ACTIVATE: Partnering to Transform Child Health in Wisconsin

The Center for Patient Partnerships
975 Bascom Mall
Madison, WI 53706-1399

Site Contact: Lane Hanson, MSW
Child Advocacy Project Coordinator
608.890.0517
lane@patientpartnerships.org

About this Organization:

The ACTIVATE initiative, a collaboration between the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, the Center for Patient Partnerships at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and the UW Health American Family Children’s Hospital, aspires to promote child health and development equity across the state through strategic partnerships between community organizations and academic entities. These partnerships leverage each members’ assets, bring momentum to each individual group's existing work, promote cross-system communication and collaboration, and refine child health advocacy training for current and future healthcare delivery and support professionals. This project is funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program.

The ACTIVATE team is conducting two projects aimed at addressing these gaps in a way that most strategically leverages collective community strengths:

1. Clinical Navigation Project (CNP) begins at the clinical point of service with student Resource Navigators screening families about root factors affecting their health such as access to food, child care, housing, or income supports. Navigators then follow up with patients to elaborate on findings from the screening and develop a plan for addressing un-met needs which undermine both short- and long-term needs. Navigators use a capacity-building approach, partnering with patients to prioritize action to address systemic barriers to health through connections to community resources. For example, navigators might connect patients with transportation to vital appointments; assist them to find suitable housing or assure adequate access to healthy food. Navigators stationed in identified clinics are primarily advanced undergraduate pre-health students at UW-Madison. Goals include increased provider understanding of patients’ broader health needs; improved communication with patients about treatment recommendations requiring action at home and more comprehensive, feasible plans for improved health and capturing patients’ own perspective on systemic issues that

2. Kids' Health Policy Project that provides high-quality child health information to stakeholders making decisions regarding policies and legislation that impact the health of Wisconsin's children.

Detailed Description of Project Opportunities:

(1) Clinical Navigation Project (CNP) begins at the clinical point of service with student Resource Navigators screening families about root factors affecting their health such as access to food, child care, housing, or income supports. Navigators then follow up with patients to elaborate on findings from the screening and develop a plan for addressing un-met needs which undermine both short- and long-term needs. Navigators use a capacity-building approach, partnering with patients to prioritize action to address systemic barriers to health through connections to community resources. For example, navigators might connect patients with transportation to vital appointments; assist them to find suitable housing or assure adequate access to healthy food. Navigators stationed in identified clinics are primarily advanced undergraduate pre-health students at UW-Madison. Goals include increased provider understanding of patients’ broader health needs; improved communication with patients about treatment recommendations requiring action at home and more comprehensive, feasible plans for improved health and capturing patients’ own perspective on systemic issues that
impact their health and how those are being addressed by the CNP. This project is modeled after Health Leads (https://healthleadsusa.org/). The graduate student in this position will be actively engaged in program implementation and refinement, with primary responsibility for Resource Navigator oversight, coordination and ongoing training. All activities will involve extensive engagement directly with students, clinical providers and administration, and ACTIVATE initiative members.

Ideal student candidates for a project experience with this organization should have:

- Strong understanding of Public Health principles
- Understanding of, and interest in, health clinic practices, particularly in innovations to shift the focus of treatment toward health promotion and the broader socioeconomic context of patients and their families
- Students would benefit from any/all of the following: critical thinking, process improvement, management, coordination, training/education, and/or quantitative and qualitative analysis.

(2) The Kids' Health Policy Project (KHPP) serves as a source of accurate, reliable, non-partisan child health information for public and private policymakers who develop child health policy and legislation in our state (e.g., Wisconsin State Legislators, County Boards of Health, City Councils). In addition to the ACTIVATE steering committee, the team consists of health care providers, providers-in-training, and graduate students of health law, public health, and public affairs. Avenues through which KHPP delivers child health information are outlined below.

Resource for Information on Child Health (RICH): Policymakers are invited to contact RICH for accurate, reliable, non-partisan information on child health topics to inform policy decisions, and to connect to appropriate child health topic experts. The learners involved conduct initial topic research and evidence consolidation, and consult ACTIVATE’s network of experts and health care providers for input and review. The outputs from this contact center include the following: (a) discussions with trainees, students or health experts; (b) trainee or student-written and physician/researcher-edited policy briefs and white papers; and/or (c) topics and content to inform KHPP seminars (as described below).

When appropriate, the Center may offer connection between local/state/national advocacy groups and child health experts who are able to provide perspectives needed to support child health policy advocacy. Physician advocates identified may offer testimony in support of important legislation and budget considerations. Residents and other learners involved will research the evidence base to assist the physician advocates to prepare associated testimony and policy briefs.

Seminars: The KHPP and partners develop legislative briefings and other policymaker-directed educational seminars, convening experts to share research-based child health information, and to introduce related policies and programs proving effective in Wisconsin and nationally. Learners closely engage in seminar planning and development: topic research, seminar design, speaker recruitment, material development and seminar coordination.

KHPP currently partners with UW Population Health Institute's Evidence-Based Health Policy Project (EBHPP) as one avenue for delivering Wisconsin State legislative briefings. This EBHPP has successfully delivered high-quality evidence-based information to legislators and other key policymakers on timely, relevant, and recurring health topics since 2002. The ACTIVATE-EBHPP partnership expands the child health topics covered by the EBHPP, with an initial goal of delivering approximately 2-3 child health-specific briefings per year.
Ideal student candidates for a project experience with this organization should have:

- Strong understanding of Public Health principles
- Strong interest and excitement about learning how health care challenges can be addressed at the policy level
- Students would benefit from any/all of the following: research skills, oral and written communication/presentation skills, ability to transform academic language for a broader audience, project management, program coordination skills.

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