

Personal Statement – Jennifer Erklauer

My path to become a pediatric neuro-intensivist has been unique with board certification in pediatrics, child neurology, neurocritical care(NCC), and pediatric critical care. My path often appeared unnecessary to others and at times myself, but my passion for pediatric NCC and my desire to improve the care for children with critical neurologic illness inspired me to continue. Understanding the field from multiple angles has allowed me to better appreciate the needs of our patients and the collaboration required for advancement.

At our pediatric institution, I serve as the Medical Director for NCC and our state-of-the-art pediatric neurointensive care unit. I have played a major role in the design and opening of our unit with the goal of building a collaborative multi-disciplinary team-based approach to the care of pediatric patients with critical neurologic illness. Building interprofessional comradery and developing a community of practice across multiple specialties has been a strength of mine and doing this at the largest children's hospital in the nation has been a tremendous experience. Continuing forward progress without losing momentum while reconciling many different contributor viewpoints has been a challenge for me. Open discussions with all stakeholders and the formation of smaller core project leadership teams to maintain progress, has been a strategy of mine to overcome this. My goal has been to bring the same benefits of improved outcomes seen in adult patients cared for in NCC units to the pediatric population. As a member of the board, I would look to expand pediatric representation within the NCS to promote reciprocal learning opportunities and collaboration. While there are significant differences between children and adults, the principles of NCC and the needs of the patients have incredible overlap. Combining experts with these varying backgrounds and pooling resources will enhance our success and help create collective products much stronger than individual efforts alone.

My involvement with NCS began with membership and ENLS certification(2010). Since then, I participated at annual meetings through Future Leaders Forum, presenting on the management of refractory status epilepticus(SE), and leading a discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Pediatric NCC. I contributed to NCS educational efforts as an author of the ENLS module on intracerebral hemorrhage, reviewer for the NCS Board Review Question Bank, and member of the NCS SE Guideline Committee. In my work through the Pediatric NCC Research Group as co-chair of the subcommittee on educational products, I led efforts to create an international, peer-reviewed educational series with didactic sessions and expert case-based panel discussions. In less than a year, we reached >75 countries and >1600 participants with an additional >2500 views on our online educational channel. This program exceeded the reach first anticipated. The potential reach of NCS is even greater. My vision for NCS is to prioritize program development aimed at international collaboration to expand access to and improve education and patient care throughout the world, including additional educational series, simulation training, cooperative guideline development, and research. Growing NCS globally strengthens its voice and targets health disparities throughout the world.