Advocacy Education Initiatives
Child Health Advocacy Institute

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

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Prepared by the Advocacy Education Department in the Child Health Advocacy Institute
Children’s National Hospital’s **CARE** mission is to excel in **Care, Advocacy, Research and Education**. The Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI) at Children’s National leads the institution’s advocacy efforts and advances policy and systems change to achieve health equity for all children. We also strive to teach students, residents, fellows, faculty and other staff the most effective methods to become child health advocates. We accomplish this through education and exposure to interdisciplinary advocacy opportunities at the individual, community and legislative levels. CHAI is committed to impacting the lives of children beyond the hospital and leads several initiatives to advance advocacy and public policy.

Our vision is to become a national model for socially accountable, interprofessional advocacy education, resulting in a skilled workforce driven to advocate for child health equity and systemic change.
Advocacy education in CHAI supports Children’s National’s priorities for community health improvement and clinical issues with complex etiologies and solutions. These efforts are occurring in a milieu of change as the U.S. health care system moves toward value-based care, and medical education is increasingly stretched to prepare trainees to think beyond individual patients and diseases and to work in interdisciplinary teams.

Children’s National attracts medical students, residents, fellows, faculty, and other clinical and non-clinical staff who are actively seeking advocacy opportunities. Our location in Washington, D.C. provides a dual reality: significant inequities based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, along with rich opportunities for community engagement and legislative advocacy. CHAI has significantly expanded its advocacy and community health education across the spectrum of learners, including close partnerships with community organizations to provide training on social determinants of health and health equity.

Each educational initiative is anchored in CHAI’s mission of promoting health equity, defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as “when every person has the opportunity to attain his or her full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances.”
Student Day Lecture
Third-year medical students at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences complete their pediatrics rotation at Children’s National. With each cohort of students every 8 weeks, a CHAI faculty member gives an interactive lecture on advocacy, culminating with practicing advocacy skills in a small group case simulation.

Child Health Advocacy Elective
Fourth-year medical students have an opportunity to undertake a health policy project that will simulate the way a physician would advocate in the public policy arena. Working with a CHAI faculty member, the students identify a health issue, propose a solution for the issue, determine how to enact the solution and take steps to advance the solution in the public policy arena. The students use population, epidemiological and other data to describe the issue and evidence-based information to craft the solution. In addition, the students attend health-related legislative hearings and meetings with government officials and relevant organizations.

“I really enjoyed the first activity where we worked as a team to package items for families. It really required teamwork, allowed us to work with others outside of medicine, learn about what inspired them to get involved and gain a real sense of community engagement.”
– Children’s National Resident

“I loved being able to work in the garden, cooking and understanding how to make healthy affordable meals was so fun, and discussing available resources was really helpful.”
– Children’s National Resident
Policy, Equity, and Advocacy for Kids (PEAK) Pathway
The Policy, Equity, Advocacy for Kids (PEAK) Pathway is offered to rising second and third year pediatric residents who are interested in receiving additional training in advocacy. The PEAK Pathway consists of a variety of optional activities aimed at building pediatric residents’ skills and understanding around public policy and advocacy. The PEAK Pathway offers three main benefits to pediatric residents: an individualized curriculum, mentorship, and community partnership building.

Moving Conversations Curriculum
Moving Conversations is an innovative curriculum developed in partnership between the Children’s National pediatric residency program and CHAI. The goal of the curriculum is to provide first-year pediatric residents with a deeper understanding of how the social determinants of health contribute to health disparities through a bus trip to under-resourced areas of Washington, D.C. This active learning experience allows participants to get out and see the local factors that directly affect the health of the population served by Children’s National. The knowledge gained by the residents in this experience is then applied to their clinical practice. This curriculum has been adapted for hospital staff and researchers.

Intern Advocacy Day
Intern Advocacy Day is a year round program created in partnership between the CHAI and the Capital Area Food Bank to promote community-based learning in advocacy and food insecurity. The program is offered to pediatric residents, fellows, faculty and staff who are interested in gaining skills in advocacy related to child poverty and food insecurity. Participants spend a day volunteering at the food bank’s community garden or distribution center, undergo a food insecurity simulation activity that recreates a day in the life of families experiencing food insecurity, and reflect on their professional role in advocacy and connecting families to food resources. Participants demonstrate improved knowledge of advocacy and improved advocacy-related self-efficacy after participating in Intern Advocacy Day.

“Meet the Pediatricians” at Joyful Food Markets
“Meet the Pediatricians” at Joyful Food Markets is a pediatric resident-run, longitudinal community-based partnership. Residents partner with Martha’s Table, a Washington, D.C. based anti-hunger organization, to provide health education at an after-school food market. They design and run interactive demonstrations on a different health topic every month and partner with a broad network of organizations to teach children and their families about healthy eating in addition to mental and physical wellness. This hands-on experience teaches residents about the impact and sustainability of a community-based intervention.

Pediatric Public Health and Advocacy (P-PHAC) Curriculum
The Pediatric Public Health and Advocacy Curriculum (P-PHAC) consists of a series of interactive lectures that aim to improve resident knowledge on prevalent pediatric public health topics. P-PHAC utilizes interactive learning sessions to empower residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for their patients and their families. Through the P-PHAC curriculum, residents learn about the child health effects of several public health topics, identify advocacy opportunities and learn strategies to communicate with lawmakers and community partners regarding child health.
The Community Building Blocks (CBB) rotation is offered to first year pediatric residents who are part of the LAUnCH track. The goal of the CBB rotation is to provide residents with an understanding of how social determinants of health (SDH) affect the local community, improve their knowledge of community resources, and train them to incorporate a focus on SDH into their clinical care and future careers. Each week of the rotation is focused on one of four SDH: poverty; trauma and adversity; schools and education; and the neighborhood and built environment. The curriculum consists of community-based experiences, required readings, meetings with interdisciplinary leaders in the field, and reflections with rotation leaders.

The Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI) rotation is offered to second year pediatric residents who are part of the LAUnCH track and focuses on legislative advocacy. The goal of the rotation is to orient residents to CHAI’s efforts and steps to engaging in advocacy, including identification of an issue, review of relevant data and policy, organization of partnerships, development and communication of proposed solutions and implementation. The rotation culminates in a meeting with a legislator or their staff member to present a policy brief prepared by the resident and discuss a child health advocacy issue.

In the Population Health and Leadership rotation, third year pediatric residents in the LAUnCH track develop the skills to advance the medical home model in order to improve population health outcomes for children. Through readings, coalition meetings and hands-on activities, residents learn how community partnerships and governmental policies advance population health.
Child Health Advocacy Institute Affiliate Faculty

CHAI Affiliate Faculty (CAF) members are Children’s National and/or George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences or School of Nursing faculty members who are contributing substantially to CHAI’s mission. Our 55 CAF Members participate and lead in advocacy education, legislative advocacy, related community benefit programs and other advocacy related initiatives. CAF members are appointed on a continuous basis and then renewed annually based on the individual’s involvement within CHAI’s priority activities. CAF Members participate in monthly learning opportunities called Learning Lunches.

Grab a Plate and Advocate (GAPA) Trainings

Grab a Plate and Advocate (GAPA) Trainings are sessions led by the CHAI to build and strengthen the capacity of Children’s National employees to engage in various advocacy efforts. GAPA Trainings educate trainees (including residents and fellows), faculty, and staff on key advocacy tools and how to use their expertise to advocate for children and families to advance health equity. GAPA Trainings are offered year round and cover various institution-led priority areas.

The Shared Nursing Leadership Advocacy Council

The Shared Nursing Leadership Advocacy Council’s Nursing Special Interest Group, along with the Department of Professional Practice, created a collaborative group to bring focus to global, local and community health efforts for Children’s National Nurses. CHAI staff educate the workgroup in social determinants of health and best practices of legislative advocacy. This workgroup aims to support nurses as they partake in global and community endeavors.

Intern Advocacy Day

Intern Advocacy Day is also offered to fellows, faculty, and staff to promote interdisciplinary learning. Please refer to page 6 for more details.

Moving Conversations Curriculum

The Moving Conversations Curriculum is also offered to fellows, faculty, and staff upon request. Please refer to page 6 for more details.

“I really do think a day at the Capital Area Food Bank could be used as a wellness activity for hospital employees... And it’s just refreshing to break up the day to day routine and reconnect with the community in a tangible way; reminds us of why we serve in the first place.”

– Children’s National Pediatric Hospitalist
Selected Grants, Publications, Abstracts and Presentations from CHAI Advocacy Education Initiatives and Partnerships

Grants:
» 5-Year Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry Career Development Award from HRSA for the creation of the Trainee Education in Advocacy and Community Health (TEACH) Curriculum
» Bloomberg American Health Initiative Award to develop an online educational module for child health providers to address chronic school absenteeism in clinical practice
» American Academy of Pediatrics Rome CATCH Visiting Professor Award
» Macy Faculty Scholars Program, a 2-year project and career development program sponsored by the Harvard-Macy Institute

Journal Publications:

Electronic Publications:
» “Pediatric Adversity and Early Brain Development.” Co-authors of online module of the National League for Nursing.
» “Moving Beyond Bystanding… to Disrupting Racism.” Co-authors and presenters of online CME course on antiracism.
» Equitably Engaging Priority Populations in Pediatric Clinical Research: Co-authors and presenters of online CME course on equity in research.

Oral and Poster Presentations Given at:
» Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting
» American Academy of Pediatrics National Conference and Exhibition
» American Academy of Pediatrics Legislative Conference
» Association of Pediatric Program Directors Annual Meeting
» Eastern Society for Pediatric Research – American Federation for Medical Research Combined Conference
» Grand Rounds Presentations at peer Top Ten Children’s Hospitals
» American Academy of Nursing Policy Conference
» Children’s National Hospital Research, Education, and Innovation Week
» Children’s National Hospital Professorial Rounds
Additional Highlights

- Over $1.25 million in grant funding secured since 2017.
- The Advocacy Education team provides support for education initiatives across all of the CHAI departments, such as providing feedback on learning objectives and teaching modalities.
- In collaboration with the Community Affairs team, we have led 17 trainings for 650 employees on “Language Matters,” concrete steps to adopting appropriate and equitable language to describe people and communities.

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