

Reducing Disparities in Behavioral Health Treatment for Children With ADHD in Primary Care

Statement of Problem

Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders in children. It can have an impact on many aspects of a child's life including school success and relationships with peers and family. We can treat ADHD effectively using behavior therapy; however, families of children with ADHD often have difficulty accessing these services. Challenges with access are even more pronounced for low-income, racial/ethnic minority families of children with ADHD, who may face increased barriers related to logistics, finances, and stigma around behavioral health conditions and treatment.

Description

This project seeks to determine whether integrating enhanced behavior therapy into primary care practice can improve access to treatment and patient-centered outcomes for low-income, racial/ethnic minority families of children with ADHD. We will conduct the study within the primary care network of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) where research suggests that 7.5% of patients ages 5 to 11 have a diagnosis of ADHD.

Our team will compare enhanced behavior therapy integrated into primary care to usual course of treatment for ADHD, which is informed by American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines. Patients in usual care can also access Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids services, if the families elect to do so. Providers from CHOP's [Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids program](#), which integrates behavioral health providers within primary care teams, will deliver the enhanced behavior therapy that will include components to address the unique needs of low-income families of racial/ethnic minority status.

There are several differences between usual Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids treatment of ADHD and the enhanced intervention. First, families in the enhanced intervention have access to a Community Health Partner, who helps them remember to practice strategies they learn in the program plus supports their regular attendance at sessions. Second, clinicians who deliver the enhanced intervention receive supervision with performance feedback. Third, sessions in the enhanced intervention are longer, and families likely will attend more sessions.

The study is designed to improve family use of services for ADHD, reduce children's symptoms of ADHD, and improve children's academic achievement, behavioral compliance, interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction. Parents of children with ADHD and the clinicians who serve them identified these outcomes as critical targets for intervention.

Next Steps

We can treat ADHD effectively, but access to high-quality behavior therapy is essential for successful patient outcomes. This study seeks to shed light on an approach to enhanced behavior therapy that could improve access to services for low-income families and produce outcomes that are important to patients and their caregivers. In addition, the study will identify which families respond best to this intervention to better understand the optimal approach to treat children with ADHD, taking into account feedback from parents and other stakeholders. In the future, this project may also help us understand whether this particular model of delivering behavioral health services could increase access and improve outcomes for other behavioral health conditions.

PCORI is an independent, non-profit organization authorized by Congress in 2010 to fund comparative effectiveness research that will provide patients, their caregivers, and clinicians with the evidence needed to make better-informed health and healthcare decisions. PCORI is committed to seeking input from a broad range of stakeholders to guide its work.

For study recruitment information, [click here](#).

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Suggested Citation

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Project Leads

Jennifer Mautone PhD, ABPP

Faculty Member

Jennifer Mautone (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and associate director of the Pediatric Research Consortium (PeRC) at CHOP. Dr. Mautone also supports primary care-based research for the Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences.

Dr. Mautone is a school psychologist with particular expertise in psychosocial interventions for treating ADHD and disruptive behavior disorders. She focuses on family-school-health system collaboration and integration of behavioral health services into pediatric primary care practices and schools. She also has a special interest in increasing access to high-quality, culturally responsive care for underserved children and families.

Dr. Mautone has served as co-principal investigator for a clinical trial funded by the Institute of Education Sciences to evaluate the effectiveness of an organizational skills treatment program in schools. She is also

dual principal investigator for a comparative effectiveness trial funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to further evaluate the Partnering to Achieve School Success program, an enhanced behavioral intervention for children with ADHD offered in primary care practices serving publicly insured children in Philadelphia. Additionally, Dr. Mautone serves as the program director for a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funded Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program grant designed to provide interprofessional training in integrated primary care to build the work force of behavioral health clinicians prepared to address the behavioral health needs of children in high need/high demand areas. She is also part of the team working on implementation and evaluation of HealthySteps in primary care at CHOP.

She joined CHOP in 2007 and the faculty at the Perelman School of Medicine in 2014 and has been involved in research, teaching and clinical practice throughout her time at CHOP. Dr. Mautone received her PhD in pediatric school psychology from Lehigh University and completed a post-doctoral fellowship in clinical child psychology at the CHOP Center for Management of ADHD.



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Team

James Guevara MD, MPH

Faculty Member

Dr. Guevara was elected to the executive committee of the Council on Early Childhood for the American Academy of Pediatrics for a three-year term beginning in 2019. He has interests in the organization, financing, and delivery of health care services to children with developmental and behavioral disabilities. He has previously published on the medical expenditures and health disparities among children with chronic health conditions. Dr. Guevara is the principal investigator on three current awards. In the first (R01MD011598), he is studying the effectiveness of patient navigation on completion of early intervention referrals and child development among children with developmental delays. In the second (R61MH118405), he is testing the effects of a novel social media-based parenting program for women with postpartum depressive symptoms. In the third award funded by the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, he is piloting three behavioral economic approaches to parent-child shared reading behaviors. Through these diverse research initiatives, Dr. Guevara has focused on improving the delivery of health care in primary care settings, reducing health disparities, and translating research findings into practice and policy.

Dr. Guevara received his MD from Northwestern University and also holds an MPH from the University of Washington.



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Alex Holdaway PhD

Faculty Scholar

Alex Holdaway (he/him) is a faculty scholar at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and a research psychologist associated with the Center for Management of ADHD at CHOP. Dr. Holdaway also supports primary care-based research for the Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at CHOP.

Dr. Holdaway is a clinical psychologist with particular expertise in psychosocial interventions for treating ADHD and disruptive behavior disorders. He focuses on developing and evaluating novel supports to increase access to, and engagement in, evidence-based psychosocial treatments for ADHD and integration of behavioral health services into pediatric primary care practices and schools. He also has a special interest in increasing access to high-quality, culturally responsive care for underserved children and families.

Dr. Holdaway has served as research director for a comparative effectiveness trial funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to further evaluate the Partnering to Achieve School Success program, an enhanced behavioral intervention for children with ADHD, offered in primary care practices serving publicly insured children in Philadelphia. Additionally, he is the principal investigator of a project funded by a CHOP Foerderer Award that partners with families of children who have been referred for outpatient behavioral health treatment at CHOP and experience treatment engagement challenges to develop an tool to measure preferences for engagement supports to address barriers to care.

Dr. Holdaway joined CHOP in 2018 and has been involved in research, teaching and clinical practice throughout his time at CHOP. Dr. Holdaway received his PhD in clinical psychology from Ohio University and completed post-doctoral fellowships in clinical child psychology at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and at the CHOP Center for Management of ADHD.



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Related Tools & Publications

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[Research to Practice: Implementation of Family School Success for Parents of Children With ADHD Article](#)

Aug 2019

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[Behavioral Health Screening: Validation of a Strength-based Approach Article](#)

Jun 2020

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[Reducing Disparities in Behavioral Health Treatment in Pediatric Primary Care: A Randomized Controlled Trial Comparing Partnering to Achieve School Success \(PASS\) to Usual ADHD Care for Children Ages 5 to 11 – Study Protocol Article](#)

Jun 2024

Related Projects

Interprofessional Behavioral Health Training for Integrated Primary Care Practice
Behavioral Health