



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
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Health Services Newsletter

STRONG CONNECTIONS, STRONG FAMILIES: INCREASING COLLABORATION BETWEEN HEAD START AND THE MEDICAL HOME

School readiness begins with health. That is the philosophy of the Office of Head Start and the Head Start National Center on Health. In addition to the health care a child receives, a child's health can be impacted by many things:

- Where the child lives – Is his home and his neighborhood safe, supportive, and nurturing?
- Where she plays – Does she have a playground or green space near her home and school where she can safely play and explore?
- Where she learns – Does she get to be in an environment that supports her desire to learn, her curiosity, and her healthy development?

Health managers in Head Start and Early Head Start programs across the country have told us they want better ways to connect with the health care community. Health managers have reported challenges collaborating with the medical home provider to ensure compliance with HSPPS especially related to obtaining timely medical screenings. Programs have the ability to create a great learning environment and safe place to play for the children in their care. They can support families in neighborhoods that aren't always safe. But navigating the health care system so that the program and families can have strong relationships with the health care provider can be a challenge.

In this edition of the health manager newsletter, we want to highlight a few different models of collaboration that are showing great promise in Head Start programs across the country. We also want to share some tools available from the National Center on Health that support health managers to strengthen the program's relationship with the health care community -- and support families to do the same.



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THE BASICS OF COLLABORATION

Bringing two complex systems together – like health care and Head Start – is no small task, even at the local level. Each system has its own needs, preferences, and challenges. It’s a lot like any relationship, though. When both are committed to making it work, the challenges can usually be overcome with open communication and trust.

The National Center on Health has been collecting stories of some of these collaborations. Sometimes it’s just a matter of knowing the other exists and how to get in contact. For some, though, there is a shared hope the health care and the Head Start teams will work more closely together as time goes on. Some common elements seen in these stronger collaborations include:

- Shared goal of working together
- Shared vision and commitment to doing what’s best for the children and families
- Honest, open communication – even when the topics are difficult
- A commitment to working through challenges
- Mutual respect
- Mutual accountability and regularly monitoring progress towards goals

When these things are present and valued by both partners, the collaboration can have a chance to do some amazing things. There are also concrete steps that need to be taken. Below are some possible approaches that programs can use to build stronger connections with their local pediatrician and health care community.

HEALTH SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The National Center on Health has begun assessing how involved pediatricians are with their local Head Start programs. While most pediatricians are aware of their local Head Start programs, most are not involved beyond making a referral when needed. Pediatricians can play a more active role. Once the health manager knows some of the pediatricians in the area, an invitation could be extended to one or more to participate in the program’s health services advisory committee (HSAC). The health manager might focus on the pediatrician who sees more of the program’s children or perhaps whose practice seems to be more in tune to the needs of Head Start families. Anyone on the pediatric medical home team can be approached to participate – the pediatrician, nurses, even care coordinators. It is important that the pediatric staff member approached is well-informed on clinical operations and has authority to make decisions. Each medical home will be different. There might be an unexpected champion found in the practice who is passionate about making stronger connections between the medical home and the larger community, including the Head Start program.

The National Center on Health has developed a tool to support health managers in engaging pediatricians and others in healthcare to become more involved with activities like the HSAC. This resource, called *Weaving Connections*, is available and provides some excellent guidance. For example, pediatricians are often seeing patients from the first moment they get in to the practice until late in the evening. If meetings for the HSAC are held during the day, it will be very difficult for a pediatrician to participate. This is where another champion in the medical home might have more flexibility or the use of virtual meeting technology can help. This and other issues are addressed in great detail in the *Weaving Connections* guide.

It’s 9 AM – Do You Know Where Your Local Pediatrician Is?

Sometimes the best place to start is just getting to know who is in the neighborhood. Creating a list of local pediatricians and other health care providers in the area can do a few things:

- * It is a way for programs to reach out (postcards, flyers) and share information about what they do, how to make a referral, or communicate other needs
- * It gives the program a place to start when a health expert is needed to provide an educational session or other assistance and
- * It gives the health manager and other staff a resource to provide families who may not be connected with a medical home or who aren’t satisfied with where they are now.

You can find local pediatricians using www.healthychildren.org or create broader partnerships by contacting the AAP Chapter in your state (www.aap.org—Key Word “Chapter Information”)



CO-LOCATION

Already have a great relationship with a pediatrician or other health care provider? Maybe it's time to take it to the next level. Several programs have started hosting clinics onsite. Some of them are doing this on a monthly basis and focusing on screenings or immunizations.

Others, like [Operation Breakthrough](#) in Kansas City, MO, have partnered with the local children's hospital or health care system to establish a full-time primary care clinic onsite. Staffed by the health providers, it offers families access to primary care for their children – a medical home – while still being connected with a larger health care system.

On-site partnership provides a unique opportunity for the Head Start staff, parents and caregivers, and the health care providers to truly collaborate to promote the whole health of the child. The parents are still directing their child's care, but they now have 2 strong partners supporting them. The health care provider can contact the parent directly if there is a question while the child is at school.

The great benefit to this model is that children then do not miss as much class time and parents are able to stay at work. For some parents, this could be the difference in keeping and losing a job – because the teacher or other staff person can consult with the pediatrician or nurse to see if a health concern truly warrants the child leaving the program for the day.



For your Family Newsletter:

Not all families know what they can and should expect from their child's medical home. Below are some key features every family should expect in a medical home and tips on partnering more effectively with their child's physician.

Partnering with Your Child's Medical Home

More than anything, parents and caregivers want their children to be healthy so they can learn, play, and grow into successful adults.

Head Start staff are here to support you by making sure that each child has a medical home. More than just a building, a medical home should provide care to every child that is:

- Available when families need
- Follows children over time
- Looks at all health-related needs, especially what child and family says is important
- Work with child's other services
- Compassionate
- Sensitive to cultural needs

A family-centered partnership

A medical home provides patient- and family-centered care by working together with families, building trust and respecting each family's unique qualities, and recognizing that families are the constant in a child's life.

Community-based system

The medical home is an important part of the community, working with other service providers to promote the healthy development and well being of children and their families.

For more information on what you can do to partner with your child's pediatrician, talk to your Head Start program staff or go to:

http://medicalhomeinfo.org/for_families/partner_with_physician.aspx#what

SUPPORTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILIES AND THE MEDICAL HOME: THE WELL VISIT PLANNER

When Head Start programs and health care systems work together, there are certainly numerous benefits. Programs are able to more easily meet health-related program performance standards. Health care providers have access to more comprehensive information about the child and can provide even better care. Ideally, though, the strongest relationship should be between the parents and the medical home.

Families now have access to an amazing tool developed by the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI) - the Well Visit Planner (www.wellvisitplanner.org). In partnership with the National Center on Health, CAHMI has expanded the Well Visit Planner to provide parents with support for their children ages 4 months to 6 years as they prepare for the many preventive care visits they will have with the child's pediatric medical home.

The information in this tool is based on recommendations established by the American Academy of Pediatrics' Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 3rd Edition. These guidelines are also the standard set forth in the Affordable Care Act for pediatric preventive care. The tool helps parents customize the well-child visit to their family's needs by helping to identify and prioritize health risks and concerns before their well-child appointment. This means parents are more prepared and better able to communicate and the provider can directly address the family's needs during the well-child visit.

Completing the tool will help parents identify priorities for an upcoming well-child visit; it will also help them understand what to expect at that visit. The content of the tool is based on the age of the child and what is recommended at each visit. So, it's important to complete the form each time. The tool also includes educational materials about topics such as growth and development, language development, and safety. The educational materials address the topics of most importance at each age.

After completing the tool, parents can then save or print a *Visit Guide* that summarizes their needs and priorities for the visit. Parents take this to the visit to help prioritize the time they have with the pediatrician and medical home team. They can also print a copy of the *Visit Guide* to leave with the medical home.

The National Center on Health has supported CAHMI to develop an implementation toolkit that helps support Head Start and Early Head Start programs to use the Well Visit Planner with families. It has been tested at various sites to ensure that the guidance provided within the toolkit is appropriate and helpful. Feedback from the sites has been very positive. It provides tangible ways to engage families around issue related to health. It also supports programs in their efforts to meet health-related Head Start Program Performance Standards, such as ensuring connections with the medical home and completing necessary screenings.

The materials for the Well Visit Planner are posted and maintained by CAHMI at www.wellvisitplanner.org and at www.cahmi.org/projects/wvp/. Of course, the National Center on Health welcomes your questions and comments on the Well Visit Planner or any other resources you may need. You can contact us by email at nchinfo@aap.org or by phone at 888-227-5125. The goal of the National Center on Health continues to be supporting Head Start and Early Head Start programs in their efforts to promote the optimal health and development for each child. Together, we can support children to be healthy and ready for school.

Well-Visit Planner™
a project of The Child & Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative

Your Child, Your Well-Visit

Take 10 minutes to get a **personalized visit guide** for your child's next well-care visit ([learn more](#)).

- **EXPLORE** key issues and needs important to the health of your child and family
- **LEARN** about important topics to discuss with your healthcare provider
- **PICK** your top priorities and get educational information before the visit
- **PARTNER** with your child's provider by sharing your personalized visit guide

The Well-Visit Planner is based on national recommendations for parents/guardians of children 4 months to 6 years old.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
 Answer a Questionnaire about your child and family	 Pick Your Priorities for what you want to talk or get information about at your child's well-visit	 Get Your Visit Guide that you and your child's health care provider will use to tailor the visit to your child & family needs

RESOURCES

ECLKC RESOURCES

Medical Providers and Head Start: What You Should Know About Oral Health and How You Can Help
(http://www.mchoralhealth.org/PDFs/HS_med.pdf)

RESOURCES FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (AAP)

AAP News article - Consider working with Head Start/Early Head Start to meet needs of vulnerable patients
(<http://aapnews.aappublications.org/content/35/1/8.full?sid=23eb9cf6-4b59-4334-b03f-661859d44ece>)

Help families identify a pediatrician through the “Find a Pediatrician” tool on www.healthychildren.org

From the AAP National Center on Medical Home Implementation

The Resources and Linkages pages provides Head Start health managers particularly as they seek to collaborate with health care providers in their area with whom to collaborate, including the Center for Mental Health Services’ Mental Health Services Locator and National 211.

(<http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/how/resources/index.aspx>)

Videos posted at the bottom of the page provide a unique tool for health managers to share with local health care providers, demonstrating the need to be connected with community services like Head Start programs.

(<http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/how/resources/index.aspx#promising>)

State Pages on the NCMHI site house resources specific to each state. There is a section on each state page for “Partners in State.” (http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/state_pages/)

Medical Home Chapter Champions Program on Asthma, Allergy and Anaphylaxis - There are champions in nearly every state who serve as the go-to person within the state AAP chapter for the care of asthma, allergy and anaphylaxis in the context of medical home. (<http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/national/mhccpaaa.aspx>)

The AAP Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Chapter Champions program has champions who are responsible for leading and responding to health care provider concerns regarding newborn hearing screening in the state. (<http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/PEHDIC/Pages/Early-Hearing-Detection-and-Intervention-by-State.aspx>)

*Fostering a culture of health and wellness
for Head Start children, families, and staff*

NATIONAL CENTER ON HEALTH

Our Goal

To help Head Start and Early Head Start programs implement best practices and effective approaches within medical and dental care access, health awareness, healthy active living, emergency preparedness, and environmental safety to support healthy outcomes and school readiness for young children and their families.

CONTACT US!

The National Center on Health welcomes your feedback on this newsletter issue as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to

nchinfo@aap.org or call (888) 227-5125.

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<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center>

School readiness begins with health!

