

Emory University Department of Pediatrics

Urban Health Program News

Executive Director's Report

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Veda Johnson, MD

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men" is a quote by Frederick Douglass that captures the mission and vision of the Department of Pediatrics' Urban Health Program (UHP). Building strong children is a multifaceted undertaking. It involves not only addressing the health and well-being of the child, but it also requires a concerted effort in identifying and addressing the deficiencies and strengths of his/her support system (i.e. family, educational system, extended community, etc.).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Through the combined agendas of the UHP, it is our intent to impact the overall outcomes of children and adolescents in a holistic and comprehensive manner. It is our intent to address the physical and socio-emotional health of our patients in context of the family and society through our **School Based Health Center Program** and the **Family Centered Pediatric Primary Care Program** at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Hughes Spalding. Both programs incorporate behavioral health into primary health care and consider the impact of family dynamics and functioning on child well-being. Understanding that education is a direct predictor of health outcomes, we endorse the philosophy that the basis for learning and academic success begins with promoting early child-

hood literacy. As a result, a key component of our **Academic Success Initiative** is the "Reach Out and Read" (ROR) Program. ROR provides books to children during well-child medical visits beginning at the age of six months up to five years of age. It also provides parental instruction on the importance of reading out loud to their child at various critical stages of development. Finally, by training future pediatricians to address the **social determinants of health**, it is our intent to disseminate this holistic approach to caring for children throughout the community.

We truly believe that we should invest in the lives of children in order to maximize their potential. We also believe that no single entity can do this work alone or in a vacuum. It takes a commitment from every individual and every organization involved in the care of children to work together to accomplish this goal.

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What are the Social

Determinants of Health?

- Health determinants beyond genetic make-up and individual health behaviors or lifestyle.
- Include income, education, access to services, socioeconomic status, race, and social and environmental stressors.
- Are major contributors to health disparities.
- Are critical components of an emerging focus on public health and behavioral health integration in pediatric care.



Laura Brey and Iliana White, Director and Asst. Director of Program and Professional Services for NASBHC with Veda Johnson, MD, Executive Director of the Urban Health Program at the Business Planning workshop for the second group of grantees.

Signing of the SB183 Bill



On April 16, 2012, Gov. Nathan Deal and Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle signed SB183 concerning the school health nurse programs. Veda Johnson, MD and Carolyn Aidman, PhD were among those invited to witness the signing.

School Based Health Center (SBHC) Initiatives

The Urban Health Program (UHP) advocates for the improvement of school-based health services. Our activities have included support of state legislation that increases the number of school nurses throughout Georgia schools (see above), as well as the development of **Comprehensive School Based Health Centers (SBHCs)**. SBHCs are primary care centers that blend medical care with preventive and psychosocial services. The goals of SBHCs are to increase access and improve health and academic outcomes for underserved students. UHP has spearheaded the development and expansion of SBHCs throughout the state of Georgia. UHP provides 12-month planning grants to communities for the purpose of establishing SBHCs. Grantees are charged with forming a community-wide advisory council, conducting needs assessments, developing a business plan, galvanizing their community to support the SBHC, identifying targeted schools, and researching and applying for SBHC funding. In 2013, the UHP received funding from the Georgia Healthcare Foundation to develop three elementary SBHCs. Programs selected for these start-up funds were located in Catoosa, Fulton, and Dougherty counties, all of which had successfully completed the 12-month planning process. All three sites are fully operational and have received overwhelming support from their school boards, school administrators and staff, parents, and broader communities.

Hallways to Health

Hallways to Health is an initiative sponsored by the School-Based Health Alliance and Kaiser Permanente. Georgia, through the UHP, was selected along with 3 other sites (Washington/Oregon, California and Maryland) to implement the project. The goal of this two-year project is to help SBHCs facilitate improvements in health and behavior among students, their families, and school staff. School personnel collaborate to define specific target goals in the areas of obesity prevention and treatment, behavioral health, and school employee wellness. To combat obesity, schools might choose from a variety of strategies, from shaping cafeteria food choices to increasing school-wide fitness activities. To address behavioral health issues, a recommended strategy is to develop a process to screen for behavioral health problems and a plan for increasing access to community treatment resources. Three SBHCs in Georgia were selected to participate in the project. They include Whiteford (Atlanta), Turner (Albany) and Lake Forest (Sandy Springs) Elementary SBHCs.

3 School Based Health Clinics opened in 2013



Turner Elementary School in Albany, GA was the first to open their doors in March.



Inside the Turner Elementary Clinic are the equipment and supplies needed to provide high quality pediatric care.



Lake Forest Elementary in Sandy springs, GA opened the doors to their clinic in May.



Tiger Creek Elementary in Catoosa County opened their clinic doors in May.



A father assists Terri McFadden, MD as she tends to his baby in the Pediatric clinic. She is the co-founder of the ROR Program.



Child in waiting area being read to by the Academic Success Coordinator, Rhonda Hudson.



Rhonda in a classroom at Primrose School at Dunwoody where 1041 books were donated to the ROR Program

ROR Volunteer of the Quarter



Teresa Vazquez is a bilingual volunteer who reads regularly to children in the waiting room as well as supporting many special events in the clinic and community. Her beautiful smile and enthusiasm inspire parents to encourage early literacy.

Building Baby Brainpower!

The Emory Urban Health Program is implementing its model of family-entered primary care at Children’s Healthcare at Hughes Spalding. Our goal is to nurture both healthy bodies and minds in our young patients. Many parents don’t realize how much impact they can have on their children’s brain development. Children are born with some basic “wiring” which connects brain regions, but during the first few years of life, their interactions with people and their environment are what build further connections between neurons (synapses). The more connections a child’s brain forms, the more ways he has to process information. Did you know that during the first 2 years of life, the cortex creates 2 million synapses every second? At birth, a baby’s brain is 25% of the size of an adult brain; by age 5, it is 90% of the size of an adult brain. So, it is very important that parents stimulate their children’s brain

development by talking to them frequently about the world around them—conversations are one of the best ways to build brainpower and increase children’s school readiness.

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a national organization which prepares young children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Sharing a book together is an excellent way to expose children to new vocabulary, encourage critical thinking skills, and get them excited about the prospect of learning to read. The 3 components of ROR are anticipatory guidance from physicians about the importance of reading to young children, a give-away book at each well-child check-up, and volunteers in the waiting room modeling developmentally appropriate reading techniques. The ROR program at Hughes Spalding was the first in Georgia, co-founded

by UHP staff members Terri McFadden, MD and Ann Hazzard, PhD. Since 2009, ROR has been under the UHP umbrella, with grant funding allowing us to expand our services by hiring an Academic Success Coordinator. Rhonda Hudson manages ROR and other initiatives to enhance our patients’ school achievement. We give away over 8000 books to our patients each year! Through partnerships with Better Brains for Babies and local public libraries, we also provide free DVDs about how to “build your baby’s brain” and registration forms for library cards.

So curl up soon with a youngster and join *Curious George* for an adventure or perhaps practice rhymes with *Sam I Am*. Not only will you have a positive bonding experience, but you’ll be building brainpower!

Holiday Book Drive - 2012

Our Holiday Book Drive was held at Barnes and Noble at both the Perimeter Mall and The Forum locations.

Rhonda with some of the Atlanta Ballet dancers who performed at the Forum store. (right)

The Book Fairs were a great success. Between both stores we received 5,829 books.



With a generous grant from the Abraham J. & Phyllis Katz Foundation, the Urban Health Program has established the **PACE** program which provides **P**ediatric primary care, **A**ccess to health care, **C**omprehensive family support, and **E**ducation. At Hughes Spalding primary care clinics, all families complete a survey before the visit to help their physician to identify family risks, needs, and strengths. Our Behavioral Health Coordinator, Katilia Harden, screens families with mental health concerns, refers them to community resources, and coordinates their care. An attorney with the Health Law Partnership (HeLP) provides legal consultation to families about issues such as environmental hazards, guardianship, medical benefits, and educational advocacy. At monthly PACE meetings, treatment plans are developed for complex cases. One of our success stories is described below:

Caring for Eden: “It takes a team”

“Doctor, you have to help me! My daughter’s mother has become crazy! She cannot care for herself or the baby.” This was the plea of Mr. Senai, an Ethiopian immigrant who brought his newborn daughter Eden to the Primary Care Clinic at Hughes Spalding. Luckily, Emory’s Urban Health Program (UHP) team has implemented a family-centered model of care at this clinic. To comprehensively care for Eden and her family her physician, Dr. Johnson, was able to utilize the services of an interdisciplinary team which includes a social worker who addresses basic family needs (e.g. housing, food, transportation), a Behavioral Health Coordinator who addresses mental health and parenting issues, and an attorney with the Health Law Partnership (HeLP).

Dr. Johnson and the Behavioral Health Coordinator discussed options for mental health care for Eden’s mother, but it appeared unlikely that she would voluntarily accept care and she subsequently moved out of Georgia. Mr. Senai was eager to formally establish paternity and gain legal custody of Eden. However, he was unemployed, did not have the money to pay for a paternity test and had many fears about the US legal system. Also, communicating with UHP team members was challenging since English was his second language. The Behavioral Health Coordinator assisted Mr. Senai in applying for financial aid from Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), which also assists parents with job training to help them move towards economic self-sufficiency.

The attorney at HeLP filed a petition for Mr. Senai to be granted legal custody of Eden. Because the child’s mother now lived in Seattle, the mother had to be served with the lawsuit in Washington State. The HeLP attorney arranged for Atlanta Legal Aid to pay for the out-of-state service process, in order to initiate the lawsuit.

Dr. Johnson had written a detailed and convincing affidavit supporting Mr. Senai’s petition for custody, and Atlanta Legal Aid Society had arranged for an interpreter to attend the hearing. The day before the hearing, Mr. Senai arrived at the HeLP office in tears. The attorney discussed plans for the hearing, but also asked the Behavioral Health Coordinator to meet with Mr. Senai to address his apparent distress. Mr. Senai discussed his shyness and the challenges of accepting help from people he doesn’t know well, particularly women, given his cultural heritage. On April 3, 2012, Mr. Senai’s petition for legitimization, custody, and child support was granted and made permanent several weeks later. The judge did not require DNA testing to grant legitimization.

Recently, Dr. Johnson saw Eden for her 18-month check-up. She was pleased to see that the smiling and engaging toddler was healthy and developmentally appropriate, a testimony to the nurturing environment her father has provided. This case illustrates the power of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, culturally sensitive approach in helping children and families reach their potential.

In 2013, a CDC study found that 13% to 20% of children in a given year have a mental health problem and most do not receive treatment.



Doctors and Dads (D.A.D.): Celebrating Father’s Day

For two years, the UHP has offered a half-day workshop in June to empower fathers to work closely with their child’s physician to foster positive child development. Speakers from Emory and Morehouse universities and Children’s Healthcare addressed men’s health issues, stress management, and parenting skills. Goodwill, the Urban League, and the Center for Working Families offered employment tips. Finally, presenters from the Georgia Fatherhood Alliance and Let Us Make Men discussed how to be an involved father and communicate effectively with one’s co-parent.



Emory residents' legislative advocacy contributed to the passage of HB 28, the Return to Play Act of 293, which provided for appropriate medical evaluation after a child sustains a possible concussion during sports participation.



Emory residents participated in community advocacy efforts including a book fair to raise funds for Reach Out and Read and a silent auction to support global health initiatives.

Public Health Curriculum for Pediatric Residents

An overarching goal of the Urban Health Program is to establish a culture that encourages providers and staff to embrace a holistic view of children within their family and cultural contexts and address the full range of issues which impact children's wellbeing. The Primary Care Clinic at Children's Healthcare at Hughes Spalding trains 25 new pediatricians from Emory and Morehouse every year, many of whom remain in Georgia to practice. We are training the next generation of physicians to understand the importance of the social determinants of health, health care delivery from a public health perspective, and community engagement.

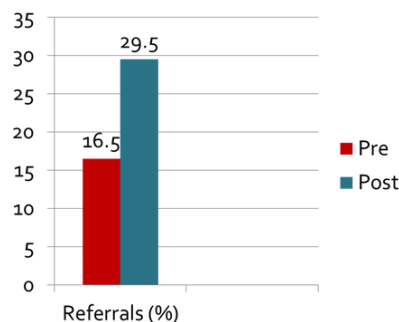
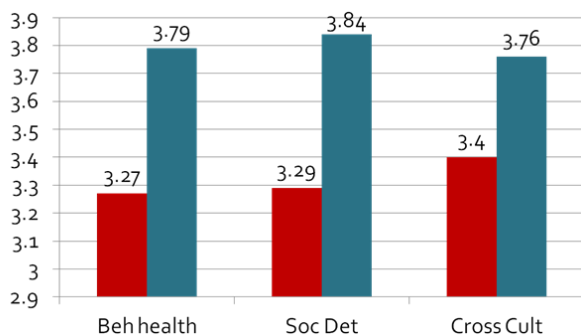
As an integral part of that training, the Pediatric Public Health Curriculum as been created to serve as a guide and resource to educate and to transform the culture of residency training to incorporate these

critical concerns into patient care. The curriculum will be woven into the fabric of our residency program and span over the three years of training. All three core competencies of residency training (knowledge, clinical practice, and advocacy) will be addressed through formal lectures, hospital based and community based primary care clinical experiences, community based projects, and advocacy initiatives.

The curriculum will follow the Pediatric Public Health Residency Curriculum Guide developed by UCLA's primary care residency training grant funded by HRSA. Emory pediatric faculty served on the Advisory Board for curriculum development and the pediatric residency program served as a control site during the pilot phase of the project (<http://www2.aap.org/commpeds/cocp/residencycurriculum.html>)

UHP Presents Residency Public Health Curriculum at National Conference

Faculty from the Urban Health Program were chosen to present an overview of the our program and residency training at the annual meeting of the Society for Behavioral and Developmental Pediatrics, held in Baltimore MD in September 2013. The presentation highlighted our innovative approach to training residents and our pilot studies of training program impact. We assessed 29 residents' confidence in their skills as they entered the residency training program and one year later. As a result of didactic information and modeling by attending physicians in their primary care clinics, residents increased significantly in their confidence about addressing behavioral health, social determinants, and cross-cultural issues. There was also a significant increase in the percentage of cases in which they made referrals to address family risk factors.



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Our Vision:

To reduce health disparities, ensuring that all
Georgia children are happy, healthy and
productive members of society.

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