

# New CHAPTERs in Diabetes: A Pilot Study of Community Health Worker Assisted Pediatric Transition to Adult Care for Emerging Adults with Type 2 Diabetes

## Statement of Problem

Youth with type 2 diabetes often slip through the cracks in the transition from child to adult care. Gaps in care for these emerging adults can have [serious health consequences](#), including worsening glycemic control and diabetes-related complications.

In the 2 years after transitioning to adult care, 16% of young adults with type 2 diabetes were uninsured, and one third of those with coverage were [disengaged](#) from their outpatient adult diabetic care. For the [disproportionate number](#) of emerging adults with type 2 diabetes from minoritized groups or low-income households, accessing adult care may be further complicated by social determinants of health like financial stress and food insecurity.

Research has shown that community health workers (CHWs) [can act as guides](#) during transitions and even [improve health outcomes](#) among minoritized or low-income adults. But the impact of CHWs on emerging adults with type 2 diabetes during the transition to adult care has not yet been studied.

## Description

Prior work by our study team has demonstrated that emerging adults with diabetes and their families are interested in support during the transition to adult care. This study will pilot an intervention where CHWs work with outpatient emerging adults with type 2 diabetes identified by electronic health records to develop a personalized care plan to address specific transition-related needs. Over the course of the 12-month intervention, CHWs will call and text to check in on the emerging adults' health-related goals and their access to resources and education.

Through a randomized controlled trial, we aim to:

1. Adapt and deliver a CHW-based transition program from young adults with type 2 diabetes
2. Gather feedback about the program from participants, CHWs, social workers and providers to inform a future hybrid-effectiveness implementation trial
3. Begin to explore the intervention's efficacy and effect on glycemic control, diabetes-related quality of life and self-rated physical health

## Next Steps

The ultimate goal of this project is to improve access to care and serve as a model for future CHW transition interventions that aim to address health disparities, prevent disease-related complications and achieve remission for the growing number of emerging adults with type 2 diabetes.

We look forward to implementing evidence from this trial to develop a type 1 hybrid-effectiveness implementation trial to test the effectiveness of the program on successful transition to adult diabetic care and improved glycemic control.

## **Suggested Citation**

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## **PolicyLab Leads**

### **Emma Edmondson MD, MSHP**

#### **Faculty Member**

Emma Edmondson (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), an Academic General Pediatrics fellow at CHOP, and an attending physician in the Division of General Internal Medicine at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Broadly, Dr. Edmondson is interested in the prevention and management of nutrition-related chronic diseases like obesity and type 2 diabetes, across the lifespan. Her current projects focus on evaluating the impact of the Philadelphia Beverage Tax on low-income families with young children and on adolescents to understand how food policies may influence health behaviors tied to obesity and diabetes. As a physician trained in internal medicine and pediatrics, she is also dedicated to improving care for adolescents and young adults, especially in the transition from pediatric to adult care, to prevent poor health outcomes and loss to follow-up later in life. She is a firm believer in food and social justice and hopes her research will inform policies that create more equitable food and health systems.

Dr. Edmondson graduated from Oberlin College with a bachelor's degree in biology. Before attending medical school, she served as an AmeriCorps volunteer at a nonprofit in Cleveland, Ohio dedicated to fighting childhood hunger, food insecurity and obesity. She then earned her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and completed residency in internal medicine and pediatrics at Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and CHOP.



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## Team

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### Faculty Member

Senbagam Virudachalam is a faculty member at PolicyLab, the Division of General Pediatrics and Clinical Futures at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). She is also an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania, a primary care pediatrician at CHOP and serves as the faculty lead for PolicyLab's Family & Community Health Portfolio. Dr. Virudachalam's research focuses on food justice, advancing equity in diet quality and health outcomes for all children. She studies cross-sector approaches to ensure that all children have stable access to healthy food environments at home and in their communities, enabling them to grow into healthy adults. Dr. Virudachalam has extensive experience conducting community-engaged research, especially with regard to the evaluation of Home Plate, a food literacy and cooking skills intervention for low-income parents that she developed in close partnership with Early Head Start. Dr. Virudachalam serves as the scientific director of culinary medicine at the Perelman School of Medicine and as the director of sustainable community health partnerships at the Community Health and Literacy Center in South Philadelphia.

Dr. Virudachalam holds a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, where she graduated with honors in Molecular and Cell Biology and with distinction in general scholarship. She earned her medical degree from the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine and completed her pediatric residency at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland. She then completed an academic general pediatrics fellowship at CHOP and earned a Master of Science in Health Policy Research from the University of Pennsylvania.



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## Funders of Project

American Diabetes Association

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