# Announcing Awardees for the Winter 2020 Clinical Futures and PolicyLab Pilot Grant Program

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At PolicyLab, we are committed to supporting our incredible investigators as they launch exciting careers as academicians, ask new and important questions, form new partnerships and strengthen their skills. In fact, this is a main area of focus in our 2019-2022 strategic plan. That is why we recently joined forces with our sister center, Clinical Futures, to administer a pilot grant program to support Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) researchers in conducting either clinical effectiveness or policy-oriented health services research studies. Together, we're investing in projects that aim to answer cutting edge clinical questions, develop or inform clinical programs, or influence practice and policy for children and families in our community. This joint program will offer awards twice in the 2020 fiscal year.

We are excited to introduce the first three PolicyLab awardees and their innovative one-year projects, which began on January 1. Each awarded project this round falls into the policy-oriented health services research track focused on understanding the social factors, organizational structures and processes, health systems, and personal behaviors that influence access to health care, quality and cost of health care, and an individual's health and well-being. In this track, awardees will receive consultation and support from PolicyLab's expert policy and communications teams to inform how they develop and disseminate their research.

*Read more about the three awarded projects below:*

**1) Identifying Disparities in Chlamydia Screening**

Did you know that rates of sexual transmitted infections (STI) are continuing to grow in the U.S., with more than 50% of cases occurring in teens and young adults? In fact, chlamydia is now the most commonly reported bacterial infection in this country, yet routine chlamydia screening rates remain low in primary care settings. To address this issue, PolicyLab researcher Dr. Sarah Wood and her team, Vicky Tam and Dr. Jungwon Min, designed a project that aims to identify rates and disparities of chlamydia screening and infection among adolescents in CHOP's primary care network. With this information and their first-hand expertise, they also plan to identify where policymakers can target interventions to improve routine STI screening among this population.

**2) Evaluating a Discipline Education Module for Caregivers with Young Children**

The PriCARE program at CHOP is an exciting parenting intervention delivered in primary care designed to strengthen parent-child relationships, improve child behaviors and decrease parenting stress. This program has been serving caregivers and their families in our network since 2014 and has contributed to reductions in caregivers' belief in the use of corporal punishment and increases in empathy toward their children.

To build on the success of this parenting intervention, PolicyLab researcher Dr. Joanne Wood in collaboration with Dr. Linda McWhorter, Devon Kratchman and Emily DePaul, will assess a new four-session Positive Discipline Module with parents and caregivers who have completed the PriCARE program. They want to learn if this additional offering provides helpful coaching to parents and caregivers around positive discipline and, ultimately, improves child behavioral problems. With the results from this project, the team hopes to strengthen the evidence on what type of content is most effective in parenting classes delivered in pediatric primary care settings and how to successfully implement these programs.

**3) A Unique Simulation of Contraceptive Access for Adolescents**

Several of our experts at PolicyLab study and evaluate innovative tactics to improve sexual health and reproductive health outcomes among adolescents. We know that one of the most effective approaches for reducing unintended pregnancies among adolescent women is expanding access to contraceptives. That is why PolicyLab researcher Dr. Nadia Dowshen and her team, including Ava Skolnik and Dr. Sarah Wood, plan to develop and test a unique telemedicine system that simulates pharmacist prescribing and dispensing of contraceptives to adolescent women through medication dispensing machines, or MedStations. Their hope is that these machines can provide adolescents easier access to contraceptives so they are more likely to practice safe sexual behaviors. Additionally, findings from this study could potentially inform future state-based legislation to allow for telemedicine options for this type of pharmacist prescribing.

We couldn't be more excited for the launch of this joint program with Clinical Futures, and we are thrilled to support such terrific work in our inaugural cohort of pilot grant awardees. We soon will release a page on our website to highlight our pilot grant program and the innovative projects we are able to fund, so be sure to stay tuned!

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