HealthPartners Children’s Health Initiative
Building Blocks for a Healthy Beginning

Aim
HealthPartners aim is to improve the health and well-being of children from pregnancy through age 5 by promoting early brain development and providing family-centered care while strengthening our community.

Areas of Focus

Promote Early Brain Development:
• Read, Talk, Sing
• Chemical-Free Beginnings
• Social Emotional Development

Provide Family-Centered Care:
• Breastfeeding Promotion
• Postpartum Depression
• Standard Workflows
• Obstetrics-Pediatrics-Family Medicine Collaboration

Strengthen Communities:
• Supporting High-Risk Families
• Teen Pregnancy Prevention
• Early Childhood Experience

Some Examples of Our Current Work

Standard Workflows

In 2013, HealthPartners combined with Park Nicollet – a partnership focused on improved health, better experiences and more affordable care for patients, members and the community. The two organizations are now officially joined under the name HealthPartners and a single, consumer-governed board of directors. This new integrated health care and financing organization serves more than 1.5 million medical and dental members and more than 1.2 million patients primarily in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. One of the aims of the Children’s Health Initiative is to promote standards, workflows and tools across the HealthPartners system. Currently, workflows and tools vary across the newly combined organization. As the Children’s Health Initiative seeks to improve the care and outcomes for pediatric patients enterprise-wide, the need to standardize and spread best practices is evident. Our focus on reducing variation will be the backbone for our ability to transform the health outcomes for children in our care.

Chemical-Free Beginnings

Background
Maternal substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco and other drugs) is a leading preventable cause of mental, physical and psychological problems in infants and children. In 2012-2013, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) in the United States found that the rate of illicit drug use among pregnant women aged 15-17 years was 14.6 percent. 8.6 percent among pregnant women aged 18-25 years, and 3.2 percent among pregnant women aged 26-44 years.¹

Aim
• Screen all pregnant women for tobacco, alcohol and drug use.
• Support women to become chemical-free so that their babies are healthy at birth.

Actions Taken
HealthPartners is expanding its successful Mother-Baby Program which started at HealthPartners Riverside and Como Clinics in 1989. As of March 2015, all 27 HealthPartners primary care clinics offer universal screening for tobacco and drugs and nurse support for high-risk pregnant women for a drug- and alcohol-free pregnancy. There have been 527 referrals since the Mother-Baby Program expansion. Park Nicollet clinics are currently in the process of developing a workflow to support the Mother-Baby Program within their clinics. The expanded Mother-baby program will universally screen every pregnant woman who seeks pregnancy care at HealthPartners, using a urine screen and a questionnaire. Patients at high-risk will work with a social worker or nurse trained to counsel pregnant women to set and achieve realistic abstinence goals. HealthPartners will use a screening tool that is confidential and helps create a trusting and non-judgmental relationship between a mother and her caregiver.

Results
By the end of 2016, all HealthPartners clinics will be offering these supportive services to pregnant women.

Social Emotional Development

Background
An estimated 12 to 16 percent of children in the United States have at least one developmental delay. As many as one-half of American children with a developmental delay will not be identified by the time they enter kindergarten, even though most will show mild developmental delays by two years of age.² Brain, cognitive and behavioral development delays early in life are strongly linked to health later in life, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, obesity and depression. There is very strong evidence that social disadvantages experienced in childhood can limit opportunities for health throughout life.

Aim
• Screen children for social emotional and developmental delays in all clinics.
• Better connect children and families with early childhood developmental resources in our system as well as in the community.

Actions Taken
HealthPartners – Park Nicollet clinics have been screening for several years using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3), Ages & Stages – Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) and the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) tools. All other HealthPartners clinics will be screening using the same tools by the beginning of 2016 after a successful pilot in 5 clinics. A cross-organizational workgroup, including developmental pediatricians, has been tasked with evaluating the intervals for screening and spreading best practices across HealthPartners. The workgroup is also working to streamline the referral process to community resources and schools in partnership with organizations like Help Me Grow, an interagency initiative of the State of Minnesota (Department of Education, Department of Health and Department of Human Services). Results
By early 2016, all children at HealthPartners will be screened using the ASQ3, ASQ-SE and M-CHAT screening tools at various intervals from birth to 3 years. When indicated a family will receive further evaluation and assistance.

Future Work

• HealthPartners will expand beyond Reach Out and Read and engage our families prenatally about the importance of Read, Talk, Sing and its impact on early brain development.
• HealthPartners will improve knowledge and awareness in the community around Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and will implement tools and interventions that promote positive early childhood experiences.
• HealthPartners is partnering to develop specific measures to drive clinical improvements. We also are striving for population level measures that affirm our work and impact on improved children’s health.

Contact: ChildrensHealthInitiative@HealthPartners.com

References
² Nordenberg, D., Parra, M., & Kagan, J., Screening for Developmental Delays. In The Newborn. 2011 Sep 1 by Elsevier Inc; 525-539
³ Ryherd, P., Park Nicollet Health Services, Assessing the Family of Care. Stillwater Medical Group, HealthPartners Medical Group in Park Nicollet.

Medical Groups within the HealthPartners Family of CMI

Age & Stages Questionnaire – Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) Survey Questions:
Does your baby try to hurt other children, adults, or animals (for example, by kicking or biting)?
When your baby talks to you, does he or she look, or smile?
Does your baby enjoy mealtimes together?

Does your baby enjoy mealtimes together?

Age & Stages Questionnaire

258.

15 months

9 months

4 months

2 months

1 month

30 months

36 months

Promote Early Brain Development:

Prognosis: Infant who was a healthy baby is highly likely to walk, sit, and talk with normal intervals from birth to 3 years.

Early intervention is key to improving outcomes. The intervals we have chosen are based on Healthy Milestones for Minnesota Children, produced by the Minnesota Early Childhood Measurement Workgroup, which is a partnership among schools, families, agencies, and clinics to ensure that all children reach vital milestones.

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