The Critical Role of Dads: Exploring the Benefits of Father-Friendly Pediatric Care

National Webinar
February 2, 2023, 2:00 - 3:15 pm ET

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Center for Health Care Strategies

Dedicated to strengthening the U.S. health care system to ensure better, more equitable outcomes, particularly for people served by Medicaid.

Together with our partners, our work advances:

- **Effective models for prevention and care delivery** that harness the field’s best thinking and practices to meet critical needs.

- **Efficient solutions for policies and programs** that extend the finite resources available to improve the delivery of vital services and ensure that payment is tied to value.

- **Equitable outcomes for people** that improve the overall wellbeing of populations facing the greatest needs and health disparities.
Agenda

• Welcome and Introductions
• Opportunities for Expanding Inclusion of Fathers
• Strategies for Engaging Fathers in Clinical Practice
• Designing Father-Inclusive Pediatric Care
• Panel Discussion: Exploring Diverse Perspectives of Fathers and Father Figures Who Play an Active Role in Their Child’s Health Care
Questions?

To submit a question online, please click the Q&A icon located at the bottom of the screen.
Today’s Presenters & Panelists

Hannah Gears, MSW
Senior Program Officer, Center for Health Care Strategies

Louis Mendoza
Family Advisor for ACHT and former Manager, Washington State Fathers Network (retired)

Mary Ann Woodruff, MD, FAAP
Pediatrician, Pediatrics Northwest
Medical Co-Director, First Year Families

Rachel Lettieri, MS
Director, Care Coordination, Pediatrics Northwest

Anne Stone, MA, MPA
Director, Washington State Fatherhood Council

Kevin Cox, MA
FELLAS Fatherhood Program Manager, Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey

Morris Carr
Family Advisor for ACHT and Men’s Health Coordinator, Access Community Health Network
The Need for Accelerating Child Health Transformation
Strategies & Levers to Accelerate Child Health Transformation

- Adopt **anti-racist practices and policies** to advance health equity
- Co-create **equitable partnerships** with patients, families, and providers
- Identify **family strengths** and address **health-related social needs**

Implement **payment and accountability levers** to support and sustain transformation
Foundational Steps for Transformation

Putting patients and families at the center of decision-making is foundational for providers looking to transform culture, policies, and practices. This may look like:

- **Engage patients and families meaningfully throughout the transformation process so they can inform improvements and understand how their contributions are used.**
- **Value patients’ and families’ time by compensating them for time spent providing feedback and sharing their expertise.**
- **Support patients’ and families’ ability to engage by providing necessary resources, training, and flexibility.**
- **Disrupt existing power dynamics by enabling patients and families to co-lead transformation work.**
- **Listen to youth voices by developing opportunities to hear from child and adolescent patients directly.**
Opportunities for Expanding Inclusion of Fathers

Louis Mendoza
ACHT Initiative Family Advisor
Dads are most ordinary men turned by love into heroes, adventurers, story tellers, and singers of song.

- Pam Brown
Topics to Be Covered

- The Challenge of Engaging Fathers
- Why the Engagement Effort Needs to be Made
- Personal and Societal Perceptions of Fathers
- Some Ideas on How to Engage Fathers and Make Them Feel Welcome
The Engagement of Fathers

It can be challenging

Why it’s important
Personal Words to Describe Fathers
Words Used by Society to Describe Fathers
# Ideas On How to Have Fathers Feel Welcomed

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<td>Talk to dad</td>
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<td>Photos of fathers</td>
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<td>Chairs are available for adults</td>
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<td>Magazines that are of interest to fathers</td>
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<td>Reception</td>
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<td>Online father-friendly surveys</td>
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<td>Father-friendly principles</td>
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Societal Expectations and Parenting Styles

- Effect of societal expectations
- Parenting differences
- Staff perceptions and acceptance
A Journey to Inclusion: Authentic Family Partnerships

*The Critical Role of Dads: Exploring the Benefits of Father-Friendly Pediatric Care*

Mary Ann Woodruff, MD, FAAP, Medical Co-Director, First Year Families
Rachel Lettieri, MS, Director, Care Coordination
• Pediatrics Northwest is a regional, multi-specialty pediatric group dedicated to improving the health of children and families in our communities
• Caring for 40K children, over 45 years
• 29 pediatricians in 4 offices in the South Puget Sound
Our Goal

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

- R. Buckminster Fuller
Trusting Relationships from the Start

• Importance of welcoming
• Belonging and mattering
• Family engagement and partnerships
• Promoting early relational health: Reach Out and Read and Promoting First Relationships
• Teams of care
• Community Health Workers Central
The Shift in Primary Care

• From laundry lists to reflective practice
• Supporting responsive relationships
• Diminishing stress
• Strengthening core skills
• Parallel process
“If we value children, then we must cherish their parents.”

-Sir John Bowlby
What We Know From Families

• “The more I trust you, the more I'm willing to trust you.”
• “I need to feel safe.”
• “Show me that you care.”
• “I know you are busy. We are busy people, too.”
• “See me. Hear me.”
• “We want empathy, not sympathy.”
Caregiver/maternal depression screening is required at well-child checkups for caregivers/mothers of infants to age 6 months.

AAP Policy Guide 2014/2019
Stark Truths

Postpartum depression is the #1 complication of pregnancy.

Women in the US affected by postpartum depression.

Paternal depression rate.

#1 15-20% 2-25%

(Higher rates in low income, ethnically diverse populations, teenagers, and history of previous perinatal depression.)
Postnatal Mood Disorder Screening at Pediatrics Northwest

**What:** Pediatrics Northwest Quality Improvement Project Pilot started in Feb 2020

**How:** Edinburgh chosen: 1, 2, 4, 6 month well checks

**Why:** Early relationships matter

Postnatal mood disorders are treatable
What should families or caregivers expect once they fill out an Edinburgh (EPDS) screening tool?

- They should be **INFORMED** about the results
- They should **UNDERSTAND** the results
- They can **LEARN** about recommendations
- They can expect to be **HEARD**
Setting the Tone for Successful Screening

• Acceptability of screening 80-90% if prior notification, screening done by paper questionnaire, provider was engaged
• Thank client for participation
• YOU are the first step in developing trust and opening possible interventions
• Normalize “we ask all patients to fill out these forms”
• “Many parents find pregnancy and postpartum to be challenging times”
• State the reason for the screening: “allows us to locate and offer useful supports and services”
A Glimpse ...

- “No one has ever asked me these questions before. I thought I was all alone” (tears that follow)
- “Thank you for caring about me”
- My first day of screening: “May I get up and hug you for caring so much”.
- “My doctor has not asked me these questions before, thank you for asking”
- “I think this is the most important work you are doing”
- “You guys always do the right things.”
Barriers

• Expectations: families and providers
• Understanding early relational health
• Billing conundrums: only 6 screenings covered between birth and 13 months
• Workflows needed
• Pandemic: one parent
• An approach
“The best thing to do for people going through a difficult moment ... to keep company with them.”

- Paul Farmer, MD
Community Health Workers

• CHWs started on July 2022 in one office, 6 additional are being hired now
• Accompaniment
• Focus on:
  • Families Perinatal to 5
  • Mental health referrals
  • Families Perinatal to 5
    • Promoting safe, stable, nurturing relationships
    • Mitigating barriers
    • Connecting to desired services
Authentic Family Engagement
Family Voice: An opportunity for co-creation

- Shift from only feedback to co-creation with families
- Improved communication
“At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done. Then they begin to hope it can be done. Then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago.”

- *The Secret Garden*, Frances Hodgson Burnett
Expanding Patient and Family Engagement to Improve Pediatric Care
Center for Health Care Strategies

Anne Stone MA, MPA
Washington State Fatherhood Council - Director
Why do we need to focus on Fathering why not just Parenting?

We know that:

Child and family well-being improve when fathers are positively engaged in their children’s lives.

Fathers play a unique and important role in children’s development.

Fathers should have support and resources to become the fathers they aspire to be.
Vision | Fathers and father figures in Washington become the parents they aspire to be for their children and families.

Mission | We amplify the voices of fathers and father figures in Washington State to promote fatherhood inclusion, equity, diversity and research activity that strengthens families and maximizes children’s potential.
## Unmarried Fathers’ Involvement, By Parents’ Relationship Status at Birth

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<th>COHABITATING (%)</th>
<th>VISITING (%)</th>
<th>NON-ROMANTIC (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAVE MONEY, BOUGHT THINGS</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>VISITED HOSPITAL</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAME ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOTHER WANTS FATHER INVOLVED</td>
<td>99</td>
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<td>74</td>
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From the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study Completed 2017

Unmarried Parents Relationship Status at Birth

- 50%
- 32%
- 8%
- 10%

http://crcw.princeton.edu/publications/publications.asp
Dads and moms report similar attitudes about parenting.

- Parenting is very important to their identity: 57% (Dads), 58% (Moms)
- Parenting is rewarding all the time: 54% (Dads), 52% (Moms)
- Parenting is enjoyable all the time: 46% (Dads), 41% (Moms)

1. Pew Research Survey of parents with children under the age of 18, 2015
At Six Weeks Old...

- Infants respond differently to each parent’s voice.
  - A quiet and alert infant will focus more quickly on a mother’s voice.
  - An upset or fretting infant will calm more readily to a father’s voice.

By one month of age, a mother will often pick up and hold her infant the same way 9 times out of 10.

On the other hand, a father will pick up and hold his infant a different ways 9 times out of 10.
At Eight Weeks Old...

When a baby sees daddy, the eyes widen, shoulders raise, the heartbeat and breathing increases. The infant becomes excited in the presence of dad.

When a baby sees mommy, the eyes narrow, the shoulders relax, heartbeat and breathing decrease. The infant becomes calm in the presence of mom.
Fathers and Child’s Development

Fathering impacts all areas of children’s development

• Communication and language
• Learning and cognition
• Relationships and social-emotional skills

Fathers impact children

• Directly (father-child relationship, provision/protection)
• Indirectly (coparenting relationship, family system)
• Uniquely
Benefits for Mothers and Infants

- Fathers’ health, behaviors and involvement are associated with:
  - 50% increase in mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester
  - Reduced prematurity
  - Reduced infant mortality
  - Successful initiation, continuation, and duration of breastfeeding
  - Associations with maternal mental health; worse maternal depression in cases where fathers depressed

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS for Dads)

- Survey to examine men’s health, attitudes, and experiences prior to and after becoming a father
- Collects comprehensive information about fathers before and after the birth of their child
- Links between paternal factors and pregnancy outcomes
- Builds on success of PRAMS methodology
Men’s Health and Fatherhood

• Fatherhood may be an important social determinant of men’s health
• Just as fathers may effect children, children may effect fathers
• Whether children have a beneficial, detrimental, or neutral impact on men’s health is not clear
2019 WA Survey of Father's Greatest Needs

5 Greatest Challenges

1. Custody and parenting time agreements
2. No services available for fathers
3. Social stigmas about fatherhood
4. Issues related to child support
5. Financial insecurity

“Allowing fatherhood to be an admirable position in the family”

Survey respondent
“Transforming systems through fathers voices” Washington Fatherhood Council Survey 2019
What are Fathers looking for?

- Accessible information from credible sources
- Father-focused resources
  - Guidance about how to be a supportive partner to an expectant / new mother
- Information about development
  - How to engage with young children to promote healthy development
  - Age expectations and behavior management
- Ways to access services that are non-stigmatizing and focused upon their unique needs
- Normalize the frustrations of parenting

Lee, Walsh, et al., 2013; Lee, Walsh, et al., Under Review; Walsh et al., 2014; Walsh, 2020
Health Systems Opportunities

Support at Birth
• Prenatal father groups
• Dad Doulas
• Engaging fathers – How are you doing? - Care coordination navigation
• Present at the birth or as soon as possible – skin to skin contact

Post partum Support
• Post Partum Mood Disorders Screening
• Conscious Fathering - empowers new fathers to build a partnership with mom in caring for and nurturing their children, from the very first day.
• Lactation – they are a chest feeding pair – Dad’s Milk Bank

Well Child Care
• In Office & Anticipatory guidance – intentional focus on father regardless of living situation
Father Friendly Principles

• Recognize - **promote co-parenting** for better outcomes of children & families

• Involve fathers with **lived experience in the design of programs and policies**

• **Recruit, train, and retain staff** that better reflect the communities they serve and provide effective father specific services

• **Increase fatherhood specific resources**

• Recognize, address **individual and system biases** that marginalize fathers
Panel Discussion
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CHCS ACHT Initiative: www.chcs.org/project/accelerating-child-health-transformation/
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