# Positioning PolicyLab for the Future

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As we near PolicyLab's 10th anniversary as a Center of Emphasis within Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's (CHOP) Research Institute, we've been doing a lot of reflecting on where we've come as a center. PolicyLab is founded on the belief that in order to have significant, lasting impact on the health and well-being of children and families, we have to build upon the stories we hear in our clinical practice to inform better community-directed research that is then directed strategically into the hands of policymakers and other key stakeholders. That means the messaging that we use to disseminate our research is incredibly important – it has to resonate with our audience.

To date, the incredible researchers and policy and communications teams at PolicyLab have done a tremendous job with this. But, today more than ever, our politics and the issues that shape children's healthcare can change on a dime. What hasn't changed are the challenges our families are facing every day; in many ways, they've only deepened.

So, when we sat down to think about what the next decade of PolicyLab might look like, we wanted to coalesce our huge body of work into portfolios that may be easier to access by our families, our colleagues, and by policymakers.

The four areas we identified are: Healthcare Coverage, Access and Quality; Intergenerational Family Services; Health Equity; and Adolescent Health and Well-being.

The strategic alignment of our work through these portfolios allows for collaboration across our diverse research teams on meaningful projects with the scope and expertise required to inform quality child and adolescent health policies at all levels. These four areas also intersect the life span of children from early childhood to their transition to adulthood, and they provide a comprehensive vision of care for children, embodying outcomes that influence physical health, behavioral health, well-being, and their families' health. Here's a window into each portfolio's goals:

- **Healthcare Coverage, Access and Quality**: CHOP is renowned for its care of children, from those who are healthy to those who have serious medical or psychosocial needs. In this portfolio, our interdisciplinary teams consider the unique needs of children in order to align health insurance coverage, clinical services, and community service organizations in improving health and well-being for children and their families.
- **Intergenerational Family Services:** Traditionally, child health organizations have been singularly focused on what children need. Yet, we can no longer ignore the fact that our patients' parents and caregivers are facing increasing barriers to their own care and services that are essential to keeping their families healthy. With growing recognition that services identifying and addressing parents' and caregivers' physical, social, and mental health needs also improve children's health, this portfolio aims to build evidence for and reduce

barriers to implementing sustainable family-centered programs offered in pediatric settings.

- **Health Equity:** Using a child health equity lens, our researchers are evaluating programs and policies to ensure that they do not inadvertently create avoidable or remediable differences in child outcomes. This lens is particularly important when considering the challenges faced by marginalized children and adolescents, including racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ youth, youth with complex medical needs, and youth involved in our child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
- **Adolescent Health and Well-being**: All parents understand the challenges of transitioning their children to success in their adult lives, but some adolescents face significant barriers to successful transition. By seeking to better understand teens' reproductive and sexual health, mental health, and special healthcare needs, this portfolio aims to inform programs and policy changes that ensure all adolescents can receive care to meet their unique needs and, ultimately, transition to healthy, productive adults.

If you want to learn more about any of our research or view some of our policy tools, please have a look around our new website. This important work cannot be done in a vacuum; rather, it requires thoughtful collaboration with fellow CHOP colleagues, community members and stakeholders. So, while you're on the new site, reach out to us if you have an interest in any of these areas! We're looking forward to the new relationships that this re-organization can bring.

As leaders of PolicyLab, we're proud of the tremendous work that our faculty and staff have done over the past 10 years, and we hope that by focusing our strategy and resources in these four areas of child and family health, we can make an even greater impact in the decade to come.

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