

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Bridging the Gaps Site:

St. Christopher's is located in Philadelphia, a city ranked as the poorest of the 10 largest cities in America. One in four families live below the poverty line. The Center for the Urban Child (CUC) at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children seeks to address not only patient medical concerns but also social determinants of health. During primary care encounters, interdisciplinary staff consistently strive to both educate families about and facilitate connections to community resources. This includes referring patients to agencies that offer assistance for housing, food, insurance, legal and mental health problems as well as support for transportation to medical appointments.

Navigator Background:

A prerequisite of working at this site was prior participation in the Pediatric Navigator Curriculum offered during the preceding academic year as part of Drexel University College of Medicine's Health Advocacy Practicum. The foundational knowledge of the Navigator Curriculum enabled the BTG interns to collaborate with the CUC medical team, promote advocacy initiatives and support the ongoing evolution of the Navigator Curriculum. BTG interns were asked to complete a variety of tasks during their 7 week summer internship. In addition to providing resources, navigators completed several projects including: HAP orientation videos, Smartphrase Resource Development, and Portal & Covid vaccine sign ups.

PROJECTS & RESULTS

Pediatric Navigation:

- 16+ hours a week working at St. Christopher's Center for the Urban Child in the primary care practice.
- Streamlined the visit for families and physicians by providing screening, resources, and counseling in "wait times"
- Acted as patient advocates, supporting families for the entire visit and sharing any main concerns or helpful information with medical providers to improve care coordination
- Escorted patient and their families to hospital lab and time critical specialty appointments
- **Interns navigated for over 100 patients this summer.**

HAP Orientation Videos:

- **Based on feedback from former Pediatric Navigators, BTG interns developed seven orientation videos to guide future Navigators**
- Videos centered on best practices and include examples of a full navigator visit
- Videos aim to provide Navigators with confidence and understanding when stepping into their role at the beginning of the year

EPIC Smart-Phrase Resource Development:

- Interns developed Resource SmartPhrases that were programmed into the electronic health record for use in care coordination
- Bilingual (Spanish/English) phrases will help streamline linkages to Cap4Kids.org, a website repository of local and federal resources
- **Smart-Phrases were developed for 15 Resource categories including: Food, Housing, Utilities, COVID, Childcare, School, Legal, Insurance, Benefits and more**

Portal & Covid Vaccine Sign Ups:

- Interns helped parents sign up for St. Christopher's online health portal so that they can see their children's medical records, lab results, vaccines records, and communicate with their doctor
- Interns also provided resources for the COVID vaccine
- Interns encouraged families to discuss the safety of the vaccine with their doctor
- **Over 100 patients were signed up for the portal and sign up instructions were revised for clarity**
- **Over 15 patients were helped to sign up for COVID vaccination**



Image 1. Simulation of a navigation session where interns connected patients with resources



Image 2. Live action picture from an orientation video depicting the navigator counseling a family.



Image 3. An example of a smart-phrase developed by interns.



Image 4. A picture depicting the Portal Sign Up station

REFLECTION

Anthony Tirone: "This summer has been an immense period of learning and growth in such a short period of time. ***In my time as a BTG intern I have experienced health inequities and their impact on families. More importantly, I have learned how to fight against these challenges and advocate for patients.*** The supervising physicians have shared tools that will help me to persevere through barriers and ultimately put patients first, something I will appreciate for the rest of my medical career. I will use these experiences from Bridging the Gaps to improve future settings I am a part of, with the hope of providing this level of care for every patient I encounter."

Vilajet Kovaci: "A summer experience I will never forget. I was able to spend time with some of the kindest and compassionate doctors at St. Chris, where together, we worked to reduce barriers to healthcare. The different projects we worked on, whether it was developing smart codes or making orientation videos, allowed me to see how we can truly implement change so that others can succeed and thrive in this setting. ***It felt empowering to be part of something bigger, something that will go on to benefit others even after we finish this program. I hope to take away some of these memories as well as goals to wherever I end up as a practicing physician, providing care that is equitable and of highest quality.***"