Addressing Equity for African American and Black Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) and Their Families Through Medical Home
Executive Summary

On July 10, 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP or Academy) National Resource Center for Patient/Family Center Medical Home (NRC-PFCMH) hosted a 2-hour Health Equity Virtual Roundtable focused on identifying recommendations for pediatricians to build stronger relationships with African American and Black families of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) within the medical home model of care. The virtual Roundtable had a total of 25 participants including: parents, caregivers, grandparents, and other family members of CYSHCN from across the United States, members of the NRC-PFCMH Health Equity Subcommittee (pediatricians, experts in medical home and systems of care, family partners, and representatives from Title V), and representatives from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (the NRC-PFCMH funding agency).

Acknowledging the far-reaching consequences of inequities and racism in many communities, the Roundtable aimed to provide an opportunity for participants to engage in a candid dialogue that prioritized family perspectives on inequities faced by African American and Black CYSHCN and their families, addressing anti-Black racism, and building trust in pediatricians and systems of care that serve African American and Black CYSHCN and their families, in the context of the NRC-PFCMH, AAP Equity Agenda, and the Maternal and Child Health (MCHB) Blueprint for CYSHCN to advance health equity.

Informed by a literature review of current health equity issues and practices conducted by NRC-PFCMH staff, with input from the Health Equity Subcommittee and Roundtable facilitators, the overarching goal of the Roundtable was to identify recommendations aligned with the medical home model of care for pediatricians to build stronger relationships with African American and Black families of CYSHCN served in their clinic or practice. This goal would be achieved through accomplishing the following 2 objectives:

**Objective 1:** Identify strategies for pediatricians to strengthen their relationships with African American and Black families of CYSHCN; families are partners in making decisions about what is best for their CYSHCN.

**Objective 2:** Identify strategies for pediatricians to be better allies of African American and Black families of CYSHCN.

The Roundtable utilized large group and smaller breakout group discussions where facilitators, Jennifer Lail, MD and Tamela Milan-Alexander, MPPA invited families to reflect on a set of discussion questions and share their experiences and perspectives. Following the Roundtable, a follow-up survey was emailed to all participants to collect additional feedback on their Roundtable experience.

Three primary themes emerged from the Roundtable discussions:

- **Building Strong Relationships Between Families of CYSHCN and Pediatricians**
  Family members repeatedly noted the importance of communication in relationship-building between families of CYSHCN and pediatricians.

- **Allyship and Cultural Competency Within Family-Centered Care**
  Family members identified numerous ways that pediatricians can demonstrate allyship with African American and Black CYSHCN and their families including practicing medicine with cultural responsiveness and humility, addressing stereotypes, and acknowledging differences.
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Family members urged the continuation of efforts identified in the AAP Equity Agenda and through the Roundtable by continuing to engage families of color in listening sessions and creating opportunities for individual pediatricians and the pediatric community to actively and systemically counter health inequities for African American and Black CYSHCN and their families. Further, family members encouraged the AAP to work towards more diversity in the pediatric community.

Roundtable follow-up survey results suggest that the Roundtable provided a positive experience and a welcoming environment conducive to sharing ideas. Key take-aways from the Roundtable reported by family participants included a recognition of shared problems faced by African American and Black CYSHCN and their families as well as a need for transparency in relationships between families and physicians.

Recommendations that arose from the Roundtable discussion support key components of the medical home model and family-centered care, including

- improving communication between pediatricians and African American and Black CYSHCN and their families through active listening;
- treating family members as experts;
- providing families with complete information;
- coordinating information exchange among the family's healthcare team;
- improving pediatricians' cultural competence, particularly around implicit and explicit biases that contribute to inequities in care;
- practicing medicine with cultural responsiveness and humility;
- continuing to engage families of color in listening sessions; and
- continuing to create opportunities for individual pediatricians and the pediatric community to actively and systemically counter health inequities for African American and Black CYSHCN and their families.

Specific recommendations, aligned with the AAP Equity Agenda and MCHB Blueprint for CYSHCN, are presented in the full report.

While much was learned from the Roundtable, much remains to be learned. As a call to “further action,” family members encouraged the NRC-PFCMH and Academy to continue to create opportunities to hear from not just African American and Black families, but from a broader representation of people of color (POC), abilities, gender, and special health care needs.

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