

Cerebral Palsy Foundation Convenes Global Leaders for Breakthrough Summit Accelerating Detection, Prevention & Cure

Summit marks a decisive shift from managing cerebral palsy to transforming outcomes through aligned science, collaboration, and urgency

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“

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*Rachel Byrne, Executive
Director*

Foundation (CPF) announced today the Cerebral Palsy Breakthrough Summit: Closing the Gap Between Knowledge, Treatment, Prevention, and Cure, convening this week in Los Angeles, CA. This Summit brings together a select group of the world's leading scientists, clinicians, engineers, and innovators to accelerate progress toward earlier detection, more effective treatment, prevention strategies, and—critically—curative pathways for cerebral palsy (CP).

Cerebral palsy is the most common lifelong physical [disability](#), affecting more than one million Americans and

an estimated 50 million people worldwide, with profound impact not only on individuals but also on families, [healthcare](#) systems, and economies. The economic impact of Cerebral Palsy is measured in the trillions of dollars globally, driven by long-term medical care, healthcare costs, productivity impacts and lifespan support needs.

Cerebral palsy represents one of the clearest opportunities in modern medicine to reduce lifelong disability, control escalating healthcare costs, improve quality of life, and deliver measurable returns on investment through strategic investment in prevention, early detection, and translational science.

For decades, cerebral palsy has largely been treated as an unavoidable outcome of early developmental brain injury—managed, but not fundamentally altered. That paradigm is now changing. Breakthroughs across neuroscience, neonatology, genomics, imaging, and rehabilitation science have opened the door to preventing some forms of CP, curing others, and significantly reducing lifelong severity in many cases—improving quality of life with the potential

of dramatically lowering long-term healthcare costs.

“This is no longer a future-facing conversation—it’s a “now” conversation,” said Rachel Byrne, Executive Director of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation. “The science has reached a point where incremental progress is no longer enough. What’s required is alignment around what is possible for cerebral palsy, urgency in how we act, and a shared commitment to translating discovery into real-world impact for the millions of people living with cerebral palsy and their families. Our CP Breakthrough Summit is about saying clearly: now is the time.”

The Cerebral Palsy Foundation CP Breakthrough Summit is intentionally designed to move beyond siloed research and incremental advances. Invited researchers and scientists will work toward a shared, actionable roadmap addressing critical questions, including:

- What does truly transformational thinking in cerebral palsy science look like today?
- Which breakthroughs—across detection, treatment, prevention, and cure—are achievable in the next 5 to 10 years?
- What cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional collaborations are required to accelerate translation from discovery to clinical and population-level impact?

Unlike traditional scientific conferences, this CP Breakthrough Summit emphasizes cross-disciplinary collaboration, translational urgency, and defined next steps, with the goal of shortening timelines from discovery to implementation—from decades to years.

“For too long, cerebral palsy has been approached as a condition we manage rather than one we actively change,” said Dr. Darcy Fehlings, Developmental Pediatrician at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Toronto. “We now have the scientific knowledge to prevent some forms of cerebral palsy, reduce the severity of others, and dramatically improve lifelong outcomes—but progress depends on alignment across disciplines and institutions. This Summit is about turning what we know into coordinated action.”



The Cerebral Palsy Foundation Breakthrough Summit is led by an international group of leaders representing pediatrics, neurology, neonatology, rehabilitation, and translational science, including:

Rachel Byrne, Executive Director, Cerebral Palsy Foundation

Dr. Nadia Badawi, Professor of Cerebral Palsy and Neonatal Neurology, Chair of Research, University of Sydney Australia, CP Alliance Foundation

Dr. Nathalie Maitre, Professor of Pediatrics in Neonatology, Director of Research in Early Development in Cerebral Palsy, Emory University

Dr. Emin Maltepe, Professor of Pediatrics, Biomedical Sciences, Development & Stem Cell Biology at UCSF

Dr. Darcy Fehlings, Developmental Pediatrician, and Professor of Pediatrics, University of Toronto

Dr. Eleanor Molloy, Consultant Neonatologist, The National Maternity Hospital, Dublin, and Professor, Trinity College Dublin Ireland

Dr. Evan Snyder, Professor and Director, Center for Stem Cells & Regenerative Medicine, Sanford Burnham Presbys, LaJolla, California

Dr. Eileen Fowler, Professor of Orthopaedics and Pediatrics, UCLA Center for Cerebral Palsy, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA; CPF Scientific Advisory Council Chair

Outcomes from the Summit will directly inform CPF's future research blueprint, funding strategies, and global partnerships—accelerating progress toward earlier diagnosis, targeted interventions, prevention strategies, and curative pathways, while ensuring that advances reach people with cerebral palsy worldwide.

About the Cerebral Palsy Foundation

The Cerebral Palsy Foundation (CPF) is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to transforming outcomes for people with cerebral palsy by driving education and policy, while accelerating breakthroughs in detection, prevention, treatment, and cure. Founded on the conviction that cerebral palsy is not a fixed or inevitable outcome, CPF works at the intersection of science, medicine, technology, and policy to move the field beyond lifelong management toward measurable, life-changing impact.

CPF advances progress by convening world-leading experts, initiating high-impact research, and translating discovery into real-world clinical and systems change. Through strategic partnerships

across academia, healthcare, industry, and government, the Cerebral Palsy Foundation works to shorten timelines from innovation to implementation—ensuring that advances reach individuals with cerebral palsy and their families globally.

Headquartered in New York, CPF operates with a global reach, focusing on solutions that improve lives across the lifespan while reducing long-term disability and healthcare costs. Learn more at cerebralpalsyfoundation.org

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