



CHAPTER 1

Getting to Know Who Is Part of Your Health Services Team and Their Roles

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Your Health Services Team

This section provides you with an overview of your health services team and their roles.

As a health manager, you do not work alone. You work together with many people to strengthen all areas in Head Start. Understanding the connections between health services and the other service areas will help you develop health leaders in your program.

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A good place to start to get to know your health services team is by looking at your program's organizational chart. You will find many of the positions described below. Think about how you can work with these people and share the message that everyone plays an important role in making sure Head Start children and families are healthy.

Program Director, Deputy Director, and/or Executive Director

Many health managers report directly to one of these directors. Your director can help you find professional development opportunities and other resources to learn about Head Start and your grantee. Get to know your director and his or her vision for the program. Find out how you can work together to make health a priority for everyone in your program. One way to do this is to share data about the health needs of children, families, and staff. It is also important to share the successes and challenges that you have delivering health services. Your director can help you integrate health throughout all program activities.

Other Content Managers

Other content managers have expertise in content areas such as education or family engagement. They are part of your program's management team. Your work will often overlap with the work of other content managers and their staff. By collaborating with the rest of your management team, you can help connect health services to the other program services.

When working with other content managers, look for ways to support healthy behaviors in all areas of your program.

Look for ways to support healthy behaviors and evidence-based health practices in all areas of the program.

As part of the management team, you work to do the following:

- Create program and school readiness goals
- Implement effective management systems that support services
- Develop a program plan that incorporates health services
- Collect and use data to inform all program decisions
- Train staff to be responsive to the needs of individual children and families



- Engage families in supporting their children's healthy development

A team approach shows all staff and families that Head Start values working together to create positive child and family outcomes.

Your Work with the Disabilities Manager

As mentioned at the start of this guide, you are not alone in your work as health manager. One great example of this is how disabilities managers and health managers can work together.

Note that in some cases, health managers also hold the position of disabilities manager [45 CFR 1308.18].

Below are a few examples of ways in which health managers and disabilities managers may work together:

- Working with special education partners to develop children's individualized education programs (IEPs) or individual family service plans (IFSPs).
- Coordinating with the disabilities manager on how to implement any health accommodations for children in your program.
- Individualizing the program's services to meet the needs of children with disabilities that require health services [45 CFR 1304.20(f)].
- Working to define individualized plans to ensure that children with disabilities receive necessary accommodations as specified in their IEP or IFSP. This includes recommendations from health care providers or family members.
- Planning accommodations for a child with disabilities who uses special equipment such as a wheelchair, crutches, feeding tube, etc.
- Coordinating medication administration for children with disabilities who need regular medication for their condition or disability.
- When reviewing your tasks in the Health Topics: Delving Deeper section of this guide, make note of when you need to coordinate with the disabilities manager.



Health Staff

Some programs hire health staff to perform required health activities. In these programs, the health manager usually serves as their supervisor. Your program may hire licensed or certified clinical staff (e.g., nurses, registered dietitians, social workers, or mental health counselors) to provide specific health services, or aides and paraprofessionals who can perform more basic tasks (e.g., safety checks, recordkeeping and reporting, or administrative duties). As health manager, you must know the background, skill, knowledge, and experience of health staff to guide their work. Any tasks that require specific expertise (e.g., health procedures, nutrition, mental health) must be executed by a licensed or certified professional [45 CFR 1304.52(d)(2-4)].

Health Consultants

Depending on the needs and resources within your program, you may work with consultants to complete specific activities. For example, you may hire a health consultant to help you review and revise your safety policies

and procedures if your data demonstrate an increase in injuries and incidents. Or you may contract with health consultants to support your program in ongoing health services (e.g.,

Health Consultant Contracts

Contracts for health consultants should clearly define your expectations and include the following details:

- Consultant's scope of work, including:
 - Products to be developed (e.g., parent handouts, written policies and procedures)
 - Services or deliverables (e.g., training, playground consultant) to be completed
- Timelines for completion of each task
- Number of hours and rate of pay
- Program staff who will monitor and support the consultant's work
- Evaluation strategies to determine the consultant's effectiveness

Resources for Working with Consultants

- Office of Head Start National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (PMFO). *Resource on Strategic Use of Consultants: A Guide for Head Start and Early Head Start Leaders*
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/center/consultants>
- The Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development
<http://www.ecmhc.org/>

nutrition, oral health, or mental health) if you do not have licensed or certified professionals on staff. You may contract with an organization that employs certified or licensed health professionals, or you may hire individual contractors with specific expertise. You are responsible for managing any consultant's work and ensuring that a current (updated yearly) contract is in place.

You will manage consultants who work with your program on an ongoing basis differently from how you will manage consultants who work on specific tasks. Some consultants may serve your program on an ongoing basis as a licensed or certified mental health professional; registered nurse, dietitian, or nutritionist; or a medical or oral health professional. Contracts with these consultants may need to be adapted to accommodate changing needs within your program. For example, if your ongoing monitoring process reveals increased concerns about challenging behaviors in a particular center, you may want to ask your mental health consultant to spend more time at this center to address these concerns. In the Health Topics: Delving Deeper section of this guide, you will see how specific tasks relate to supervising these consultants.

Other Program Staff

Because health is everyone's business in Head Start, all program staff—including bus drivers, cooks, teachers, family service workers, and home visitors—have opportunities to address health issues in their work with children and families. Part of your job is to encourage staff to model healthy behaviors for families and build their confidence in how to discuss a range of health topics with families. Staff members often must act as 'brokers,' that is, the person who links families and children to health resources or to health care delivery.¹ You and the management team can help staff understand how their work connects to the health and safety of everyone in the program. You can also help them manage any challenges they may face.

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Another way you promote health is when you address staff health and wellness issues such as initial and periodic examinations, screenings, and mental health information. For more information, see the Staff Health section in the Health Topics: Delving Deeper section of this guide.

Volunteers

Programs may receive support from a wide range of volunteers, including parents, retired health professionals and educators, and others. Former health and education professionals can offer guidance on menu design, culturally and linguistically responsive health education, health fair activities, field trips, and more. They also may be able to connect you with community organizations that can help you acquire resources for your program. Volunteers may be able to help you organize food or clothing drives to support families in your program. These individuals may have a range of skills and knowledge so you will want to choose activities for them that match their abilities.



Governing Body and Policy Council

The governance system in Head Start is unique among early childhood programs. Each Head Start program has two governance bodies: (1) a governing body that has legal authority for the



Head Start program, and (2) a Policy Council that works with the governing body to make financial, human resource, and policy decisions for the program. Parents or family members of enrolled children (and pregnant women in Early Head Start programs) are elected to the Policy Council to represent their classroom, center, or other program options. Together these two bodies review and approve a program's annual grant application, budget, program plan, policies and procedures, and annual self-assessment. Your program director will talk with you about what kinds of information and reports you will need to share with these bodies and how you can engage them in your health initiatives.

Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)

HSACs consist of parents, staff, managers, local providers, and community partners who are interested in the health and wellness of Head Start children and families. HSACs meet regularly, and may meet in a variety of settings, both at local programs and at community locations to accommodate providers' schedules.

Invite your HSAC to attend some of your key health events.

Depending on the size of your service area, some programs may schedule HSAC meetings in different or multiple locations. Some programs have also used video conferencing to make it easier for providers to participate. HSACs are a resource for Head Start programs. They can help identify emerging local health issues and health trends affecting low-income families. HSAC members can also identify local resources that programs need and can participate in ongoing monitoring and self-assessment activities to support programs. HSAC members may give you advice, help you problem-solve issues, share or guide your analysis of data, offer solutions and resources, and collaborate on program activities. Share successes with your HSAC and invite them to attend some of your key health events.

You will find more specific information about your HSAC in the section Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC): Building a Community Health Approach to Delivering Services (see page 34).

Other Community Partners

As you review your Community Assessment you may find there are organizations in your community that could provide needed services to your program. They may not have representatives that participate in your HSAC, serve on the policy council, or volunteer in your program. You may or may not have a formal, written agreement regarding shared work. Understanding who these partners are and creating opportunities for new collaborations can help you meet some of the requirements in the HSPPS. For example, a local organization supporting homeless women and children may offer depression screening to the women it serves. These women and children also may be enrolled in your program. Developing a formal, written collaborative agreement with such an organization could help you support the identification and treatment of maternal depression among mothers in your program.

Every community is different and has its own unique resources. Get to know your local community and explore opportunities to recruit volunteers, HSAC members, and partners who can help you address barriers to health services that affect many low-income families.

Helpful Hints

- The Staff Responsibilities (see page 217) document in the appendices provides information on staff responsibilities. This checklist can be used to help you determine how required health services are being fulfilled in your program.
- By reviewing your program's community assessment, you may find additional community partners that could provide services for your program.

Connecting Health Services...

Find out how your program connects health services to each of the other service areas. Listed below are some questions that will help you think about how your work overlaps with the work of other members of your management team. As you read through this guide, you will learn more about how to collaborate with your team to support health services.

Health and Education Services

Does your program:

- Include health in school readiness goals?
- Plan daily routines and other educational experiences for children that encourage healthy behaviors?
- Consider health data when planning and analyzing child assessments?
- Support individualization for children with special health care needs and/or disabilities with individualized education programs (IEPs), individualized family service plans (IFSPs), and section 504 plans (as a part of the Americans with Disabilities Act)?
- Ensure staff conducts environmental safety checks before using a classroom, playground, or socialization space? (For home visitors, this includes home safety checks with families.)

Health and Family Services

Does your program:

- Invite families to share their observations, interpretation, and beliefs about their children's health?

- Invite families to partner with you to become health champions for their child and family?
- Integrate health into family partnership agreements (FPAs)?
- Address health and safety issues during home visits?
- Coordinate mental health support for parents?
- Support health needs of pregnant women?
- Conduct awareness activities about environmental health issues, including lead, pests, household chemicals, and tobacco exposure?

Health and Community Services

Does your program:

- Develop and maintain a system to communicate with providers and share health data on enrolled children and pregnant women?
- Provide consistent messages to families served by many community organizations?
- Coordinate a community-wide approach to health services?

References

1. Head Start Bureau. (1984). *Health Coordination Manual. Head Start Health Services*. Washington, DC: Head Start Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; II-12.