



*Children's National Medical Center
Child Health Advocacy Institute
Case Statement*

Children learn what they live. This is an old adage that can be both promising, yet daunting in what it foreshadows for our youth, and the responsibility it places on adults. It tells us that those in a position to influence what is learned can shape and even transform lives. As it has for more than 135 years, Children's National Medical Center (Children's) continues to lead the nation in its ability to save children's lives through the diagnosis and treatment of illness and disease. The medical center's new Child Health Advocacy Institute also is poised to become a leader in improving children's lives through care, but also with advocacy, research and education – beginning and ending with what is learned.

What We Know...

Pediatric medical centers, like Children's, have long acted as a safety net for the most vulnerable in our society – called upon to react with the best trained professionals and most advanced technology to treat the sickest of the sick and improve the health and well-being of the community. Certainly being on the “front line” has its advantages. It builds a team of skilled experts and compassionate professionals with the ability to make a difference in those treatment areas where advances are needed most. Being on the “front line” also enables researchers, clinicians, and advocates to *discover* new interventions, *deliver* those interventions through best practice and *disseminate* those best practices through public health and legislative policy. These activities are all supported by the ongoing collection, analysis and monitoring of health information and clinical data that can accurately drive the “call to action” to address current health trends and disparities such as these:

- More than one in ten children in DC suffers from asthma and it remains uncontrolled in about 85% of inner-city children – making asthma the leading cause of school absenteeism due to a chronic disease. (IMPACT-DC)
- Nearly 50% of children born in the year 2000 will develop type-2 diabetes. (CDC, Nation Center for Health Statistics)
- Unintentional injury remains the leading cause of death for children 14 and under. (Safe Kids Worldwide)
- 74% of the estimated uninsured children in DC are eligible, but not enrolled in Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program. (American Academy of Pediatrics)

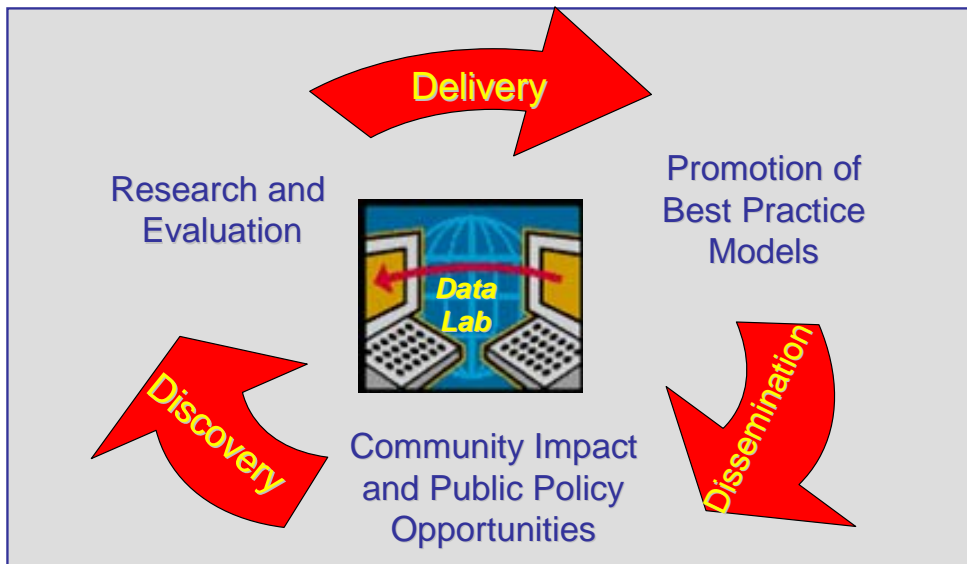
The incorporation of the **Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI)** as an essential element of the academic medical center is a novel approach to preventive health care for children – it establishes that critical link between what is empirically learned on the frontlines to what is possible, and more importantly, what is practical in the broad array of health and public policy interventions.



A common public health parable depicts a man standing by a river when he hears a cry for help. He sees someone struggling in the water, on the verge of drowning. Being an expert swimmer, he jumps in and rescues the victim. Before he has time to rejoice in his success, however, he sees someone else floating by, also crying for help. As soon as he rescues this person, he discovers a third....then a fourth and a fifth. More and more victims float by, taxing his swimming stamina. Finally he walks away. When asked where he is going, he replies, "I'm going up the river to try to stop people from falling in."

The Child Health Advocacy Institute is Children's Hospital's vehicle for working effectively and impactfully upstream.

Child Health Advocacy Institute *Discovery - Delivery - Dissemination*



Conceptual and operational framework for the Child Health Advocacy Institute at Children's National Medical Center, Washington, DC

What We Have Learned...*Discovery*

Children's record of commitment to child health advocacy is longstanding. In 1973, we launched one of the nation's first hospital-based offices of child advocacy through which a campaign focused on the dangers of lead exposure, ultimately led to local and national legislation for lead hazard control and abatement. In the early 1980's, we developed the multidisciplinary prototype for the diagnosis and treatment of child abuse which became a best practice model for the nation.



In 1987, the national Safe Kids Campaign was launched which has now evolved to a worldwide injury prevention movement. In 1990, Children's launched a community and clinical advocacy campaign—*It's Wise to Immunize*, a community-based clinical and educational intervention to prepare children to enter school fully immunized. So, establishment of the ***Child Health Advocacy Institute*** represents a natural extension of our historical efforts, signifying a renewed and expanded commitment to advocacy.

What We Are Learning...*Delivery*

Children's is certainly no stranger to the ***Discovery, Delivery and Dissemination*** approach to pediatric medicine. We have long been an innovator in reaching far beyond the hospital walls. The ability to successfully implement all of the steps of this continuum is what makes us uniquely positioned to impact the lives of children both here at the medical center and in the communities where they live and learn.

Children's touches more than 500,000 children and families each year through an extensive network of neighborhood clinics and community-based programs and initiatives, including:

- Dr. Bear®'s Express – a city-wide immunization and health promotion campaign targeting pre-school age children
- IMPACT DC – a novel asthma education, care and research program expanding to our community health centers throughout the city.
- Children's School Services program – a cadre of professional school nurses providing early detection, screening, referral and preventive services, as well as formal health education in the District of Columbia Public and Public Charter Schools
- DC KIDS – a public-private partnership bringing primary care to children in the foster care system.

These successful and widely-recognized programs, coupled with the hospital's presence and regular activity at the District Building, state houses in Annapolis and Richmond, and on Capitol Hill, has afforded Children's respected access to policy makers to advocate on behalf of improvements in child health and well-being. The ***Child Health Advocacy Institute*** will continue to advance these efforts and take them even further; the CHAI will give the hospital the ability to be *proactive* and *anticipatory* in its approach to addressing the health threats that most impact children and their families on a daily basis.

What we envision...*Dissemination*

The vision behind the ***Child Health Advocacy Institute*** is to transform pediatric health through the demonstration of measurable improvements in pediatric health outcomes. This is best accomplished through the coordinated and equitable application of the medical center's four



mission-driven principles -- Care, Advocacy, Research, and Education – to the community, region, nation, and the world.

Presently, data collection is dispersed across the organization emanating from a variety of inpatient, outpatient and community-based sources. Given the breadth of Children’s market share and reach, active surveillance and population-based assessment of community health trends and status is definitely within reach. Comprehensive coalescence and enterprise-wide analysis of health-related information through a coordinated data lab will allow the ***Child Health Advocacy Institute*** to communicate reliable findings and pose data-driven solutions. Through the discovery, delivery and dissemination approach, the ***Child Health Advocacy Institute*** will serve as a hub for:

- Data collection and analysis across Children’s clinical programs and community-based services through a new state-of-the-art **Child Health Data Lab**;
- The determination of health outcomes that can be documented and substantiated, and used for program development and education;
- The validation of “best practices” that can be shared with health professionals, peer organizations, media, policymakers, and others;
- The compilation, communication and translation for public consumption of research findings and other health information that can direct and influence policy initiatives, and generate national dialogue on models to improve the status of children’s health across the country.
- The training of health professionals in advocacy work and an avenue for scholarly professional development in the realm of advocacy and public policy.

In short, the ***Child Health Advocacy Institute*** will act as a repository of health information and a “go to” resource for anyone, or any entity, invested in the health and well-being of children. The CHAI will also aggressively and proactively pursue both traditional and non-traditional pathways to address the most serious threats facing children and families now and on into the future.

Conclusion

Ultimately, our goal is that the exceptional work and extraordinary learning that will take place through the ***Child Health Advocacy Institute*** will, in the end, determine how a child will live, independent of whether they may ever set foot in the medical center.