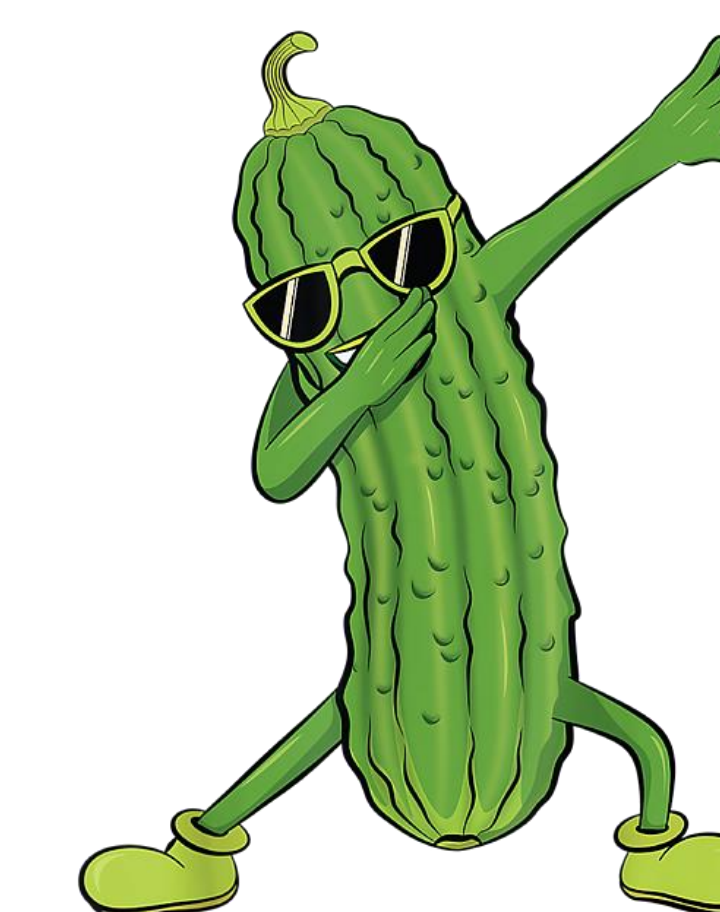


Reducing Inequity in Accessing Mental Health Care in Marginalized Groups by Embedding Psychology Residents in an Inpatient Pediatric Service

Thom Dunn PhD, Emili Pickenpaugh PhD, and Ken Novoa MD

Behavioral Health Services, Denver Health



BACKGROUND

- Access to behavioral health providers for underserved communities is a pervasive issue, particularly for children/families
- Integrated primary care is one strategy to reduce such disparity, if available
- Acute care hospital admissions can provide opportunities for such patients to access behavioral health providers
- We wondered about the efficacy of integrated psychologists/embedded psychology residents in an inpatient pediatrics/PICU service at a public, safety-net hospital

METHOD

- A proactive pediatric psychology C-L (PPPCL) service was developed in 2020 by embedding psychology residents with inpatient pediatrics/PICU service
- Care was taken to be certain that these residents did not duplicate services provided by social work or child life
- We also did not want this service to duplicate care provided by our Psychiatry C-L service, nor be asked to answer questions outside their scope of practice (agitation, medicine recs, etc)

Key Points:

- Psychology residents are embedded with our hospital's pediatrics and PICU services
- This Proactive Pediatric Psychology Consult – Liaison (PPPCL) service launched in 2020
- Designed to not duplicate services provided by Social Work or Child Life
- Augmented a “reactive” Hospital Psychiatry Consult Service (with both PhDs and MDs)
- PPPCL has been successful, expanding from 4 mornings a week to 7 days a week in 3 years
- More than half of the patients and families contacted were BIPOC, reducing inequity when accessing mental health care
- Patients ineligible for integrated primary care are admitted for inpatient care, permitting access to a behavioral health provider

RESULTS

Patient contacts/year

- 2020 – 2021: 158
- 2021 – 2022: 294
- 2022 – 2023: 409

PPPCL Patient Demographics

- Hispanic: 53%
- White: 26%
- Black/African-American: 13%
- Other: 8%

PPPCL Mean (SD) Age

- 11.31 (6.57)

Top PPPCL Patient presentations

- 1) Respiratory: RSV, Bronchiolitis
- 2) Trauma: Falls, MVC, GSW, NAT
- 3) Other: DKA, Fever, Seizure

Top PPPCL Interventions Offered

- 1) Assessment and referral
- 2) Brief psychotherapy
- 3) Care conferences, de-escalation
- 4) Pediatric resident didactics

DISCUSSION

- A proactive psychology service increases access to behavioral health providers, reducing inequity among marginalized groups
- Exemplifies a successful service model for early psychological outreach and prevention for pediatric populations within medical and critical care settings

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This program and poster are supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), under grant number MC1HP42079, as part of an award totaling \$1,570,412, with 50% financed with non-governmental sources. This information or content and conclusions are those of the authors and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.