



Alison Cernich, Ph.D., named director of Shriners Children's Research Institute

Shriners Children's is proud to announce that Alison Cernich, Ph.D., has accepted the position of director of our Research Institute. In this role, Dr. Cernich will oversee the recruitment of researchers as well as the design and construction of the institute's 150,000 square feet of laboratory space at the Science Square location in Atlanta, Georgia.



An experienced research leader and neuropsychologist, Dr. Cernich most recently served as acting director and deputy director of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. In that role, she helped oversee a broad research portfolio spanning child health, development, women's health, disabilities, and rehabilitation medicine, and contributed to strategic initiatives across NIH.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Cernich to Shriners Children's at this pivotal moment in our journey," said Chairman of the Board of Trustees Leslie D. Stewart, M.D. "As we advance Vision 2035, her leadership will help shape the future of our research enterprise, accelerating discoveries that improve care for children and families across our system."

Dr. Cernich holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University, where her training focused on traumatic injury and disability-related research. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Loyola University New Orleans and is board certified in clinical neuropsychology. Her academic background spans clinical science and translational research, providing a strong foundation for research leadership.

Dr. Cernich has held senior leadership roles across major federal health and research organizations, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Defense. Across these settings, her work has focused on advancing research and innovation for children and individuals with disabilities — particularly in rehabilitation, medical devices and data-driven approaches — by bringing together clinicians, researchers, and partners to address complex, interdisciplinary challenges.

"This is an amazing opportunity to shape a research institute from the ground up," said Dr. Cernich. "Bringing Shriners Children's research and innovation together allows us to move discoveries from the lab into practice faster, so families see the impact through stronger outcomes and new possibilities in care."

Originally from New Orleans, Louisiana, Dr. Cernich enjoys hiking and spending time outdoors.

“We very much look forward to Dr. Cernich leading the transformational change in research at Shriners Children’s,” said Marc Lalande, Ph.D., vice president, research programs. “Please join me in welcoming Dr. Cernich to Shriners Children’s.”
