



LR: Doug Maynard, Dr. Christine Chambers, Erica Ehm, Rob MacCormick (Patient Partner)

## DR. CHRISTINE CHAMBERS FROM THE LAB TO THE CLINIC: BRIDGING THE GAP IN CHILDREN'S PAIN MANAGEMENT

Dr. Christine Chambers is working to improve children's pain management in Canada, and all over the world.

As Scientific Director of SKIP (Solutions for Kids in Pain) — a recently established \$7.3 million national Networks of Centres of Excellence Canada initiative — her works spans the spectrum of research, training, knowledge translation and advocacy.

## CONVERTING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

With over 100 national and international partners, SKIP's mission is to mobilize evidence-based solutions for improved pain management in children, in order to close the gap between what research shows and what health care does.

"Findings presented in medical journals don't automatically get translated into clinical practice; in fact, estimates show it can

take 17 years for research findings to get to the front line," explains Dr. Chambers. "What we see in the meantime is that the management of children's pain remains poor, despite existing research-backed solutions."

In both the short and long-term, studies have shown that poorly managed pain early in life can have serious health consequences. These consequences include

higher pain sensitivity later in life, trauma, chronic pain, and changes in brain development that can lead to long-term learning and behavioral problems. Still, roughly two-thirds of children in hospital undergo painful procedures with no documented pain management.

### DID YOU KNOW?

As recently as the 1970s and 1980s, Canadian babies underwent procedures such as heart surgery without pain medication, as it was believed they were too young to feel pain.



## COLLABORATION & CREATIVE APPROACHES

One of the defining strengths of the SKIP initiative is its steadfast commitment to working in collaboration with all stakeholder groups in children's pain management to generate change, including health care, government, not-for-profits and of course, patients and caregivers themselves. Based at Dalhousie and co-led by Children's Healthcare Canada in Ottawa, the program's over 100 outstanding partners include the IWK Health Centre, the Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto), Stollery Children's

Hospital (Edmonton), Child Kind International (Boston), the International Association for the Study of Pain (Washington), the Australian Pain Society, The Mayday Fund, The Louise and Alan Edwards Foundation and DMRF donors.

Beyond these extensive networks, Dr. Chambers and her team are also working outside the box of traditional health care to accelerate change, harnessing the power of social media as part of SKIP's overall advocacy strategy.

Notably, in Dr. Chambers' recent work, this strategy proved incredibly effective in reaching parents around the world. Her previous initiative, "It Doesn't Have to Hurt", funded through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), generated 150 million content views worldwide, trended nationally on social media several times, won multiple national and international awards, and was featured in The New York Times, The Globe & Mail, and on CBC's The National.



“Canada is a world leader in children’s pain research, and we have the data to show not only the long-term harm associated with poorly managed pain, but also the solutions to change that. At SKIP, we are working tirelessly to get this knowledge out there so that children can benefit from evidence-based pain solutions in contexts from needles and vaccinations, to surgery and chronic disease. Our work will not be complete until solutions such as topical anesthetics, analgesics, breathing exercises and distraction are finally the norm in children’s care, as opposed to outdated practices like using physical restraint during painful procedures, with a lack of pharmacological and psychological support.”

– **DR. CHRISTINE CHAMBERS:** Canada Research Chair in Children’s Pain, Killam Professor in the Departments of Pediatrics and Psychology & Neuroscience – Dalhousie University, Scientific Director of Solutions SKIP, incoming Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health.

## DMRF DONORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED \$160,000 TO THIS IMPORTANT AND LIFE-CHANGING PROJECT



**Emily Drake** @E\_Drake  
When I became a mom I was so surprised at how difficult it is to find evidence-based information. #ItDoesntHaveToHurt has shown the power of leveraging #SocialMedia to get credible information to parents @KidsInPain

**Global Halifax** @globalhalifax  
Funding has been announced for a new knowledge mobilization network to improve children’s pain management @KidsInPain @DrCChambers #ItDoesntHaveToHurt. [globalnews.ca/halifax/videos/](http://globalnews.ca/halifax/videos/)



**Skip – Solutions for Kids in Pain**  
The federal government has announced a 1.6 million dollar grant for Solutions for Kids in Pain (SKIP). A mobilization network to improve children’s pain management.

**Isabel Jordan** @isabeljordan  
And how do we know that patients are at the centre? Well to start, we’re involved from the beginning, middle and end of a project. @DrCChambers gets this. #ItDoesntHaveToHurt

**Emily Greenwaldt Carliner** @emilgreenwaldt  
Trending in Canada #ItDoesntHaveToHurt - Tune in if you want to hear how we mobilize knowledge to support Kids in Pain @KidsInPain

**Lindsay Richter** @LindsayRichter  
“It’s not just talk and advocacy - @KidsInPain is actually going to change the way children’s pain is managed in 🇨🇦 - @EricaEhm



“As a mother of four, there’s one thing I know for certain, and that is that no one is going to advocate more strongly for children than their parents,” says Dr. Chambers.

## A FOUNDATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Despite the impressive momentum and global reach of her work, Dr. Chambers has faced many challenges along the way, from gender bias in science and leadership, to the incredibly competitive landscape of research funding. She notes that as the first Foundation to partner with SKIP, DMRF played an instrumental role in securing additional partners, donations and federal funding for SKIP, all of which have made the initiative so successful today.

“I’ve never been rejected so much as I have over the last 5-7 years, but I’ve pushed through because I’m really motivated to do this work, and to make a difference in the lives of children and families. I also hope that by doing the work I’m doing, unapologetically, that I can in some way help to make it easier for all the women who will follow me. Thank you, DMRF, for all of your support – I cannot overstate just how critical it has been.”