



**EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH EDUCATION**

Advocacy Education Initiatives

Child Health Advocacy Institute



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Our Vision for Advocacy Education

Children's National Hospital's **CARE** mission is to excel in **Care, Advocacy, Research and Education**. The Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI) at Children's National leads the institution's advocacy efforts and advances policy and systems change to achieve health equity for all children. We also strive to teach students, residents, fellows, faculty, and other staff the most effective methods for becoming child health advocates. We accomplish this through education and exposure to interdisciplinary advocacy opportunities at the individual, community, and legislative levels. Collaborating with Children's National Medical Education and Safe Kids Worldwide, we strengthen our capacity to expand community-based advocacy and amplify our impact. CHAI is committed to impacting the lives of children beyond the hospital and leads several initiatives to advance advocacy and public policy.

Our vision is to become a national model for socially accountable, interprofessional advocacy education, resulting in a skilled workforce driven to advocate for child health equity and systemic change.



About CHAI Advocacy Education



Advocacy education in CHAI supports Children's National's priorities for community health improvement and clinical issues with complex etiologies and solutions. These efforts are occurring in a milieu of change as the U.S. healthcare system moves toward value-based care, and medical education is increasingly stretched to prepare trainees to think beyond individual patients and diseases, and to work in interdisciplinary teams.

Children's National attracts medical students, residents, fellows, faculty, and other clinical and non-clinical staff who are actively seeking advocacy opportunities. Our location in Washington, D.C. provides a dual reality: significant inequities based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, along with rich opportunities for community engagement and legislative advocacy. CHAI has significantly expanded its advocacy and community health education across the spectrum of learners, including close partnerships with community organizations to provide training on social determinants/drivers of health and health equity.

Each educational initiative is anchored in CHAI's mission of promoting health equity, defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "when everyone can attain their full potential for health and well-being."

“I loved being able to work in the garden, cooking and understanding how to make healthy affordable meals was so fun, and discussing available resources was really helpful.”

– Children’s National Resident

Student Day Lecture

Third-year medical students at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences complete their pediatrics rotation at Children’s National. With each cohort of students every 8 weeks, a CHAI faculty member gives an interactive lecture on advocacy, culminating in practicing advocacy skills in a small group case simulation.

Led by Drs. Lola Okito and Anita Krishnan

Child Health Advocacy Elective

Fourth-year medical students have an opportunity to undertake a health policy project that will simulate the way a physician would advocate in the public policy arena. Working with a CHAI faculty member, the students identify a health issue, propose a solution for the issue, determine how to enact the solution, and take steps to advance the solution in the public policy arena. The students use population, epidemiological, and other data to describe the issue and evidence-based information to craft the solution. In addition, the students attend health-related legislative hearings and meetings with government officials and relevant organizations.

Led by Dr. Matthew Magyar

“I really enjoyed the first activity where we worked as a team to package items for families. It really required teamwork, allowed us to work with others outside of medicine, learn about what inspired them to get involved and gain a real sense of community engagement.”

– Children’s National Resident



Policy, Education, and Advocacy for Kids (PEAK) Pathway

The Policy, Education, Advocacy for Kids (PEAK) Pathway is offered to pediatric residents who are interested in receiving additional training in advocacy. The PEAK Pathway consists of a variety of optional activities aimed at building pediatric residents' skills and understanding of public policy and advocacy. The PEAK Pathway offers three main benefits to pediatric residents: an individualized curriculum, mentorship, and community partnership building.

Led by Drs. Danielle Dooley and Theiline Gborkorquellie

Moving Conversations Curriculum

Moving Conversations is an innovative experience developed through a partnership between the pediatric residency program and CHAI. Designed for first-year pediatric residents and fellows, the program deepens understanding of how social determinants/drivers of health contribute to health disparities through a guided bus tour of under-resourced neighborhoods in Washington, D.C., including Wards 7 and 8, while also highlighting the many assets and resources within these communities.

The tour is facilitated by CHAI Affiliate Faculty, who provide historical and policy context to highlight the systemic drivers of inequities. Following the experience, participants engage in a structured debrief with reflective questions that encourage ongoing dialogue and consideration of how these insights can be applied in their clinical practice.

By linking what residents witness in the community to the inequities they encounter at the bedside, the curriculum equips future pediatricians with a stronger foundation in advocacy and social accountability. The program has since been adapted for hospital staff, researchers, and other health professionals, broadening its reach and institutional impact.

Led by Multidisciplinary Team Across CHAI and Medical Education



Intern Advocacy Day

Intern Advocacy Day is a year-round program in partnership between the CHAI, the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) and DC Central Kitchen (DCCK) to promote community-based learning in advocacy and food insecurity. The program is offered to pediatric residents, fellows, faculty, and staff who are interested in gaining skills in advocacy related to child poverty and food insecurity. Participants spend a day volunteering at CAFB or DCCK, undergo a poverty simulation that recreates a day in the life of families experiencing financial challenges, and reflect on their professional role in advocacy and in connecting families to local food resources. Participants demonstrate improved knowledge of advocacy and improved advocacy-related self-efficacy after participating in Intern Advocacy Day.

Led by Drs. Tamara Gayle and Matthew Magyar

Pediatric Public Health and Advocacy (P-PHAC) Curriculum

The Pediatric Public Health and Advocacy Curriculum (P-PHAC) consists of a series of interactive lectures that aim to improve resident knowledge of prevalent pediatric public health topics. P-PHAC utilizes interactive learning sessions to empower residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for their patients and families. Through the P-PHAC curriculum, residents learn about the child health effects of key public health topics, identify advocacy opportunities, and learn strategies to communicate with lawmakers and community partners regarding child health.

Led by 3rd Year LAUnCH Track Residents

Leadership in Advocacy, Under-resourced Communities and Health equity (LAUnCH) Residency Track

CHAI is proud to partner with the Children's National Pediatric Residency Program on a number of initiatives in the Leadership in Advocacy, Under-resourced Communities and Health equity (LAUnCH) track. The mission of the LAUnCH Track is to train a new generation of residents who will create successful community partnerships and integrate public health concepts into the everyday practice of medicine to improve the health of under-resourced communities. The training for the LAUnCH Track is integrated within the overall pediatric residency program to ensure excellence in the attainment of clinical skills.

Led by Drs. Amanda Stewart and Theiline Gborkorquellie

First Year

The **Community Building Blocks (CBB) rotation** is offered to first-year pediatric residents who are part of the LAUnCH track. The goal of the CBB rotation is to provide residents with an understanding of how social determinants of health (SDH) affect the local community, improve their knowledge of community resources, and train them to incorporate a focus on SDH into their clinical care and future careers. Each week of the rotation focuses on one of four SDH: poverty; trauma and adversity; schools and education; and the neighborhood and built environment. The curriculum consists of community-based experiences, required readings, meetings with interdisciplinary leaders in the field, and reflections with rotation leaders.

Led by Drs. Theiline Gborkorquellie and Julie Krueger

Second Year

The **Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI) rotation** is offered to second year pediatric residents who are part of the LAUnCH track and focuses on legislative advocacy. The goals of the rotation are: to orient residents to CHAI's efforts and the legislative priorities of Children's National; to describe the steps to engage in and practice skills around legislative and media advocacy; and to create or adapt a legislative advocacy policy proposal to share with a legislator or member of their staff. The rotation culminates in a meeting with a legislator or their staff member to present a policy brief prepared by the residents and discuss a child health advocacy issue.

Led by Drs. Danielle Dooley, Tamara Gayle, and Nicol Awadalla Bacon

The **Child and Adolescent Protection Center (CAPC) rotation** is offered to first-year residents in the LAUnCH track. During this rotation at the Child & Adolescent Protection Center (CAPC), pediatric residents gain experience evaluating children for suspected physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and other forms of maltreatment through both inpatient consults, outpatient clinics, and didactics. Residents learn history taking techniques, participate in multidisciplinary interagency case reviews, and may engage with legal processes such as court observations and mandated reporting. The rotation emphasizes trauma-informed care, interagency collaboration, and the development of clinical and documentation skills essential to the management of maltreated children and youth.

Led by Dr. Allison Jackson

Third Year

The **Introduction to Global Child Health** course is offered to second-year pediatric residents who are in the LAUnCH track, as well as residents interested in global health electives. This is a one-week rotation introducing global child health issues, including health care delivery, disease burden, resource allocation, discussion of principles of bioethics, and the introduction to common illnesses seen in low-resource settings through lectures, case-based discussions, and simulations.

Led by Dr. Sajithya Perera and Kristi Myers

In the **Population Health and Leadership rotation**, third-year pediatric residents in the LAUnCH track develop the skills to advance the medical home model in order to improve population health outcomes for children. Through readings, coalition meetings and hands-on activities, residents learn how community partnerships and governmental policies advance population health.

Led by Dr. Amanda Stewart

In the **Research rotation**, third-year LAUnCH residents receive dedicated time to advance their research project, including data analysis and working on scholarly dissemination. Residents also present to a group of faculty to receive mentorship on their projects.

Led by Drs. Yael Smiley and Lanre Falusi

Trainee Education in Advocacy and Community Health (TEACH) Curriculum

The Trainee Education in Advocacy and Community Health (TEACH) Curriculum is an innovative, multimodal curriculum developed in partnership between the CHAI and Graduate Medical Education, funded by a five-year, \$1 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The TEACH Curriculum trains pediatric residents to understand, identify, and address child poverty in the primary care setting. The curriculum consists of eLearning and experiential learning in the form of community-based activities. Throughout the three years of residency, residents complete the following components: *Epidemiology of Child Poverty, Population Health and Social Determinants of Health, Biomedical Influences of Child Poverty, Taking Action in Primary Care, and Policy and Child Poverty*. Through this curriculum, residents have shown improved knowledge, confidence, and attitudes about child poverty.

Led by the CHAI Advocacy Education Team

Residents On the Hill Day (ROTH)

Residents on the Hill Day is a signature annual event within CHAI's advocacy education portfolio that immerses pediatric residents in the heart of federal health policy. Developed in partnership with Children's National's Government Affairs team, this initiative provides residents with a rare opportunity to engage directly with members of Congress and their staff to discuss the most urgent and emerging issues in pediatric health care.

During the event, residents participate in structured briefings to prepare for legislative meetings, learning how to translate clinical experience into concise, evidence-based policy messages. They then bring those insights to Capitol Hill, where they speak with lawmakers about issues that impact the health and well-being of children. These discussions allow residents to convey the real-world implications of policy decisions and to advocate on behalf of the children and families they serve every day.

Beyond the day's meetings, Residents on the Hill Day is designed as an experiential learning opportunity that cultivates the next generation of physician-advocates. Participants build confidence in legislative advocacy, refine their communication and leadership skills, and gain firsthand understanding of how health policy is shaped at the national level. The experience reinforces CHAI's mission to equip pediatric trainees with the tools, knowledge, and professional networks necessary to influence systemic change and advance child health well beyond the walls of the hospital.

Led by Multidisciplinary Team



GWU Clinical Public Health Track Program for Fellows

CHAI faculty serve as leaders within the Clinical Public Health Graduate Medical Education (CPH GME) Program at George Washington University (GWU) School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The CPH GME Program aims to develop 21st century clinician leaders who have the experience, skills, and knowledge to promote health equity and population health outcomes in three tracks: Health Policy, Quality Improvement & Patient Safety, and Community Health & Advocacy. The CPH GME Tracks integrate applied learning opportunities for trainees drawn from diverse specialties throughout the Children's National fellowship programs and the residencies and fellowships at GWU School of Medicine. The longitudinal curriculum provides learners in each track with unique experiences through a combination of in-person discussions, group projects, self-directed learning, and experiential learning activities.

Led by the CHAI Advocacy Education Team and educators at GWU School of Medicine and Health Sciences



Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI) Affiliate Faculty

The CHAI Affiliate Faculty (CAF) program engages faculty from Children's National Hospital and the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences and School of Nursing who contribute substantially to CHAI's mission of advancing child health equity.

CAF bring expertise across diverse disciplines and play a vital role in shaping CHAI's advocacy agenda. They actively participate in and often lead advocacy education initiatives, legislative advocacy efforts, community benefit programs, and other projects that extend CHAI's impact beyond the hospital walls. CAF also serve as integral partners in advancing CHAI's flagship educational programs — the Leadership in Advocacy, Under-resourced Communities, and Health Equity (LAUNCH) Track; the Policy, Education, Advocacy for Kids (PEAK) Pathway; and Residents on the Hill (ROTH) Day — by mentoring residents, facilitating workshops, guiding advocacy projects, and helping to bridge classroom learning with real-world policy engagement.

CAF members are central to CHAI's culture of continuous learning and professional growth. They participate in monthly Learning Lunches, which highlight emerging issues in child health advocacy, and Advocacy in Motion (AIM) sessions, designed to provide deeper, skills-based learning opportunities and collaborative discussions.

In addition, the program fosters professional development and collaboration through a structured mentoring initiative. This includes both peer mentorship, where faculty support one another through shared experiences and collaboration, and traditional mentor-mentee relationships, which pair more experienced advocates with those seeking guidance to advance their careers in advocacy skills and leadership.

Membership in the Affiliate Faculty is highly selective. Candidates are chosen through a competitive process that considers their advocacy experience, commitment to health equity, and alignment with CHAI's priority activities. Membership is renewed annually based on demonstrated engagement and contributions, ensuring that the program remains dynamic and responsive to evolving advocacy needs.

Intern Advocacy Day

Intern Advocacy Day is also offered to fellows, faculty, and staff to promote interdisciplinary learning. Please refer to page 6 for more details.

Moving Conversations Curriculum

The Moving Conversations Curriculum is also offered to fellows, faculty, and staff upon request. Please refer to page 6 for more details.

CHAI Advocacy Education Awards

Frederick Green Pediatric Resident and Fellow Advocacy Award

This award recognizes two 3rd year pediatric residents and a fellow in their final year who have demonstrated passion and commitment to improving the lives of children through their work as a child health advocate. The work could be at the institutional, community, and/or legislative levels. The residents are recognized at graduation and will receive a certificate and a monetary award from CHAI. The fellow will be recognized at their division-level graduation ceremony and will receive a certificate and monetary award to honor their accomplishment.

CHAI Champion Award

This award is presented to a CHAI Affiliate Faculty (CAF) member who has demonstrated exceptional commitment and sustained engagement in CHAI initiatives throughout the year. The recipient embodies CHAI's mission through active participation in programs such as Community Health Improvement Week (CHIW), mental health advocacy, community outreach activities, and educational initiatives, exemplifying leadership and dedication to advancing child health and well-being beyond the hospital walls.

Advocacy All-Star Award

This award recognizes a CHAI Affiliate Faculty (CAF) member who has demonstrated extraordinary advocacy in one or more areas, including policy development, community based initiatives, curriculum implementation, and research, over the past year. The recipient exemplifies CHAI's values through their leadership and impact, whether or not their advocacy efforts are directly connected to CHAI projects.

"I really do think a day at the Capital Area Food Bank could be used as a wellness activity for hospital employees... And it's just refreshing to break up the day to day routine and reconnect with the community in a tangible way; reminds us of why we serve in the first place."

–Children's National Pediatric Hospitalist

Selected Grants, Publications, Abstracts and Presentations from CHAI Advocacy Education Initiatives and Partnerships

Grants:

- 5-Year Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry Career Development Award from HRSA for the creation of the Trainee Education in Advocacy and Community Health (TEACH) Curriculum
- Bloomberg American Health Initiative Award to develop an online educational module for child health providers to address chronic school absenteeism in clinical practice
- American Academy of Pediatrics Rome CATCH Visiting Professor Award
- Macy Faculty Scholars Program, a 2-year career development program sponsored by the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation
- Mildred and Morris Michael Award for Innovation in Health Professions Education to expand the TEACH Curriculum

Selected Journal Publications:

- Falusi O, Linton J, Fortuna L (eds.). Children in Immigrant Families: Advancing Health Equity. *Academic Pediatrics*. 2024; 24(5) Supplement.
- Falusi O, Weisz J, Clarence I, Lichtenstein C, Coddington D, Avent G, Beers L, Ottolini M. Leveraging E-Learning and Community Assets to "TEACH" Residents to Address Child Poverty. *Academic Pediatrics*. 2022;22(5):850-857.
- Falusi O, Chun-Seeley L, de la Torre D, Dooley DG, Baiyewu M, Gborkorquellie TT, Merrill CT, Davis E, Ward MC. Teaching the Teachers: Development and Evaluation of a Racial Health Equity Curriculum for Faculty. *MedEdPORTAL*. 2023 Mar 28;19:11305. doi: 10.15766/mep_2374-8265.11305.
- Bell S, Falusi O, Lindo E. Elimination of race-based medicine: a call to action. *Lancet Child Adolesc Health*. 2022 Sep;6(9):597-598.
- Weisz J, Magee P, Clarence I, Ottolini, Falusi O. "TEACH"ing Medical Students to Address Child Poverty: A Multimodal Curriculum. *Academic Pediatrics*. 2022;22(1):168-170.
- Klein M, Hanson E, Lichtenstein C, Mogilner L, Falusi O, Tolliver D, Lungelow L, Chamberlain L. Poverty Related Education in Pediatrics: Current State, Gaps and Call to Action. *Academic Pediatrics*. 2021 Nov;21(8): S177-S183.
- Chokshi B, Walsh K, Dooley D, Falusi O, Deyton L, Beers L. Teaching Trauma-Informed Care: A Symposium for Medical Students. *MedEdPORTAL* December 30, 2020.
- Faraz Covelli A, Ben-Maimon S, Falusi O, Darcy-Mahoney A. Assessing Nurse Practitioner and Medical Student Experience and Self-efficacy Caring for Patients and Families Living in Poverty. *Education in the Health Professions*. 2020;3:27-32.
- Darcy-Mahoney A, Dooley D, Davis N, Stephens M, Falusi O. Closing the Gap: Addressing Adversity and Promoting Education in Early Childhood Visits. *Advances in Family Practice Nursing*. 2019;1:183-199.
- Lichtenstein C, de la Torre D, Falusi O, Sims A, Smiley Y, Baiyewu M. Using a Community Bus Tour to Increase Knowledge of Health Disparities among Pediatric Residents. *Academic Pediatrics*. 2018;18(6):717-719.
- Weisz J, Chun-Seeley L, Barber J, Coddington D, Lichtenstein C, Linton JM, Avent G, Ottolini M, Falusi O. "TEACH"ing: Evaluation of a 3-Year Multimodal Child Poverty Curriculum. *Pediatrics Open Science* 2025 July;1(3):1-9.
- Uppal P, Blumenreich S, Falusi O. Protecting Youth with Disabilities from School Shootings: Where do Pediatricians Step In? *Journal of Health Advocacy*. 2025 October.

Electronic Publications:

- "TEACH Curriculum." Modules and activities accepted to OPENPediatrics.org learning system.
- "Medicaid." Contributing authors of online module of the Academic Pediatric Association U.S. Child Poverty Curriculum. Published on the American Academy of Pediatrics website.
- "Pediatric Adversity and Early Brain Development." Co-authors of online module of the National League for Nursing.
- "Moving Beyond Bystanding... to Disrupting Racism." Co-authors and presenters of online CME course on antiracism.
- Equitably Engaging Priority Populations in Pediatric Clinical Research: Co-authors and presenters of online CME course on equity in research.

Oral and Poster Presentations Given at:

- Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting
- American Academy of Pediatrics Legislative Conference
- American Academy of Pediatrics National Conference and Exhibition
- Association of Pediatric Program Directors Annual Meeting
- Harvard-Macy Institute
- Eastern Society for Pediatric Research – American Federation for Medical Research Combined Conference
- Grand Rounds Presentations at peer Top Ten Children's Hospitals
- American Academy of Nursing Policy Conference
- Children's National Hospital Research, Education, and Innovation Week
- Children's National Hospital Professorial Rounds
- AMEE (International Association of Health Professions Educators)
- Gold Foundation Humanism Summit

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