

# The COACH Model: A Care Management Intervention to Engage and Empower Patients

## Statement of Problem

Across the country, data demonstrates that children and adults facing high social and environmental needs have more frequent emergency room visits and hospital admissions, resulting in higher costs. Dr. Jeff Brenner, founder of the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, saw this trend reflected in his own practice: 30% of hospital costs in Camden, N.J., were coming from only 1% of patients. Further analyses in Camden found that many of these medically and socially complex patients habitually frequented the emergency room for easily treatable conditions, and often sought care for advanced conditions that could have been prevented through early diagnosis and care management. This issue is garnering attention from pediatric institutions interested in finding ways to effectively support children with complex conditions and their families.

## Description

Through direct experience with patients—as well as partnerships with hospitals, primary care providers and community representatives—founding Camden Coalition staff developed a care management intervention for patients with complex medical and social issues called [COACH](#). COACH is a set of techniques and tools that can be used by an interdisciplinary health care team to empower medically and socially complex patients to best manage their health conditions and engage in preventive care.

COACH stands for:

- C:** Connect tasks with vision and priorities
- O:** Observe the normal routine
- A:** Assume a coaching style
- C:** Create a backwards plan

## **H:** Highlight progress with data

A care team—comprised of a nurse, community health worker and social worker—use the COACH model to work with patients on a weekly basis to address their complex medical and social needs. At the core of the model is the development of an [Authentic Healing Relationship](#) between the patient and the care team, which supports patients in working toward sustained behavior change and long-term health management.

With expertise in tool development and organizational management, PolicyLab worked closely with an interdisciplinary team at the Camden Coalition to codify the COACH intervention into a reference guide and manual. This innovative approach to care, created and refined organically by way of real patient experiences, is now recorded and translatable, facilitating its use in a wide range of settings.

With the COACH manual in place, PolicyLab's qualitative research team then partnered with a cross-disciplinary team at the Camden Coalition to develop a fidelity tool that measures adherence to the COACH model. PolicyLab staff conducted multiple rounds of in-depth interviews, focus groups with staff and supervisors, and accompanied teams on home visits to devise the items for the fidelity tool. The goal of this tool is to guide and assess the successful implementation of COACH. The tool can be used for training purposes for new staff, as well as ensuring fidelity as the COACH model is implemented in new communities and settings.

## **Next Steps**

Leadership at the Camden Coalition and team members at PolicyLab are working together to identify grant opportunities to pilot both the manual and fidelity tool in new settings to understand where adaptations might be necessary.

*This project page was last updated in September 2021.*

## **Suggested Citation**

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, PolicyLab. *The COACH Model: A Care Management Intervention to Engage and Empower Patients* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.policylab.chop.edu> [Accessed: plug in date accessed here].

## **PolicyLab Leads**

# Katherine Kellom

## Administrative Manager

Katherine Kellom (she/they) is an administrative manager at PolicyLab and the director of the Qualitative Research Core at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She has worked at nationally top-ranked institutions with teams comprised of experts in their fields conducting qualitative, mixed and multi-method research for more than ten years. Beginning as a research assistant at the University of Pennsylvania's Mixed Methods Research Lab, Katherine currently serves across a variety of project teams to provide conceptual and technical support for clinical and community-based research projects. She has extensive knowledge and valuable practical experience applying qualitative research methodologies with a focus on integrating key stakeholder perspectives and goals into research designs.

Katherine leads and advises project teams using qualitative methods to achieve research aims on projects ranging from small pilots to state-wide, mixed-methods evaluations. Katherine is an expert in facilitation techniques and in the use of the qualitative data analysis tool, NVivo; she provides training in both areas. As director of the Qualitative Research Core, Katherine manages and supports staff members and qualitative team members in the Core and at PolicyLab, ensuring skillset development and access to the resources needed to contribute high-quality work to various project teams.

Katherine received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Bryn Mawr College in 2009, majoring in psychology.



Katherine Kellom

Email: [KellomK@chop.edu](mailto:KellomK@chop.edu)

## Team

# Cynthia Mollen MD, MSCE

## Faculty Director of Affiliate Trainee Program

Additionally, Dr. Mollen is a professor of pediatrics at the Perelman School Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, core faculty leader for the Qualitative Research Core at CHOP, faculty leader for the Qualitative Methods Research Affinity Group, and a practicing pediatric emergency medicine physician at CHOP. Dr. Mollen completed both her pediatrics residency and pediatric emergency medicine fellowship at CHOP and

became a faculty member upon completing her training in 2001. She also completed the Master of Science in Clinical Epidemiology during her fellowship.

Since joining the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania and CHOP, Dr. Mollen has developed and refined a research and clinical interest in adolescent health, with a particular focus on utilizing the emergency department and non-primary care settings as sites for interventions related to major public health issues affecting adolescents, such as unintended teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. She has also pursued training in qualitative research methods and has utilized those methods in a variety of research projects. Dr. Mollen's projects have included interviewing adolescents to learn about their attitudes about developing an intervention aimed to improve the use of emergency contraception; exploring minority adolescents' perception about bias when seeking family planning care; assessing the decision-making processes of parents with terminally ill children; and improving access to expedited partner therapy for adolescents.



Cynthia Mollen  
MD, MSCE

Email: [Mollenc@chop.edu](mailto:Mollenc@chop.edu)

## **Meredith Matone**

### **DrPH, MHS**

#### **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.



Meredith Matone  
DrPH, MHS

Email: [MatoneM@chop.edu](mailto:MatoneM@chop.edu)

## Funders of Project

Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

## Project Contact

Katherine Kellom  
[KELLOMK@email.chop.edu](mailto:KELLOMK@email.chop.edu)

## Related Tools & Publications

- 

[COACH Reference Guide  
Tools and Memos](#)  
Feb 2016