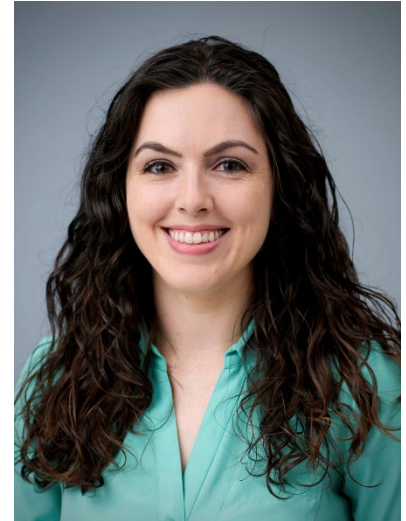


ASPHO Career Path Spotlight

Melanie Stall, MD



Career Description

1. **Current position:** Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology/Bone Marrow Transplant
2. **Institution:** University of Colorado/Children's Hospital Colorado
3. **Years at institution:** <1 year (I left UT Southwestern in June)
4. **Did you complete additional post-fellowship training? Was it an important factor in your current position?** I am currently completing a 2-year research fellowship that is focused on helping junior faculty conduct outcomes research and be successful in obtaining extramural funding.
5. **Years out of Fellowship:** 1
6. **Type of institution:** Academic center
7. **Approximate number of attendings in your PHO department/division:** 40
8. **How do you allocate your effort?** Clinical + Education 50%, Research 50%, Administration 0%, Other 0%
9. **Position Specifics (Please give a brief description of your current responsibilities in these areas)**
 - a. **Clinical activity:** I am on the leukemia/lymphoma team and have 1.5 days of clinic per week. I'm on inpatient service 6 weeks per year, split between chemo and resident teams.
 - b. **Scholarship/Research:** My research interests are in healthcare disparities, patient centered outcomes, and communication. Specifically, my focus has been on intervention development to improve care for families who speak languages other than English. My research fellowship protects 50% of my time and consists of a half day per week of didactics.
 - c. **Education/Teaching:** Embedded within my clinical activity is time to teach medical students, residents, and fellows.
 - d. **Administration:** N/A
 - e. **Other:** N/A

ASPHO Career Path Spotlight

Career Perspectives

- 1. What were important factors in your taking on this role (e.g., professional interest, family, geography, spousal profession)? What made this career path appealing?** I didn't think I would ever have any interest in research until I became involved with a mixed methods project in residency on prognostic communication in high risk oncology patients and loved it. My interest in language equity research came early in fellowship after clinical experiences with a Vietnamese-speaking family. These early research experiences helped shape my interests and my career goals evolved from wanting to be a full-time clinician to research being a large focus. The primary driving force for the recent move to my current position was access to more focused research mentorship and resources to help facilitate my transition into an independent researcher. The ACCORDS Center at the University of Colorado sponsors my current research fellowship which protects half my time and provides access to mentorship, qualitative and quantitative methodologists/analysts, didactics, and writing support.
- 2. Is there specific training or experience that helped you obtain this position?** I think my unique research niche and experience with qualitative/mixed methods are skills that have framed the trajectory of my career.
- 3. Is this career path what you expected? Please explain.** As mentioned above, I didn't think research would be such a large part of my career when I was in training, but I've known since early on in medical school that I wanted to be a pediatric oncologist, and I couldn't imagine doing anything else.
- 4. What do you find most rewarding about your current professional role?** The best part of my job is caring for my patients, and I love the strong and lasting relationships that result with families. On the research side, it has been rewarding to explore families' experiences and be able to translate their suggestions for improvement into interventions that I hope will mitigate problems I routinely witness on the clinical side.
- 5. What do you find most challenging about your current professional role?** I think truly protecting your time for research can be challenging. Balancing my clinical and research responsibilities is a skill I'm continually working on.
- 6. What do you see yourself doing in 5 years and 10 years?** I see myself doing the same clinical work in the next 5-10 years. I hope to be in the middle of a career development award in 5 years and have an established independent research program in 10 years. I also hope to grow into leadership roles and take on more mentoring roles.