

EvolvED: Advancing Eating Disorder Care in Pediatric Primary Care

Statement of Problem

Early intervention is critical to [improving](#) eating disorder outcomes and is tied to lower rates of hospitalization and reduced likelihood of poor long-term health outcomes. But despite ample evidence, early intervention is far from standard. We know from our research that delays in treatment are common, particularly for [boys, LGBTQ+ youth](#) and [youth of color](#). Adolescents need care models that equitably improve early detection of and intervention for eating disorders.

[Primary care providers](#) are the first line of clinical support for teens with eating disorders. For many youth, especially marginalized youth, yearly well visits are their [primary contact](#) with a health care provider. While the [vast majority](#) of primary care providers see adolescents with eating disorders, [over 62%](#) report needing more education in the early identification of eating disorders. There is an imminent need for resources to support providers in growing their knowledge base and confidence in managing youth with or at risk for eating disorders.

Description

This pilot study aims to improve detection and treatment of eating disorders among pediatric primary care providers. Our aims are to:

1. Alongside eating disorder experts and primary care providers, co-create a suite of online educational tools (EvolvED) to improve the identification and treatment of eating disorders in pediatric primary care
2. Pilot and evaluate the effectiveness, acceptability, and usefulness of the suite of tools with primary care providers using a mixed-methods approach

This project is the first of its kind to focus specifically on pediatric primary care populations while taking an iterative and collaborative approach to designing educational materials and resources.

Next Steps

We will aim to create and disseminate a free website hosting the suite of tools. This pilot will serve as the foundation for a broader research agenda to address eating disorders in the community, with a focus on equitable design, delivery and scaling of interventions.

This project page was last updated in March 2025.

Suggested Citation

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, PolicyLab. *EvolvED: Advancing Eating Disorder Care in Pediatric Primary Care* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.policylab.chop.edu> [Accessed: plug in date accessed here].

PolicyLab Leads

Samantha Turner **PhD, RN**

Faculty Scholar

Samantha Turner (she/her) is a faculty scholar at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), a registered nurse, and a postdoctoral fellow in the Eating Disorder Assessment and Treatment Program at CHOP. Her research centers around equitable access to eating disorder prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment, particularly for adolescents in marginalized bodies. She aims to restructure the eating disorder assessment and treatment landscape to include all of those who can benefit and sees nursing as a discipline well-suited to this challenge.

Dr. Turner received a her bachelor's degree in nutrition and dietetics from Simmons University and her nursing degree and PhD in nursing from UMass Chan Medical School. During her training, her research focused on weight stigma in pediatric health care and eating disorder treatment, as well as policy approaches to reduce the prevalence of disordered weight control behaviors among children and adolescents.

Clinically, Dr. Turner has worked as a pediatric nurse in primary care, school settings and outpatient eating disorder programs. She has collaborated with the Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders (STRIPED) at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where she researched predictors of and novel strategies to reduce disordered weight control behaviors.



Samantha Turner
PhD, RN

Email: Turners5@chop.edu

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.



Jennifer Mautone

PhD, ABPP

Email: MAUTONE@chop.edu

Team

Alix Timko

PhD

Faculty Member

Dr. C. Alix Timko is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and a clinician-scientist in the Eating Disorder Assessment and Treatment Program at CHOP. She also serves as the faculty lead for PolicyLab's Adolescent Health and Well-being Portfolio. Dr. Timko is an expert in the area of eating behavior in children and adolescents, the use of acceptance-based behavioral therapy in treating eating disorders and in the presentation of disordered eating in boys.

Dr. Timko is a former National Institutes of Mental Health-funded Scholar in the “Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health” (BIRCWH) program. The goal of this K12 program is to extend her expertise into the area of neuroscience, specifically in behavioral neuroendocrinology and the use of neuroimaging to study sex as a variable in eating disorders. She is focusing on neurocognition, reward circuitry and the roles they play in the development and progression of anorexia nervosa. She is also interested in the role of neuroinflammation in eating disorders. Ultimately, she is striving to understand how malnutrition during this sensitive period impacts brain development, and to identify biomarkers that predict risk or resilience for a protracted course of illness. This research will inform the development of novel, more effective interventions for this population.

Clinically, Dr. Timko is interested in investigating how best to use Cognitive Remediation Therapy (CRT) with adolescents. Her work has focused on whether or not this adjunctive outpatient treatment for anorexia can be initiated in the acute medical inpatient setting, whether or not it is best delivered to adolescents or to their parents, and what aspects of CRT are most impactful for change. Dr. Timko also conducts research on the use of Acceptation and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in the treatment of eating disorders in youth. Her work has used an ACT-informed family treatment and using ACT after standard treatment to help reduce risk of relapse. Through these studies, Dr. Timko will improve both the acute treatment and long-term prognosis of adolescents who suffer with anorexia.

Dr. Timko received her PhD from Drexel University.



Alix Timko

PhD

Email: TIMKOC@CHOP.EDU

Emily Ferrer

William Brake

Funders of Project

National Eating Disorders Association

Project Contact

Samantha Turner

turners5@chop.edu

Related Tools & Publications

-

[EvolvED: A New Way to Bring Eating Disorder Treatment to Primary Care
Blog Post](#)

Feb 20, 2025