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Dr. Schwarz received her medical training at Washington University School of Medicine and trained in Pediatrics and Pediatric Gastroenterology at St. Louis Children's Hospital, Washington University School of Medicine. She was an Instructor of Pediatric Gastroenterology there and then moved to St. Louis University School of Medicine where she was Chief of the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition. In 1987 she moved to Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, became the Director of the Pediatric Liver Center, and served from 1995-2004 as Interim Chief/Chief of the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition.

She has concentrated her research interests in viral infections of the liver in childhood, initially working in the pathogenesis of Reye Syndrome secondary to influenza B virus and then moving to studies of hepatitis B and C viruses. In the hepatitis B field she has worked in hepatocarcinogenesis (using an NCI R03 grant to study the role of oxidative DNA damage in HCC in both the woodchuck model and in man), in clinical anti-viral trials, and in developing innovative tools to increase HBV vaccine coverage in high-risk children (an R01 grant from NIDA entitled "Viral Hepatitis in Children of Injection Drug Users."). In the area of hepatitis C virus infections of childhood, she pioneered in the treatment of HCV in hemophiliac children with alpha-interferon and in characterizing the safety and efficacy of pegylated interferon to treat young children with pegylated interferon. She is currently the PI of an NIDDK U01 multi-center grant to treat children with chronic HCV with pegylated interferon +/- ribavirin. Dr. Schwarz is interested in the application of state-of-the-art techniques to investigate the role of viral pathogens in children with biliary atresia (as an investigator in the NIDDK Biliary Atresia Research Consortiu,) and in acute liver failure (as an investigator in the NIDDK Pediatric Acute Liver Failure Study.)