

Mitchell Cohen named new chair of Pediatrics at UAB, physician-in-chief of Children's of Alabama

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Mitchell Cohen, M.D., a national leader in pediatric medicine and an internationally renowned specialist in children's digestive disorders, has been named chair of the [Department of Pediatrics](#) at the [University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine](#) and has been elected physician-in-chief of [Children's of Alabama](#) by its board of trustees.



Cohen is a professor of pediatrics, vice-chair for clinical affairs, and director of the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. He was chosen after a national search considered candidates from some of the country's most prestigious institutions.

Cohen will succeed Sergio Stagno, M.D., who announced in September 2013 his intention to step down as chair and physician-in-chief after serving in those roles since 1988. Cohen will officially join UAB and COA on Sept. 1.

"I am looking forward to leading a faculty well-known for its excellence," Cohen said. "This is an opportunity to meaningfully advance the health of the children of Alabama, to work with a faculty that is driven to improve the quality of care and to work in an exceptional facility."

The Department of Pediatrics at UAB has more than 170 faculty members and trains more than 100 residents for careers in primary care and pediatric subspecialties. Children's of Alabama, with its new Benjamin Russell Hospital for Children, had nearly 14,000 hospital discharges and 660,000 outpatient visits in 2013.

"Mitch Cohen is the ideal person for this important leadership position," said [Selwyn M. Vickers, M.D.](#), senior vice president for Medicine and dean of the School of Medicine at UAB. "Dr. Cohen has led with distinction. His track record of building teams that succeed in the full academic mission — of research, education and clinical care — is outstanding. Dr. Cohen will build on the legacy of excellence established by Dr. Stagno to reach new heights for the people of Birmingham, the state of Alabama and beyond."

"Mitch Cohen is coming to Birmingham at a very important time for UAB's Department of Pediatrics and Children's of Alabama. We look forward to welcoming him to our campus and to the important work that we will accomplish together on behalf of children throughout the state and the region," said [Mike Warren](#), Children's of Alabama's president and chief executive officer.

Stagno, who will remain on the UAB faculty, said, "Mitch Cohen is a proven and very strong leader in pediatric gastroenterology with the skills to be a very effective chair of pediatrics."

Growing the Pediatrics faculty, especially research faculty, is a priority for the School of Medicine, Vickers says. UAB and Children's of Alabama have committed significant resources

to help ensure Dr. Cohen's success in terms of recruiting, expanding the academic mission of the department, and supporting the development of new research and service programs.

"There is an opportunity to enhance the research portfolio and make research and discovery more prominent within the Department of Pediatrics," Cohen said. "The energy and vision of Dr. Vickers, and the alignment between UAB and Children's of Alabama, also made this opportunity very attractive."

Cohen is a native of New York, N.Y., and completed medical school at Mount Sinai School of Medicine and pediatric residency training at Johns Hopkins. In 1983 he began a three-year fellowship in pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati and joined the faculty of the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine as an instructor. He became director of the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 2005 and vice-chair of the Department of Pediatrics in 2009. From 2002 to 2004 he served as president of the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, and received the organization's Shwachman Award in 2013 for lifelong scientific contributions.

Cohen and his wife, Morissa Ladinsky Cohen, M.D., also a pediatrician, have five children: Seth, 32, Noah, 28, Raphael, 26, Andrew, 17, and Nicole, 13. Birmingham's recent growth and revitalization also figured into Cohen's decision to leave Cincinnati after more than 30 years.

"Birmingham is a very welcoming community," Cohen said. "The city seems very proud, and justly so, of UAB and Children's. I hope to capitalize on that to achieve greater heights. We think Birmingham is going to be a great place to live."