

Evaluating Implementation of the Families in Recovery Program

Statement of Problem

Recovery from substance use disorders can be especially challenging for parents of young children. Parental substance and opioid use disorders impact more than [8 million children](#) in the United States and [disproportionately affect](#) adults of childbearing age, contributing to increasing rates of [family instability](#) and [maternal mortality](#). Parents with substance use disorders face unique challenges, often interfacing with multiple systems, including drug and alcohol treatment, child welfare, and counseling, and balancing the recovery process with their parental duties.

In response to this need, [Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance](#), a nonprofit child abuse prevention organization, developed an innovative program aimed at engaging and supporting parents of young children impacted by substance use disorder. This program, [Families in Recovery](#), is comprised of seven strengths-based group sessions that explore the experiences of parents in recovery. Since 2018, Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance has piloted Families in Recovery at a variety of sites including maternal and child home visiting programs, drug and alcohol treatment centers and family support hubs, among others. Though the program has received overwhelmingly positive reviews from facilitators and participants since its inception, we don't yet have an evidence base for how best to implement it in diverse contexts and settings.

Description

Over the course of the next two years, our team will partner with Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance to evaluate the implementation of Families in Recovery. The purpose of this study is to understand how the program is being implemented at each site and assess whether the program is being delivered as intended. Through this evaluation, we hope to identify best practices in implementation and describe facilitator, administrator and family perspectives on key components of the program.

We will use mixed methods to evaluate Families in Recovery, including engaging key stakeholders such as program facilitators, administrators, and participants through in-depth qualitative interviews, longitudinal surveys, a focus group and site observations. We'll then combine information learned from these stakeholder engagement efforts with process metrics collected throughout the evaluation and descriptive statistics about each implementing site. These metrics will cover program enrollment and participation, staffing and turnover, and site-level implementation characteristics. This will help us assess local and contextual factors that may impact fidelity to the program model.

To facilitate effective, respectful, and responsive research, we will include a community advisory board of four community experts to consult on evaluation materials (e.g., interview guides, survey instruments) and support interpretation and external validation of findings.

Findings and recommendations from this implementation evaluation will inform quality improvement efforts and future outcome evaluation efforts for Families in Recovery.

To view the *Families in Recovery Implementation Evaluation Final Report*, click [here](#).

Next Steps

We will begin this evaluation with the first of three surveys to gauge site context, concepts of fidelity to the program model and experiences with implementation. Administrators and facilitators at each site currently implementing Families in Recovery will complete these surveys. We will also engage a small number of experienced Families in Recovery facilitators in a focus group to understand key facilitators and barriers to implementing the program.

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PolicyLab Leads

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Director

Dr. Matone's research interests include maternal and young child health, as well as family well-being. She focuses on building community and public agency research partnerships to support improvements in policies and programs that serve mothers and infants in under-resourced communities. She is experienced in large-scale program evaluation, mixed-methods research designs, and use of administrative data for observational study designs in areas of child and caregiver health.

Dr. Matone is a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, a faculty affiliate at The Field Center, and a board member of the Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Youth Children. Dr. Matone received her Doctor of Public Health, specializing in child and adolescent health and development, from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is an alumnus of the Doris Duke Fellowship for the Promotion of Child Well-being program and a former Stoneleigh Foundation fellow.



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Team

Kali Hackett **MSW, MPH**

Research Study Manager

Kali Hackett is a research study manager at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In this role, she leads various maternal and child health projects, with a particular focus on the implementation and evaluation of intergenerational programs and interventions. Ms. Hackett is a public health social worker with significant experience supporting young children, parents, and families both in direct service capacities and through research and policy. Her approach to this work focuses on ensuring that children, caregivers, and families have the necessary resources, knowledge, quality care and support to thrive. Ms. Hackett received her Master of Public Health and Master of Social Work from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



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Peter Cronholm **MD, MSCE, CAQHPM, FAAFP**

Faculty Scholar

Peter Cronholm is a faculty scholar at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and an associate professor, director of Community Programs and associate program director in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. His research interests have focused on health services regarding: 1) integration of trauma-informed care and primary prevention strategies into systems of primary care; and 2) developing novel mixed methodologies and patient-centered outcomes into research paradigms. He is an affiliate faculty member in the Graduate Program in Public Health Studies, a senior fellow in the Center for Public Health Initiatives, a senior scholar at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, an associate of the Firearm and Injury Center at Penn, an associate of the Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center, and an affiliate of the Evelyn Jacobs Ortner-Unity Program in Family Violence at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice.

Dr. Cronholm is the co-director of the University of Pennsylvania's Mixed Methods Research Lab (a University of Pennsylvania Service Center that supports investigators in the development of conceptual and methodological approaches for community-based and clinical research questions) and has content expertise in program evaluation of health services using mixed methodologies and Community-Based Participatory Research techniques. He is actively involved in community programs addressing health disparities with a focus on preventing and reducing the impact of trauma throughout the lifespan having served as a member of the Board of Directors for the Academy on Violence and Abuse, Institute for Safe Families, the Men's Resource Center, Women Organized Against Rape, and Prevention Point Philadelphia. Dr. Cronholm is an active member of the Philadelphia Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Task Force's research committee as Lutheran Settlement House's Research Advisory Board. He has collaborated closely with PolicyLab in developing programming related to early home visitation, child injury and maltreatment and building qualitative and implementation science methodologies into research strategies.



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Funders of Project

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance

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Related Tools & Publications

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[Supporting Caregivers Impacted by Substance Use Disorders: A Conversation with Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance](#)

[Blog Post](#)

Nov 09, 2022

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[2020 Pennsylvania Family Support Needs Assessment Tools and Memos](#)

Oct 2020

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