



# AMCHP Family Engagement Initiatives

## Background

Family engagement plays an essential role in state Title V maternal and child health (MCH) programs. Family members volunteer, advise, and/or are employed by state Title V MCH, and/or children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) programs. They bring unique insight and experience and are prepared to advocate on behalf of MCH. Family engagement refers to a range of activities that engage families in the planning, development, and evaluation of programs and policies at the community, organizational, and policy levels.

Families contribute invaluable insight and experience to AMCHP programs and policies. Families advise us on the development of publications and programs and serve on committees and advisory workgroups and on the board of directors. Families also are a key audience for the AMCHP Annual Conference. In fact, families who attend the annual conference consistently praise the value of the conference to network with other families and Title V programs and to understand more clearly how Title V makes a difference in the lives of children, youth, families, and communities. The purpose of this fact sheet is to highlight the variety of ways that AMCHP is engaging families across programs and policy activities.

## AMCHP Activities

AMCHP engages families across the organization. These efforts fall into three main areas:

1. Organizational structure
2. Leadership development
3. Program and policy activities

Throughout these areas, family leaders provide the perspective of families, co-design activities and products, brainstorm and give feedback on new initiatives, facilitate engagement of other families within their networks, provide tools and resources, serve as content experts, review and edit content for publications and trainings, and generally contribute their expertise as a family member.

## About AMCHP

The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) is a national resource, partner and advocate for state public health leaders and others working to improve the health of women, children, youth and families, including those with special health care needs.

AMCHP members come from the highest levels of state government and include directors of maternal and child health programs, directors of programs for children with special health care needs, and other public health leaders who work with and support state maternal and child health programs. Our members directly serve all women and children nationwide, and strive to improve the health of all women, infants, children and adolescents, including those with special health care needs, by administering critical public health education and screening services, and coordinating preventive, primary and specialty care. Our membership also includes academic, advocacy and community-based family health professionals, as well as families themselves.

AMCHP builds successful programs by disseminating best practices; advocating on our members' behalf in Washington; providing technical assistance; convening leaders to share experiences and ideas; and advising states about involving partners to reach our common goal of healthy children, healthy families, and healthy communities.

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## Organizational Structure

Family leaders are a part of critical elements of the infrastructure of the organization. As part of our commitment to meaningful partnership, we have formalized our [Family Engagement & Partnership Guiding Principles & Values](#).

### Family Representatives on the Board of Directors and Committees

Family engagement and partnership is a critical element of AMCHP's work. One of the many ways we partner with families, and ensure their perspective is part of the conversation, is with two Family Representative seats on our Board of Directors. In addition, family leaders are eligible to serve in the Director-at-Large positions on the board and as members of the executive committee. You can visit our website at [Family Engagement Current Initiatives - AMCHP](#) to view short videos from current and past family leaders about their experience serving in this position! To learn more about our Board members, visit [Our Board - AMCHP](#).



Families play a key role in shaping AMCHP programs and policies. At AMCHP, families advise on the development of publications and programs by serving on all of our committees. To learn more about our committees visit [Our Committees - AMCHP](#).

### Family Leader on Staff

AMCHP recognizes the unique expertise that family leaders bring to issues affecting them and their loved ones and supports the model of family-professional partnerships. In 2009, AMCHP created a staff position specifically for a family leader. In this position, the family leader on staff acts as a liaison to other family leaders, works to help ensure that the family voice is represented throughout AMCHP activities, and serves as one of the family leader representatives on behalf of the organization.

### Family Delegates

Each Title V program paying dues may designate up to five delegates who have voting rights and the fifth delegate seat must be held by a family member connected to the Title V program. This delegate is called a 'Family Delegate.' The Family Delegate is an active advocate for all families in their state or territory, including families with special health care needs, and works within state, territorial, and/or community systems of care to advise, promote, and educate families and program/policy leaders on new and existing policies/programs. Historically, family leaders have represented children and youth with special health care needs, and it is the aim to have family representatives from all MCH programs.

To learn more about the Family Delegate role, visit [Family Engagement Current Initiatives - AMCHP](#).

### Family Leadership, Education, And Development (LEAD) Committee

The purpose of the Family LEAD Committee is to provide board-level support and leadership to develop and implement effective programs, strategies and policies that advance family and youth involvement in maternal and child health issues, including children and youth with special health care needs, at the local, state, and national levels. The Family LEAD Committee envisions that all families be equipped to be effective leaders, advocates, and partners in health care and in their communities.

Members of the committee support the work of AMCHP in a variety of ways, including activities during the AMCHP Annual Conference, serving as reviewers for family and youth applications and awards, presenting on and/or hosting webinars and virtual trainings for family leaders, writing articles for AMCHP publications, and supporting work under AMCHP's strategic plan.

## Leadership Development

Developing family leaders and helping them obtain the tools and resources they need to be active participants in the workforce is a main priority of AMCHP.

### Family Leader Activities

AMCHP hosts a variety of activities to support and uplift family leaders. These activities include webinars for Family Delegates and all family leaders on various topics identified as important to them, calls with the family representatives on AMCHP's Board of Directors, opportunities related to AMCHP's Annual Conference, articles written by family leaders and featured in AMCHP's publication Pulse, and a variety of opportunities to share best practices and serve as subject matter experts throughout the year. These activities also provide a forum for family leaders to meet and network with each other.

### Leadership Lab Family Leader Cohort

For over 20 years, AMCHP has supported the development of maternal and child health leaders through formal and informal learning opportunities, experience, dialogue, feedback, peer-to-peer learning, mentoring, coaching, and more. To meet the expanding needs of Title V staff, AMCHP redesigned our approach to leadership development by launching the Leadership Lab. One of the most important aspects of the Leadership Lab is that it contains several cohorts: Family Leaders, Directors, Epidemiologists, Title V Staff, and Adolescent Health Leaders. This model gives family leaders the benefit of an individualized track to meet their unique needs while also providing integrated learning opportunities with all cohorts for more holistic leadership development.

To learn more, visit the Leadership Lab website at [Leadership Lab - AMCHP](#).

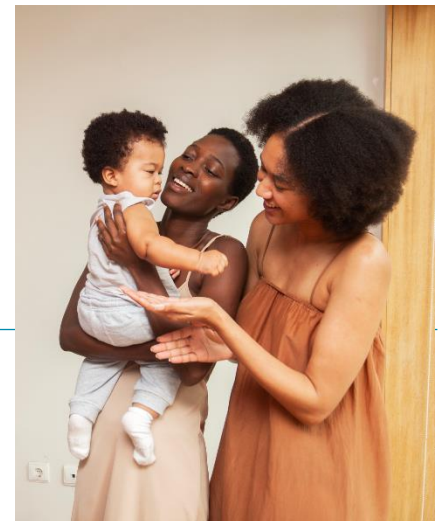
### Family Engagement Community of Practice (CoP)

Since 2015, AMCHP has hosted a Community of Practice (CoP) on Family Engagement. The goal of the AMCHP Family Engagement CoP is to increase Title V capacity to engage families in their work. The CoP provides a platform to share ideas, innovations, lessons learned, successes, and best practices from subject matter experts. Members of the CoP are those working with families, and on family engagement initiatives, across Title V & MCH. This includes but is not limited to, MCH/Title V Directors, CYSHCN/CSHCN Directors, and Family Leaders. The CoP typically runs for approximately eight months.

### Family Engagement and Leadership Web Page

AMCHP has web pages specifically devoted to family engagement. The web pages include tabs for important information on family leadership development, Family Delegates, new and current initiatives, survey reports and case studies, and tools and resources.

To explore the Web pages, visit [Family Engagement Overview - AMCHP](#).



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## Program and Policy Activities

Families are both engaged in the development of, and a target audience for, program and policy activities at AMCHP.

### The National Maternal & Child Health Workforce Development Center

AMCHP, in collaboration with The National Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Workforce Development Center (WDC), has an Equity & Engagement (E&E) Core. The following are the vision and missions of the E&E Core:

**Vision:** To foster an evolving culture of equity, focused on supporting meaningful engagement of people with lived experience within the MCH WDC and among Title V programs.

**Mission:** To support Title V professionals as they build their equity capacity and better engage people with lived experience. We provide tailored tools and resources for individual and collective equity and engagement work, including:

- Supporting intentional, strategic approaches to equity and engagement.
- Providing language and definitions of equity and engagement that are useful to professionals at every level.
- Providing practical, step-by-step guides to engagement with communities that are different than your own.
- Helping groups identify and refine their equity goals.
- Working with professionals to strengthen their “equity muscles.”

**Internal Mission:** The WDC is committed to doing our own equity and engagement work. To guide the WDC equity and engagement work we:

- Help cores and teams recognize the emotional labor of equity and engagement work, and do the self-reflection required to build capacity.
- Routinely assess staff and leadership incorporation of equity and engagement principles into their work within the center.
- Support intentional, strategic approaches to equity and engagement.
- Emphasize patience, humility, and relationship building as we work to achieve solutions to disrupt long-standing inequities.
- Recognize and address the multiple, intersectional systems of oppression (patriarchy, racism, ableism, etc.) that contribute to inequities and that have silenced people with lived experience.



For more information and resources, visit the E&E Core page here: [Equity & Engagement with People with Lived Experience - National MCH Workforce Development Center \(unc.edu\)](https://www.unc.edu/eandengagement/)

## MCH Essentials Series

The MCH Essentials Series from AMCHP was developed as a Title V learning platform to assist MCH professionals, students, families, and people with lived experience. A library of MCH resources, accessible from any location at any time, it covers key pieces of the foundational knowledge needed for successful and equitable leadership in a variety of MCH/CYSHN roles and contexts.

The history of MCH, racial equity, and youth empowerment are among the subjects covered. Everyone interested in expanding their knowledge in the various disciplines or journeys in MCH/CYSHN will find the information tailored to their needs. The *MCH Essentials Series* provides a chance to learn more about MCH subjects and issues related to the diversity of MCH asynchronously. This is all relevant for families who are interested in becoming more versed in the structure and intended outcomes of the systems (e.g., Title V) and programs aimed at meeting their needs.

We are currently in the process of revamping the *MCH Essentials Series* so that it functions more like an orientation to MCH, which can benefit jurisdictional Title V staff, consultants, and partners coming to this work from diverse pathways (i.e., those outside of public health, including family and community leadership). In addition to ensuring that all current and aspiring professionals have access to foundational learning opportunities, the orientation content will promote practices (e.g., culturally sensitive communication, valuing experiential evidence in decision-making) that will better equip all professionals to engage and partner with families.

To learn more, visit [MCH Essentials Series - AMCHP](https://www.amchp.org/mch-essentials-series)

## Promoting Innovation in State MCH Policymaking (PRISM)

AMCHP and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) launched the PRISM Learning Community, funded by MCHB, in 2018 to build state and territorial health agency program and policy-making capacity to address substance use and mental health in MCH populations, with an emphasis on perinatal people with substance use disorders. The PRISM team regularly engages people with lived experience of substance use disorder and mental health challenges (i.e., peer recovery specialists, parents and youth in recovery, etc.) to codesign educational events and resources for the learning

community. Through the learning community, cross-agency teams have also received technical assistance on equitable strategies to engage family members impacted by substance use disorder in their policy development, implementation, and evaluation efforts.

### State Public Health Autism Resource Center (SPHARC)

[AMCHP's SPHARC](#), which is funded by MCHB, is a comprehensive web-based resource center intended to provide ongoing technical assistance and facilitate cross-state learning to increase the capacity of states, particularly Title V programs and HRSA state autism implementation grantees, in developing and implementing systems of care for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities (ASD/DD). SPHARC engages family leaders and others with lived experience with ASD/DD in developing and delivering technical assistance to help states improve systems of care through webinars, workshop presentations, peer-to-peer exchanges, etc. Several family-led organizations have been past recipients of the HRSA state autism grants and all grantees are required to engage families in meaningful roles on their projects.



### AMCHP Every Mother Initiative

With support from [Merck for Mothers](#), the AMCHP Every Mother Initiative was launched in 2013 to help states take specific and focused steps to reduce maternal mortality and severe morbidity. At its core, the Every Mother Initiative is about peer learning and mentorship. To facilitate this learning, AMCHP hosts 15-month Action Learning Collaboratives (ALCs), or multidisciplinary learning communities that come together to address a common public health issue. Every Mother ALC aims to strengthen state maternal mortality review (MMR) capacity and support states in taking action based on MMR committee recommendations. States participating in the ALCs include families and consumers in the design and execution of their respective MMR data-to-action translation projects.

### Innovation Hub

[AMCHP's Innovation Hub](#) is a public, online platform that facilitates peer learning, builds the MCH evidence base, and identifies and promotes effective and equitable practices and policies grounded in evidence that have a collective impact on the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. It is home to the [MCH Innovations Database](#), a searchable repository of “what’s working” in MCH. There are currently 44 practices (roughly 23.3% of the total number of practices) and one policy in the database that address or support family and youth engagement.

### Replication Projects

On an annual basis, AMCHP awards up to four organizations to replicate a practice from the MCH Innovations Database as a part of its [Replication Projects](#). Awardees receive coaching from a representative of the practice being replicated as well as tailored assistance from AMCHP to support replication in their unique context.

Over the past 12 years, AMCHP, with support from MCHB, has awarded eight organizations to replicate family and youth engagement-oriented practices from the MCH Innovations Database. This represents 40% of the overall number of technical assistance awards given out since 2016. Below are the following eight practices that have been replicated through this opportunity:

- [Youth and Young Adult Transition – Children’s Medical Service](#) (Emerging)
- [Transition Interagency Group Envisioning Realization of Self \(TIGERS\)](#) (Emerging)
- [Pediatric Practice Enhancement Project](#) (Promising)
- [Women of Color Health Equity Collective](#) (Promising)
- [PATCH Teen Educator Program](#) (Best, replicated three times)
- [Innovative Approaches: Community Systems Building Grants for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs](#) (Best)
- [NC Project Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education \(AWARE\)/Advancing Coordinated and Timely InterVentions, Awareness, Training, and Education \(ACTIVATE\)](#) (Best)

## Building Resilience from Lived Experience

Supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under grant number 5 NU38OT000296-05-00 and a cooperative agreement with the Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Supports (CSTLTS), AMCHP has developed a collection of stories that aim to help us begin to understand the depth and complexity of the needs of women, children, and families during public health emergencies. These unique stories allow us to first listen to individuals who have experienced the personal and professional impacts of emergencies, with the aim of:

- Building the evidence base for policies and practices that support equity-centered emergency responses;
- Prompting meaningful action at all levels, including among Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and related program staff within jurisdictional health agencies; and
- Ensuring others with lived experience feel seen and consider sharing their stories.

To learn more, visit [Building Resilience From Lived Experience – AMCHP](#).

## Family Engagement for Policy

AMCHP ensures that family leaders are engaged at all levels in the development and implementation of our policy agenda through several mechanisms. First, family leaders serve on our Legislative and Health Care Finance Committee, which has the primary charge of developing the AMCHP policy agenda and making recommendations for all policy positions taken by the association. Then, AMCHP staff tailor trainings and support for family leaders who are able to make visits to their elected officials during the AMCHP Annual Conference. Finally, on request, AMCHP staff regularly provide policy briefings to the AMCHP Family LEAD Committee and family leader webinars and/or virtual trainings.

## Summary

Organizational Structure	Leadership Development	Program and Policy Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family Representatives on the Board of Directors and Committees</li><li>• Family Leader on Staff</li><li>• Family Delegates</li><li>• Family LEAD Committee</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family Leader Activities</li><li>• Leadership Lab, Family Leader Cohort</li><li>• Family Engagement Community of Practice (CoP)</li><li>• Family Engagement Web Pages</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The National Maternal &amp; Child Health Workforce Development Center</li><li>• MCH Essentials Series</li><li>• Promoting Innovation in State MCH Policymaking (PRISM)</li><li>• State Public Health Autism Resource Center (SPHARC)</li><li>• The AMCHP Every Mother Initiative</li><li>• Innovation Hub</li><li>• Replication Projects</li><li>• Building Resilience from Lived Experience</li><li>• Family Engagement for Policy</li></ul>

## AMCHP Staff Contact

### Michelle Crawford

Senior Specialist, Family Leadership Initiatives

[mcrawford@amchp.org](mailto:mcrawford@amchp.org)