

## **Keeping Families Healthy, Stony Brook Children's Hospital, Stony Brook, NY**

Keeping Families Healthy (KFH) in Stony Brook, NY is a program that bridges the gap in pediatric care coordination by employing community health workers (CHWs) to serve as a liaison between families and their child's clinicians.

The program was founded by Susmita Pati, MD, MPH, to address challenges experienced by children and their families due to chronic or complex conditions, social risk factors such as lack of resources, language barriers, health literacy, transportation and insurance issues

KFH initially received funding from the New York State Department of Health's initiatives Healthcare Efficiency and Affordability Law and Medical Home Demonstration Project, for implementation of patient-centered medical homes to improve care coordination, continuity and quality of care. Most recently, the program won the Academic Pediatric Association's 2017 Health Care Delivery Award for "its innovation in linking the medical home with the community, engaging learners at multiple levels, and conducting academic work in concert with care delivery to at-risk children".

### **What does KFH focus on?**

There are three main areas highlighted in the program: newborn care, which involves frequent visits during the first two months; adolescent and child wellness through preventative care and routine disease management; management of chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, and obesity.

Clinicians identify patients who are at risk for poor outcomes and refer them to the KFH program. Next, CHWs reach out offer to enroll families in the program. The role of the CHWs is to improve the family's ability to receive necessary care and services, and work with them until both parties mutually agree the family is self-sufficient.

### **How does KFH help families coordinate their children's' care?**

KFH has seven main goals:

1. Clarify how to seek appropriate medical treatment
2. Empower families to be prepared for appointments with clinicians
3. Facilitate families' understanding of the clinician recommendations
4. Facilitate families creation of a system to keep track of their child's medical information
5. Identify and address barriers to obtaining health care
6. Provide appropriate health education
7. Connect families with local community resources

### **What training do CHWs receive?**

After performing an environmental scan of organizations in Long Island that could meet their community outreach needs, KFH partnered with the Federation of Organizations (<http://fedoforg.org/>). This non-profit community social welfare organization facilitates CHW

employment. KFH program staff use a standardized protocol for a 60 hour in-person training that covers navigation, motivational interviewing, database training, safety in the home and what to expect in visits to homes. This is followed by field shadowing of CHWs who are already working with their own families in the program. With this training, on average CHWs interact with families 4 to 5 times through in person visits supplemented by phone calls and text messages to help achieve these seven goals.

### **What are the results of the program so far?**

In October 2016, the journal *Vaccine* published an article demonstrating that the program improved vaccine rates by 20% in infants and by 16% in newborns. The KFH team's results showing a ~50% decrease in 'preventable' emergency room visits was published in *Pediatrics* in April 2017.

*To learn more about Keeping Families Healthy, please contact Giuseppina Caravella, MPH, CHES, Program Coordinator for Keeping Families Health at [Giuseppina.caravella@stonybrookmedicine.edu](mailto:Giuseppina.caravella@stonybrookmedicine.edu).*

*For more information regarding the study published in *Vaccine*, please visit: **Pati S**, et al. An enriched medical home intervention using community health workers improves adherence to immunization schedules. *Vaccine* (2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2015.09.070>*

*More information on results of the decrease in ED visits is currently in press: Anugu M, Braksmajer A, Huang J, Yang J, Ladowski KL, **Pati S**. Enriched medical home intervention using community health worker home visitation and ED use. *Pediatrics* 2017: doi: [10.1542/peds.2016-1849](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-1849).*