



Professor D. Brent Polk

Professor D. Brent Polk, MD, is the Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Vice-Dean for Child Health at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California. He is Physician-in-Chief, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and Director of The Saban Research Institute of Children's Hospital Los Angeles. He previously served as chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, as well as director of the NIH-funded Digestive Disease Research Center at Vanderbilt University and is a Fellow of the American Gastroenterology Association (AGA).

His research is focused on the regulation of growth and development of the intestine as it relates to ontogeny and disease. Current areas of investigation include epidermal growth factor and tumor necrosis factor receptor family member signaling mechanisms leading to proliferation, differentiation, survival or migration of intestinal cells and the relationship between inflammation and tumorigenesis. These findings have been extended to understanding the relationship between commensal and pathogenic enteric bacterial flora and regulation of intestinal cell proliferation, integrity and apoptosis with implications for health and disease.

Professor Polk has mentored undergraduate, graduate and medical students, postdoctoral and clinical fellows as well as junior faculty. He is a member of several professional organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the AGA, the American Pediatric Society, the American Physiological Society, the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and the Society for Pediatric Research. He is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and the Subspecialty Boards in Gastroenterology.