

Piloting HealthySteps: Implementation, Evaluation and Exploration of Policy to Support Sustainability

Statement of Problem

The family environment in which a child develops critically influences their health and well-being from birth to age 3. As pediatric primary care medical homes are a family's most frequent point of contact with the health care system during the first years of life, they are uniquely positioned to identify family needs and offer or connect individuals to family-based interventions to support child development and [caregiver well-being](#). Two-generational strategies, also referred to as dyadic care models, have been proven [effective](#) for supporting both the preventative and acute needs of children during infancy and early childhood.

One such dyadic care model is [HealthySteps](#), which leverages the pediatric primary care setting to support healthy early childhood development and positive parenting. Within the model, a child and family development professional, known as a HealthySteps specialist, connects with families as part of the primary care team during pediatric well-child visits for patients ages 0 to 3. The HealthySteps specialist offers screening and support for common and complex parenting challenges, such as feeding, attachment, behavior, sleep, maternal depression, and adapting to life with a baby or young child. Trained specialists also provide guidance, referrals, care coordination and home visits for families who need them.

While there is [evidence](#) to support the implementation and scaling of family-oriented prevention services in early childhood and dyadic care models, including behavioral health care models like HealthySteps, this project will grow the evidence base for the model and include advocacy efforts specific to our local and state landscape to support program sustainability. There is currently no evidence on the implementation and effectiveness of HealthySteps in the Philadelphia community, and current local and state health care payment structures do not allow for sustainable funding requiring innovative or strategic partnerships.

Description

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While there is evidence to support the implementation and scaling of family-oriented prevention services in early childhood and dyadic care models, this project will grow the evidence base for the HealthySteps model and include advocacy efforts specific to our local and state landscape to support program sustainability.

Over the next three years, a collaborative team—with members from PolicyLab, the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (DCAPBS) and CHOP Primary Care—will lead a pilot to implement and evaluate HealthySteps at Cobbs Creek Primary Care in West Philadelphia. [Evaluations](#) of HealthySteps to date have shown a wide range of key positive outcomes in child health, parenting knowledge and practices, family health and well-being, and with practices and providers. Our team will lead a hybrid implementation-evaluation design coupling strong quantitative and qualitative methodologies to understand the local context for successful implementation and outcomes related to provider and patient receptivity and satisfaction, child health and development, parenting knowledge and practices, and family health and well-being.

Building off these findings, we will leverage policy and communication efforts and expertise to inform and advance reimbursement and payment innovation to support the delivery of dyadic, integrated, family-centered care within and beyond the primary care setting.

Piloting HealthySteps will bring much needed services and supports to the West Philadelphia community, and the evaluation will support a robust assessment of proof of concept, quality improvement and effectiveness. The project will also explore and make the [case](#) for financing mechanisms to scale and sustain the model.

Next Steps

The HealthySteps pilot launched at CHOP's Cobbs Creek Primary Care site in June 2023 and the team is collecting data to inform future implementation. With the overarching goal of promoting equity in early childhood development among children in the West Philadelphia community, this pilot will support early identification of unmet behavioral health needs, improved service accessibility and sustainability, and enhanced family support through pediatric primary care as a trusted community resource. Specifically, over the next three years, we aim to:

- Apply implementation science methodology to pilot HealthySteps at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Cobbs Creek Primary Care site
- Use a hybrid evaluation design to assess implementation and generate an understanding of the local context impacting feasibility, acceptability, quality, and replicability of outcomes related to provider and patient receptivity engagement and satisfaction, child health and development, parenting knowledge and practices, and family health and well-being
- Engage key national, state, and local stakeholders and policymakers to understand the opportunities and barriers to payment innovation, make the case for reform and, ultimately, identify sustainable funding pathways for HealthySteps in Pennsylvania
- Publish findings, recommendations, and best practices for broad dissemination among relevant stakeholders and publications

This project page was last updated in July 2023.

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PolicyLab Leads

Kali Hackett **MSW, MPH**

Research Study Manager

Kali Hackett is a research study manager at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In this role, she leads various maternal and child health projects, with a particular focus on the implementation and evaluation of intergenerational programs and interventions. Ms. Hackett is a public health social worker with significant experience supporting young children, parents, and families both in direct service capacities and through research and policy. Her approach to this work focuses on ensuring that children, caregivers, and families have the necessary resources, knowledge, quality care and support to thrive. Ms. Hackett received her Master of Public Health and Master of Social Work from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



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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.



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Jennifer Mautone **PhD, ABPP**

Faculty Member

Jennifer Mautone (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and associate director of the Pediatric Research Consortium (PeRC) at CHOP. Dr. Mautone also supports primary care-based research for the Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences.

Dr. Mautone is a school psychologist with particular expertise in psychosocial interventions for treating ADHD and disruptive behavior disorders. She focuses on family-school-health system collaboration and integration of behavioral health services into pediatric primary care practices and schools. She also has a special interest in increasing access to high-quality, culturally responsive care for underserved children and families.

Dr. Mautone has served as co-principal investigator for a clinical trial funded by the Institute of Education Sciences to evaluate the effectiveness of an organizational skills treatment program in schools. She is also dual principal investigator for a comparative effectiveness trial funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to further evaluate the Partnering to Achieve School Success program, an enhanced behavioral intervention for children with ADHD offered in primary care practices serving publicly insured children in Philadelphia. Additionally, Dr. Mautone serves as the program director for a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funded Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program grant designed to provide interprofessional training in integrated primary care to build the work force of behavioral health clinicians prepared to address the behavioral health needs of children in high need/high demand areas. She is also part of the team working on implementation and evaluation of HealthySteps in primary care at CHOP.

She joined CHOP in 2007 and the faculty at the Perelman School of Medicine in 2014 and has been involved in research, teaching and clinical practice throughout her time at CHOP. Dr. Mautone received her

PhD in pediatric school psychology from Lehigh University and completed a post-doctoral fellowship in clinical child psychology at the CHOP Center for Management of ADHD.



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Team

Wanjik? F.M. Njoroge MD

Faculty Member

Wanjik? F.M. Njoroge (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine and medical director of the Young Child Clinic at CHOP. Dr. Njoroge is also the program director for the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship Training Program in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at CHOP. She received her bachelor's at Columbia University and her MD from Baylor College of Medicine. She completed her adult psychiatry residency training at the University of Pennsylvania and child psychiatry fellowship at the Yale Child Study Center (YCSC).

During her time at YCSC, Dr. Njoroge completed postgraduate training programs with the Harris Infant Psychiatry fellowship and a postdoctoral National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) research fellowship. In addition, she was also a post-doctoral fellow at Yale University's Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy and a Solnit fellow in the ZERO TO THREE program based in Washington, D.C. Dr. Njoroge successfully received multiple research development awards from the NIMH and Eunice Shriver National Institute of Child and Human Development, and teaching awards most recently from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

Her research interests to date have included prevention, promotion and early intervention for young children. In particular, she has a specific focus on investigating the impact of culture on early infant/childhood development, the impact of screening and brief interventions on infant and parent psychosocial domains, and the intersection of culture, race and ethnicity on parenting practices. Her current area of research continues to have a particular focus on infants, very young children and their parents with the goals of identifying parenting stressors, parental attitudes and beliefs, cultural norms, and impact of trauma that may derail optimal development in vulnerable and disenfranchised populations.



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Rebecka Rosenquist

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Deputy Director of Policy & Strategy

Ms. Rosenquist has extensive experience working in health policy, advocacy, and related work. Prior to joining CHOP, she was the director of state engagement for Shatterproof ATLAS, a quality measurement system for addiction treatment programs, where she led Shatterproof's partnerships with state agencies and stakeholders in ATLAS pilot states.

Prior to that, Ms. Rosenquist was the associate director for health policy at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn LDI). She has also worked for Action for Global Health, a cross-European coalition of non-profits funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Thomson Reuters Foundation, both in London, UK. She started her career in state and local politics, working for the political action committee EMILY's List.

Ms. Rosenquist is a graduate of the College Scholars Program at Cornell University and received her master's degree in global politics from the London School of Economics & Political Science. She lives in Narberth with her husband and two children.



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Mia Wilson

Clinical Research Assistant

Mia Wilson is a clinical research assistant at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Ms. Wilson joined the maternal & child health team in January 2023 to facilitate and implement projects that aim to

improve the health and well-being of mothers, caregivers and parents. The two projects she is working on are HealthySteps, a pediatric primary care model that supports healthy early childhood development, positive parenting and caregiver well-being; and the Community Clinical Systems Integration – Home Visiting (CCSI-HV), a model that utilizes evidence-based nurse-led home visiting services as part of the clinical care team within CHOP's pediatric primary care network.

Ms. Wilson graduated from Elon University in 2022 with a Bachelor of Art in Public Health. She has had previous experience in undergraduate research analyzing maternal health disparities within the Black community and other communities of color, which was titled, "Un-Masking the Origins of Maternal Morbidity Inequities (UMOMMI)." She also has experience as an intern with the maternal health organizations Black Mothers in Power and Women & Children's Center Moses Cone Hospital Doula Services. She plans to pursue her master's degree and PhD in Public Health.



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Emma Golub

MPH

Policy Analyst

Emma Golub (she/her) is a policy analyst at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Ms. Golub supports PolicyLab's work on the payment reform necessary to scale and sustain health care interventions that support healthy development in early childhood and advance health equity. She focuses on HealthySteps, a dyadic care model that promotes healthy early childhood development in pediatric primary care. Her role also includes serving as the strategist for PolicyLab's Family & Community Health Portfolio.

Ms. Golub most recently served as a senior health policy analyst at the Center for Health and Research Transformation (CHRT) at the University of Michigan. At CHRT, she supported the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) in its strategic planning to transition Michigan's demonstration project for individuals dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid into a dual eligible special needs plan model. Ms. Golub also supported MDHHS' strategic planning process for long-term care and other health policy research projects.

Prior to her role at CHRT, Ms. Golub worked in global health at Abt Associates. Her focus was a project that engaged private sector actors and fostered public-private engagement to support the achievement of global health goals in sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, and HIV. Ms. Golub's public health career began in Amman, Jordan on a project working to improve health outcomes for women and children.

Ms. Golub has a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University in American Studies and Middle Eastern Studies.



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Related Tools & Publications

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[Caring for the Caregiver: Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Teen Parents
Blog Post](#)

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[Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Parenting Teens
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Nov 2020

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[Addressing Postpartum Depression in Pediatric Settings
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[Sustaining HealthySteps: States' Approaches to Financing an Evidence-based Model for Healthy Early
Childhood Development
Tools and Memos](#)

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[Breaking Down Silos: Developing Effective Coordination of Early Childhood Development Resources and Systems](#)
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