

## REVIEW ARTICLE

**Dr. Marilyn C. Augustyn, MD and Her Contribution to ADHD****Kasumbiwal Ajay H.<sup>1</sup>, Lakhe Siddheshwar A.<sup>2</sup>, Kaithi Pavani<sup>3</sup>, Sarita Verma<sup>4</sup>****How to cite this article:**

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**ABSTRACT**

Dr. Marilyn C. Augustyn is a developmental-behavioural paediatrician, Professor of Pediatrics, and Director of the Division of Developmental and Behavioural Pediatrics at the Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine and Boston Medical Centre (BMC). I chose her because she is a notable figure with over 30 years of extensive experience in evaluating and caring for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), ADHD, learning disabilities, and intellectual disabilities, particularly within trauma-informed, culturally diverse, and urban healthcare settings.

Throughout her career, Dr. Augustyn has demonstrated a deep commitment to improving developmental outcomes for children by integrating clinical care, research, and advocacy. She has played a key role in advancing evidence-based approaches to early identification and management of developmental and behavioural challenges. Her work often emphasizes the importance of understanding the broader psychosocial environment of children, including exposure to trauma, socioeconomic barriers, and family stressors, which significantly influence developmental trajectories.

In addition to her clinical responsibilities, she is an influential educator who mentors medical students, residents, and fellows, shaping the next generation of paediatricians. Her leadership at BMC has strengthened multidisciplinary collaboration and improved access to compassionate, family-centred care for vulnerable populations. Dr. Augustyn's contributions highlight her enduring dedication to child health and developmental well-being.

**Key Messages:** Dr. Marilyn C. Augustyn is an exemplary developmental behavioural paediatrician whose career embodies interdisciplinary excellence, compassionate care for underserved communities, and leadership in academic pediatrics. Her contributions including innovations in family navigation, trauma-informed care,

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and developmental research highlight how dedication, advocacy, and scholarship can advance the health and well-being of children with neurodevelopmental disorders.

## KEYWORDS

• Developmental–Behavioural Pediatrics • Autism Spectrum Disorder • ADHD • Trauma-Informed Care • Family Navigation • Urban Health • Neurodevelopmental Disabilities • Pediatric Leadership

## INTRODUCTION

Background Education and early career path Earned a BS in Biomedical Engineering from Northwestern University in June 1985. Graduated with an MD from Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine in June 1989. Completed Residency in Pediatrics at UCLA (1989–1992). Pursued a Fellowship in Developmental and Behavioural Pediatrics at Boston City Hospital (now BMC), finishing June 1995. Transition from engineering to medicine: Her early work in biomedical engineering in Chicago preceded her medical journey, offering a unique analytical foundation before entering clinical paediatrics. Scientific Contributions Clinical leadership and capacity: As Division Director at BMC, Dr. Augustyn oversees over forty clinicians, running clinics five days a week to serve more than 7,500 children yearly for developmental evaluations and care. Research and innovation: Pioneered family navigation programs to reduce delays in autism diagnoses and improve service access; conducted randomized controlled trials and contributed to JAMA Pediatrics. Investigated effects of in utero cocaine and opioid exposure, effects of violence exposure, maternal depression, and family dynamics in urban contexts. Editorial and leadership roles: Co-Editor for behavioural/developmental paediatrics in UpToDate journal, and for the “Challenging Case Series” in the Journal of Developmental and Behavioural Pediatrics. Served on state and national committees, including the American Board of Pediatrics DBP Sub board. Academic and publication activity: Actively publishes case studies and consensus guidelines on autism, identity, camouflaging, and health care for youth with neurodevelopmental disabilities (2024–2025).

Challenges & Breakthroughs Urban, trauma-informed pediatric care: Serving the

underserved, diverse urban communities may present systemic challenges limited resources, complexities of trauma, disparities in access. Dr. Augustyn navigated and overcame these by innovating family navigation models and integrating trauma-informed approaches into developmental care. Interdisciplinary bridge-building: She fostered partnerships across community organizations and federal systems to enhance disability care access and coordination for youth. Sustained leadership: From early faculty roles to leading a large division and obtaining grants (e.g., MCHB-funded training programs) displays her resilience and commitment in evolving clinical, administrative, and academic arenas. Reflections Interdisciplinary skill-building: Dr. Augustyn’s path highlights the value of blending technical (engineering) and human-centred (medicine) skills a reminder to diversify your strengths. Commitment to underserved communities: Her work emphasizes how clinical excellence coupled with social responsibility can revolutionize care encouraging learners to think beyond the clinic. Innovation through research and leadership: Be proactive: design interventions, pursue research, assume leadership roles, even in challenging environments this creates systemic change (e.g., family navigation models). Editorial and scholarly contributions: Sharing knowledge through writing and editing amplifies impact students should consider publishing, engaging in peer review, or contributing to academic discourse

## CONCLUSION

Summing up, Dr. Marilyn C. Augustyn exemplifies a paediatrician whose journey from biomedical engineering to clinical leadership underscores the power of interdisciplinary

vision, innovation, and service. Her contributions to developmental-behavioural paediatrics especially in autism and trauma-informed urban care reflect a career dedicated to equity and impact. For students, her story illustrates how dedication, research, empathy, and leadership can combine to improve countless children's lives. In emulating her example, aspiring professionals can forge pathways that are both personally meaningful and socially transformative.

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**Conflict of Interest:** None

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