Announcing PolicyLab's New Cohort of Community Partnerships in Research Awardees

Date:

Thursday, May 28, 2026

As we proudly celebrate 5 years of PolicyLab's Community Partnerships in Research Program, PolicyLab is excited to announce 7 new awardees.

This unique program seeks to build and deepen research partnerships between researchers and community groups. The goal is to improve health systems and outcomes for children and their families through research that is more inclusive.

Through two grant mechanisms, we aim to build capacity at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) for academic researchers to partner with community-based leaders and organizations to develop and execute community-engaged research projects. Community-engaged research seeks to involve groups not typically included in research in developing relevant, impactful research projects driven by local leaders and community needs.

This year, we were honored to have additional partners from across the institution in this program, and we'd like to thank the CHOP Global Health Center and the Melissa Ketunuti Endowment, the Health Equity Research Methods (HERMes) Initiative, and CHOP's Office of Community Impact (OCI) for their support and commitment to advancing the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Read about the grant recipients and their innovative projects below:

JOINT PROJECT AWARDS

A Qualitative Study to Support Community-Centered Design of Short-Term Respite Childcare Models for Parents of Color in Recovery

Partnership: Yuan He, MD, from CHOP'S Division of General Pediatrics will partner with April Lee from Philly Voice for Change, alongside collaborators from Maternity Care Coalition, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Unity Recovery, Gaudenzia, Caring Together at Drexel, and Jefferson's MATER program

Project Description: This team plans to conduct a qualitative study to better understand how access to short-term childcare impacts recovery and treatment engagement for parents of color with substance abuse disorders.

Feasibility, Acceptability, and Operationalization of a Donor Human Milk Program Using On-Site Pasteurization at Princess Marina Hospital in Botswana

Partnership: Jonathan Strysko, MD, MSc, IBCLC, from CHOP's Division of General Pediatrics will partner with Kaone Ranyere, SACLC, from the Botswana-University of Pennsylvania Partnership and Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone, Botswana

Project Description: This team plans to pilot Botswana's first donor human milk program using a low-cost, on-site pasteurization approach to improve access to safe donor milk for hospitalized infants.

This award is sponsored in partnership with the CHOP Global Health Center and the Melissa Ketunuti Endowment.

Philadelphia Youth Narcan Education (PYNE) Initiative

Partnership: Samara Jinks-Chang, MD, MPH, MS, from CHOP's Division of Adolescent Medicine will partner with Kendra McDow, MD, MPH, from the School District of Philadelphia, alongside collaborators from Penn's Center for Addiction Medicine and Policy, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and Stanford REACH Lab

Project Description: The team plans to develop and evaluate a youth-centered naloxone education initiative for middle and high school students across Philadelphia.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

Pediatric Emergency Airway Readiness & Learning (PEARL-AIR) for Community Emergency Departments

Partnership: Jeremy Jones, MD, from CHOP's Division of Pediatric Emergency Medicine and the ExPERT program will partner with Monica Costello, MSN, RN, CEN, from Holy Redeemer Hospital; Megan Stobart-Gallagher, DO, from Einstein Montgomery Hospital; Jill Matusiak, MSN, RN, CEN, and Jason Burgess, MSN, RNC-NIC, from Virtua Mount Holly Hospital; Lisa Winchester, PhD, RN, CEN, NPD-BC, and Alfred Sacchetti, MD, from Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital; and Sherri Campbell, MSN, RN, CEN, TCRN, from Chester County Hospital

Project Description: This team plans to partner with community emergency departments across the Philadelphia region to better understand and improve pediatric airway readiness in non-children's hospitals, where most children receive emergency care.

Building a Community-Academic Partnership to Improve Youth Mental Health Care Transitions

Partnership: Priyanka Joshi, MD, MSHP, and Polina Krass, MD, MSHP, from CHOP's Division of Emergency Medicine and PolicyLab will partner with Leigh Wilson-Hall, MSW, and Aaron Truchil, MSSP, from the Camden Coalition

Project Description: This team plans to develop a community-academic partnership to explore and adapt mental health care navigation models for youth in New Jersey.

Designing a Civic-Science Media Model for Rural Pennsylvania Families

Partnership: Jennifer Whittaker from PolicyLab and CHOP's Qualitative Research Core will partner with Sarah Rafacz from Spotlight PA

Project Description: The team plans to develop and test a civic-science media partnership focused on documenting how rural Pennsylvania families navigate changes to health insurance and social safety net

policies.

This award is sponsored in partnership with the Health Equity Research Methods (HERMeS) Initiative, which aims to advance health equity research and translation across CHOP and CHOP Research Institute.

Indigenous Health Unit Community Research Advisory

Partnership: Elizabeth Sanseau, MD, and Chermiqua Tsosie from CHOP's Indigenous Health Unit will partner with Cornelia Dimalanta from the Native American House Alliance (NAHA)

Project description: The team plans to establish an Indigenous Community Research Advisory Board to guide pediatric health care research focused on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children and families in Pennsylvania.

This award is sponsored in partnership with CHOP's Office of Community Impact. Through strategic partnerships with community organizations, schools, government agencies and families, OCI develops and supports programs that promote health equity, improve access to resources, and strengthen communities.

We recently spoke to Dr. Lori Crosby, whose community-engaged work at Cincinnati Children's Hospital inspired PolicyLab's program, to reflect on the importance of community-engaged research and the ways in which it fosters collaboration and innovation. Dr. Crosby shared:

"Community-engaged research enhances the rigor, relevance and feasibility of our research. It ensures that research is centered on community needs. And it leverages the power of community in our research. In this way, it helps support population health."

Tanisha Belton
DrPH, MPH

Senior Manager of Research Initiatives



Tanisha Belton
DrPH, MPH
Email: BeltonT@chop.edu