 Symposia -
 - 23 oral presentations
 - 5 concurrent contributed sessions
 - 29 oral presentations
- Annual Meeting Attendance:
 - 299 attendees
 - 51% trainees
 - 6% outside of US and Canada
- Membership:
 - 429 members
 - 46% trainees

2025 Student/Trainee Poster Award Winners

Session A

1st Place

Shan-Xuan Lim
Postdoctoral Scholar
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of
Child Health and Human Development
“Planetary Health Diet during pregnancy and
major pregnancy complications: Findings from a
multisite, diverse United States cohort.”

2nd Place

Caitlin Meyer, MPH
MCH Epidemiology Student
University of Illinois - Chicago
“Change in hospitalization rates for mental health
and substance use disorders from before to after
the start of the COVID-19 pandemic among
Illinois youth, overall and by sex.”

Session B

1st Place

Mia Zhu, PhD MPH
Postdoctoral Fellow
University of Michigan School of Public Health
“Grandmaternal body mass index in early pregnancy
and risk of childhood sleep apnea in grandoffspring.”

2nd Place

Matthew Shupler, PhD MPH
Postdoctoral Scholar
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
“Prenatal and postnatal exposure to ambient fine
particulate matter (PM2.5) and risk of autism spectrum
disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
among Medicaid recipients.”

Join an SPER committee!

[SPER committee webpage](#)

Program Committee

The Program Committee helps plan the annual meeting. Committee members identify topics for Concurrent Contributed Sessions and select presentations for these sessions from submitted abstracts. A call for volunteers will be announced in the coming weeks.

Communications Committee

The purpose of the Communications Committee is to coordinate and enhance communications between the Society and membership. The committee has primary responsibility for the SPER newsletter, for SPER's communication via social media, and developing a communications plan.

[Join the communications committee here.](#)

Digital Engagement Committee (DEC)

The purpose of the Digital Engagement Committee is to help develop and oversee SPER online education initiatives, to include: online seminars, including joint SPER/SER presentations as well as other webinars, and other posted material such as SPER playlists.

[Join the digital engagement committee page here.](#)

Outreach Committee

The purpose of the Outreach Committee is to promote awareness and accessibility of the Society to help grow the membership. The Committee has responsibility for overseeing initiatives aimed at recruitment of new members and retention of existing members and expanding the Society's reach.

[Contact or join the outreach committee here.](#)

Student & Post-Doc Working Group

The mission of the Student, Trainee, & Post-Doc Working Group is to facilitate the educational experiences and professional development of trainees in pediatric and perinatal epidemiology-related disciplines by providing information, resources, and networking opportunities; facilitating trainee exchange of research ideas; planning the [Advanced Methods Workshop](#) and trainee events at the annual symposium; and promoting trainee engagement in SPER..

[Join the student and post-doc committee here.](#)

Equity Advisory Board

The Equity Advisory Board intersects with SPER programming and activities to promote equity both within the society and in perinatal, pediatric, and reproductive epidemiologic research. The board meets monthly and hosts an open listening session each year where any current or prospective SPER member can attend and discuss topics related to equity, and we plan for activities over the coming year.

[Join the Equity Advisory Board here.](#)

Follow SPER on Social Media!

SPER is currently active on [LinkedIn](#), [Bluesky](#) and [Facebook](#), follow/connect with us for society updates and information!



SPER Communications



@spercomms.bsky.social



Search: SPER

Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your SPER membership for 2026! Benefits include discounted registration rates for the annual meeting; opportunities to serve on committees, review abstracts and be a poster judge; access to the online jobs and fellowships board; participation in the electronic mailing list; subscription to *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology* – and more! If you would like to join SPER (or know a colleague who does), [click here to complete the membership application](#).

Reminder that SPER memberships run from January 1st to December 31st (no matter when you renew), please renew early for more SPER value!

Give to SPER

Fund the future and support our mission to foster pediatric and perinatal epidemiologic research!

Donated funds will be used to support our annual meeting, student travel awards and memberships, and expanded programming throughout the year.

SPER is a Non-Profit 501c(3) organization, so your donations may be tax deductible.

[Donate to SPER here!](#)

Sponsor the SPER Annual Meeting

Support SPER and promote your organization! Sponsorships are available at the Full (\$750) and Email (\$350) levels. [Details on sponsoring the SPER annual meeting available here.](#)