

Hospital Employed Physician, July 1, 2022-June 30, 2024
**Presidential Appointment*

Roopa Thakur, MD, FAAP

Roopa Thakur, MD, FAAP, is a practicing pediatrician at Cleveland Clinic. She is board certified in general pediatrics. She earned her medical degree from The Ohio State University College of Medicine in Columbus, Ohio and completed her post-graduate training at Cleveland Clinic Children's in Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Thakur's interests include resident education and healthcare advocacy. She currently serves as Associate Program Director of Cleveland Clinic Children's Pediatric Residency Program, Medical Director of School-Based Health Clinics, and Medical Director of Youth Strategies for Community Health and Partnerships. She also serves as Medical Director of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Lead-Free Ohio Program.

Which aspect(s) to children's health do you think the Ohio Chapter should focus on in the near future? Why and how?

With current events being a reflection of long-standing concerns in our communities, breastfeeding support and gun control are top on my list today. Similarly, ongoing efforts to improve WCC and immunization completion rates, which have dipped severely during the pandemic, are high priority in my mind.

I think the *how* is difficult to answer. Many decisions affecting children's health have been politicized, and our communities are mistrustful. Advocacy for policy that promotes or incentivizes preventive medicine and injury prevention will continue to be critical. We also need to think about how to foster trust, potentially through partnership with trusted members of the community. In addition to provider trainings and patient/family handouts, should we consider partnering with local library and school systems or faith-based organizations to offer webinars to the parents of our most vulnerable youth? Can we work more closely with the county board of health to conduct regional needs assessments and cater our outreach to parents accordingly? While there are many potential solutions, and none will work for every community, I feel that understanding what our patients/families need from us is the best place to start.

How has your Ohio AAP membership and involvement shaped your professional development or enhanced your personal life?

I have been a member of the Ohio AAP since 2011, when I started residency at Cleveland Clinic Children's. My first experience presenting was at the Ohio AAP's Annual Conference resident poster session, where I had the opportunity to share my work evaluating parental perceptions of mass sports physicals in comparison to WCC visits at their medical home, funded by CATCH grant.

In August 2015, I was invited to join the editorial board of the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics' premier publication, *Ohio Pediatrics*. This experience allowed

me to inform content for the publication, practice writing and editing, and network with other primary care and subspecialist pediatricians across the state.

In terms of professional development, I can say with certainty that the Ohio AAP helped to develop my identity in the space of public health. In 2019, I found myself increasingly involved in lead poisoning prevention efforts within Cleveland Clinic as well as the greater Northeast Ohio region, including Cuyahoga County Board of Health's Healthy Homes Advisory Council and the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition. In 2020, I took advantage of the Ohio AAP's Lead QI Collaborative to achieve multiple professional aims: 1) teach my trainees the basics of quality improvement, 2) evaluate the lead screening/testing practices at 3 different Cleveland Clinic primary care sites, and 3) network with like-minded pediatricians across the state to share best practices in lead poisoning prevention. Upon completion of the project, I was invited to join the Ohio AAP Childhood Lead Prevention Advisory Committee, advising on resources and deliverables in regard to the lead prevention program.

In August 2021, I was approached to serve as Medical Director for the Ohio AAP Lead-Free Ohio Program. Through the program, I have learned how the Ohio Department of Health collaborates with the Ohio AAP. I have also had the opportunity to present at other institution's Grand Rounds and statewide Ohio AAP webinars for primary care providers, community health workers, and other members of our care teams.

Because of my involvement in these efforts, I gained recognition in my department as an expert on lead poisoning prevention. In the past 3 years, I have been asked to deliver CME sessions on lead poisoning prevention, as well as to speak about my public health work at department, institute, and enterprise-wide meetings.