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Dear friends, colleagues, mentors, and supporters,

Happy New Year!

I hope this first March of Dimes Research Brief of the year finds you healthy and sharp. I also hope that you were able to share some moments of connection and joy with those you love over the holiday season.

As a reminder, if you don't want to hear about our news, grants, podcast, blogs, and publications, click 'unsubscribe' at the bottom of this email.

Here's 2024's first brief.



## Monthly Research Brief

### News

Just days ago, we announced Dr. Marisa Bartolomei as the recipient of The 2024 March of Dimes Richard B. Johnston, Jr., MD Prize. As the co-director of the Epigenetics Institute at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine and the Perelman Professor of Cell & Developmental Biology at the school, Dr. Bartolomei has made instrumental discoveries in how genetic materials are expressed and affected by exposures throughout life and during prenatal development. March of Dimes will present the award to Dr. Bartolomei at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Society for Reproductive Investigation (SRI) in Vancouver, British Columbia on March 16. [Read more in our press release about Dr. Bartolomei.](#)

## Grants

Get ready—we're opening the Request for Applications (RFA) portal for the Basil O'Connor Starter Scholar Research Awards on February 29, 2024. These awards support outstanding researchers who are embarking on their independent research careers. As a recipient of our brief, you get to know the portal open date in advance, so you can plan accordingly. Check back here next month for a link.

## Podcast

Our seventh and last MODCAST of 2023 is unmissable. Dr. Lynne Sykes, co-director of the March of Dimes Prematurity Research Center (PRC) at Imperial College London, discusses the immune cascade that triggers vaginal microbiome-driven preterm birth and a new vaginal supplement that could change the makeup of the vaginal microbiome to prevent this type of immune response. [Listen to MODCAST now.](#)

## Blog

Our first blog of 2024 summarizes a recent paper from scientists at the March of Dimes (MOD) Prematurity Research Center (PRC) at Stanford, who have, in a first, created a breakthrough Machine Learning (ML) algorithm that makes reliable predictions about labor onset, preterm birth, and preeclampsia—and identifies the biological markers supporting those predictions. [Read our latest blog on the Stanford paper.](#)

## Publications

[Prospective Cohort Study of Emergency Department Visit Frequency and Diagnoses Before and During COVID-19 Pandemic in Urban, Low-Income, US- and Foreign-Born Mothers in Boston, MA](#)

[Microbiome preterm birth DREAM challenge: Crowdsourcing machine learning approaches to advance preterm birth research](#)

[Spatial Patterning of Spontaneous and Medically Indicated Preterm Birth in Philadelphia](#)

[Discovery of sparse, reliable omic biomarkers with Stabl](#)

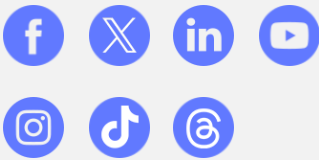
That's it for the January brief. See you next month.

Emre Seli, MD  
Chief Scientific Officer  
March of Dimes

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STRONG  
BABIES.**



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