Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

How Health Systems Can Help Families During the Extended Tax Season in 200 Words

Health Equity

Date Posted:

Apr 27, 2021

Countless factors affect patient health outside the direct care health care systems and clinicians provide. Poverty is a critical social determinant of health that can have significant effects on the physical and mental health of our patients and their families. To improve health care outcomes and quality of life, health care systems should help promote family financial stability.

Medical Financial Partnerships (MFPs) are collaborations between health care systems and financial service organizations, with the shared goal of improving health by improving financial well-being. We recently described Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's MFP's success in generating almost $700,000 in tax refunds to our West Philadelphia community. This initiative provides an example of how a health care system can respond to a community needs assessment that identifies issues impacting local families—in this case, uncovering that citizens were forgoing care, food and other necessities due to financial strain.

COVID-19 has provided an opportunity for all providers—from independent practitioners to large systems—to join this wealth-building effort. Due to the pandemic, the IRS recently extended the federal tax season through May 17, 2021. As highlighted in discussions about the Child Tax Credit expansion, tax credits are an evidence-based means of improving both short- and long-term outcomes. Providers can play a role as we approach the tax deadline by encouraging and supporting patients and families to claim the money they are due through free national services like getyourrefund.org. In doing so, we can empower families to combat the ravages of poverty.

Maria Rozo, MD oversees advertising and community partnership efforts for the CHOP Medical Financial Partnership.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Strategic Operations & Communications Director Lauren Walens.

George Dalembert, MD, MSHP
George Dalembert, MD, MSHP
MD, MSHP
Faculty Scholar