



Advancing High Performance Health

AMGA Foundation

Acclaim Award
HealthPartners

2020 Honoree

Narrative:
**A Collaborative
Approach to Child
and Family Health**



HealthPartners: Evolving a High-Performing Health System to Serve All Patients and Communities

2020 Acclaim Award Honoree

*Narrative: A Collaborative Approach
to Child and Family Health*



In March of 2020, AMGA named HealthPartners a honoree of the 2020 Acclaim Award. The Acclaim Award, supported by AMGA Foundation, the association’s nonprofit arm, is designed to recognize and celebrate the successes that medical groups and other organized systems of care have achieved in improving the value—the quality and cost of care—of the healthcare services they provide to their communities. It honors organizations that are meeting the IOM Aims for Improvement and are taking the necessary steps to become a High-Performing Health System™ as defined by the AMGA.

As part of the Acclaim Award application process, HealthPartners was asked to highlight narratives describing the design and deployment of major components—projects, phases, or tactical plans—that were part of its plan to transform the way it delivered health care in order to more fully achieve the AMGA High-Performing Health System™ attributes, improving both the quality and cost of care. Here, we share one of its narratives.

Right from the Start

The first few years of a child’s life, in particular, are a critical time when the brain develops major capabilities, predicting future success in school, as well as future health. Over the years, HealthPartners has been working to improve the health and well-being of children from pregnancy through adolescence by concentrating on several priority areas within a children’s health initiative, believing every health system plays a role in ensuring every child gets off to the best possible start. Specifically, HealthPartners has implemented tangible work to develop innovative family-centered care models, maximize care team efficiency, optimize its electronic medical record, facilitate collaboration across departments, and solicit patient/community inputs.

Such an initiative requires intentional collaboration, standardization, and leadership attention. HealthPartners’ initiative is driven by its organization’s CEO, in partnership with its OB/GYN and Pediatrics Physician department chairs, as they helped align the initiative with the group’s overall mission and vision, delivering the quadruple aim of better health, better patient experience, lower cost, and improving the work life and joy in practice of those who deliver care.

Care Transformation Strategy/Design

Here are a few basic facts and figures concerning childhood development and early motherhood.

- Data shows that 90% of a child’s brain develops in the first five years of life, and yet one in three American children starts kindergarten without the language skills they need to learn to read.
- Reading proficiency by the third grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success.
- High school graduation is an important predictor of overall health outcomes. Graduates have less chance of being in prison, greater financial stability as adults, and fewer health problems.
- An estimated 15% of children in America have at least one developmental delay, yet less than 20% of those children receive early intervention services before three years of age.
- At least 80% of new mothers experience the “baby blues” following the birth of their baby and about 15% of mothers experience postpartum depression anytime in the first 12 months after delivery. However, postpartum depression is significantly underdiagnosed—more than 50% of cases may go undiagnosed without proper screening.
- Infant mortality is low in Minnesota, where HealthPartners is located, compared to the rest of the nation, but African American babies have over twice the rate of infant mortality compared to white babies.

With the objective to better understand the needs of our pediatric patient population, HealthPartners’ executive leadership convened to discuss the current state of children’s health care. Upon an extensive literature review and guiding clinician discussions, it

became apparent that there was more the group could and should be doing for this particularly vulnerable population.

This led to the development of HealthPartners’ initiative, with the mission to improve the health and well-being of the children that it serves, from birth through adolescence. The population health initiative focuses on improving care for all children, including those who are increasingly at risk, while leveraging best practices across the organization in collaboration with the community. In 2018, more than 800 clinicians cared for children and families across the medical group. Annually, HealthPartners has over 10,000 deliveries and almost 192,000 well-child visits.

Eventually the executive leader group evolved into a standing steering committee, a multidisciplinary group that includes clinical and executive leaders from such departments as Behavioral Health, Clinical Quality, Communications, Community Health, Government Relations, Marketing, Nursing, Operations, Public Health, and Research, along with the medical group’s CEO. This committee is the strategic body and sets priorities for the initiative with expertise to ensure the work aligns with the organization’s mission and vision.

Based on feedback from physicians, best practices, and impact to patients, the group categorized work into three guiding principles: promoting early brain development, providing family-centered care, and strengthening communities. Using the Institute of Medicine’s six overarching aims as guideposts, each principle includes various priority areas:

Early Brain Development

- **Play, Talk, Read, Sing:** Encourages every caregiver to “exercise” their child’s developing brain. As part of this work, all children six months to five years receive a book at every well-child visit.

- **Developmental and Social Emotional Screening:** Identifies and refers children with social/emotional and developmental delays to the appropriate resources. All children from two months to five years are screened for delays at regular intervals during well-child visits.
- **Healthy Beginnings:** Promotes drug, alcohol and tobacco-free pregnancies by universally screening pregnant women and offering non-judgmental support.

Family-Centered Care

- **Breastfeeding Support:** Encourages mothers to feed their babies only human milk for at least the first six months of life by offering support and resources to patients, members and employees.
- **Postpartum Depression Screening:** A preventive service for expectant and new mothers at their OB visits as well as their infant’s well-child visits.
- **Standard Workflows:** Supports long-term health goals for children and families by aligning evidence-based guidelines, clinical tools, and measurement across the organization. Includes Pediatric and Pregnancy Care Councils.
- **Adolescent Health:** Work includes the development of clinical standards for talking to adolescents about sexual health, pregnancy prevention, and other important adolescent well-being topics.

Strengthen Communities

- **Reducing Disparities in Maternal and Child Health:** Works to identify and reduce racial and economic disparities in maternal and child health.
- **Family and Community Connections:** Expands access and partnerships with community programs to support families that are most at-risk.

Once the priorities are set by the steering committee, work is then assigned to the operations committee to resource how improvements can be implemented within the system. This team is comprised primarily of clinical, administrative, and nursing leaders. For each priority area, a work group is then created and assigned a project manager to set goals and move the work forward. As a way to assure sustainability and validity of projects, a measurement subcommittee was established. These groups provide venues for goal setting, accountability, initiative status, and barrier resolution. The OB/GYN and Pediatric department chairs, in partnership with the senior operations director, serve as the primary link to the medical group’s clinicians, operational teams, clinic staff, and leaders to provide continued involvement and engagement.

Structure of the Initiative

Steering Committee

CEO and senior leaders from:

Behavioral Health, Clinical Quality, Communications, Community Health, Department Medical Chairs, Government Relations, Health Plan, Marketing, Nursing, Operations, Public Health, and Research

Operations Team

Operational leaders (clinic, nursing, and quality directors) and project managers

Workgroups

Project managers, Initiative Chairs, physicians, operational leaders, specialty departments, community partners

Play, Talk, Read, Sing	Healthy Beginnings	Developmental & Social Emotional Screening	Breast-feeding Promotion	Postpartum Depression Screening	Pediatric Standard Work	Pregnancy Standard Work	Family & Community Connections	Adolescent Health	Reducing Disparities in Maternal and Child Health
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Centralized Support: Epic, Patient Education, Medical Education, Communications, Care Delivery Marketing, Project Management



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