Family Engagement Initiatives Update
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) – Spring 2017

Family Engagement Background

While the AAP has a long history of engaging patients and families in its activities, more concerted efforts have taken place over the past several years with the inclusion of a family engagement measure on the AAP organization-wide Balanced Scorecard. Efforts around family engagement have been coordinated by 2 primary groups: (1) the Family Partnerships Network, and (2) a staff Family Engagement Workgroup. Below is an overview of each group as well as ideas for what your group can do related to family engagement.

Family Partnerships Network (FPN)

The Family Partnerships Network was officially established in May 2014 (the Y is capitalized to represent youth and young adults), and is designed to be a resource for Academy members regarding the importance of patient and family-centered care and the roles for families in health care and in health care redesign. The mission of the AAP FPN is to represent family and youth perspectives, lead and facilitate youth and family engagement, and support ongoing youth and family involvement at the local, state and national level.

The FPN is governed by an 8-member Executive Committee (including two youth/young adult representatives), which provides leadership to FPN activities. Some current activities include the following:

- Friends of Children-funded “Committees and Family Engagement (CAFÉ) Program”. This project involves the addition of a family liaison to the Committee on Hospital Care (COHC), Committee on Pediatric Emergency Medicine, Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine, and Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health (COPACFH) for 2 years. Family liaisons have attended their first committee meetings and feedback has been positive, to date.
- The FPN, in collaboration with the COPACFH, hosted a Webinar entitled, “Partnering with Diverse Dads: Challenges and Successes” in January 2017. Over 600 individuals registered, with over 300 live attendees. Feedback was extremely positive. The FPN and COPACFH are exploring additional activities related to encouraging father engagement. The FPN is also exploring youth engagement as the topic for its next quarterly Webinar.
- A Phase 2 Friends of Children project was recently approved; it includes the following activities to enhance family engagement at the AAP: the creation of a virtual family advisory panel for HealthyChildren.org; chapter grants to allow for AAP chapters to engage families or family organizations in their work; and family-professional partnerships in legislative advocacy. The FPN recently released a Request for Applications to chapters to apply for grant funding. Proposals are due in mid-April.

Additional information about the FPN can be found at www.aap.org/fpn.

AAP FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

1. The family is the principal caregiver and the center of strength and support for children.

2. The AAP recognizes that perspectives and information provided by families, children, adolescents, and young adults are essential components of collaborative decision-making in the delivery of high-quality, safe, and compassionate care. Patients and their families are integral partners of the health care team.

3. The AAP recognizes the value of diversity among patients, families, and pediatricians. The delivery of care within the context of appropriate physician knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of cultural and population distinctions take into account families’ experiences, beliefs, values actions, customs, and unique health care needs.

4. Recognizing, valuing, and building on the strengths of individual children and families and empowering them to discover and communicate their own strengths, build confidence, and partner in making choices and decisions about their health care is vital to optimal health and development.

5. To promote improved patient, family, and physician experiences and outcomes, the AAP encourages and supports family engagement in its core competencies of education, practice, research, and advocacy.

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This group includes staff representatives from nearly every AAP department who meet monthly to advance efforts related to AAP objectives on family engagement and to share information and resources. One of the FPN co-chairpersons also participates in monthly meetings to ensure coordination of activities. The activities of the workgroup outlined below aid the AAP in achieving the following 3 family engagement objectives:

- Increase family engagement throughout the work of the AAP
- Optimize preparation of family leaders and volunteers for involvement in AAP work
- Equip staff with knowledge, tools, resources and information to support AAP leaders in efforts to increase family engagement in AAP work

**Workgroup Activities**

- Implementation of a strategic planning process focused on additional activities to be accomplished over the next 12-18 months. The work group will prioritize the following:
  - Reviewing and refining the staff Family Engagement Work Group roles and responsibilities; supporting the efforts of work group members
  - Integrating family involvement and perspectives in the development and review of Academy policy
  - Identifying specific areas in the Academy that may benefit from enhanced family engagement and provide support and technical assistance to these areas, as necessary
  - Continuing to provide support and technical assistance related to family engagement to all Academy staff via lunch and learns, managers’ meetings, division/department meetings, and on an individual basis
- Development of subgroups to enhance family engagement within the Academy, especially related to products and information geared toward families and the public
- Planning an educational lunch and learn series and/or presentation at a manager’s meeting on the “how to” aspects of family engagement in Academy work
- Reviewing staff Family Engagement Work Group roster to determine AAP departments/divisions that are not represented on the work group and reaching out to other areas that may be interested in having representation on the work group

**What You Can Do**

- Think about opportunities to expand family engagement in your division and/or department and reach out to the staff Family Engagement Work Group to share your ideas. Work group members are available to support and assist you in expanding your family engagement efforts.
- Reach out to the FPN and/or the staff Family Engagement Workgroup for advice or consultation.

For additional information about the FPN or the staff Family Engagement Workgroup, contact Sunnah Kim at skim@aap.org or Michelle Esquivel at mesquivel@aap.org.