

ANNUAL REPORT



Boston Children's Hospital
Family Advisory Council

FY20
October 1, 2024 -
September 30, 2025
25

Boston Children's Hospital-Wide
Family Advisory Council

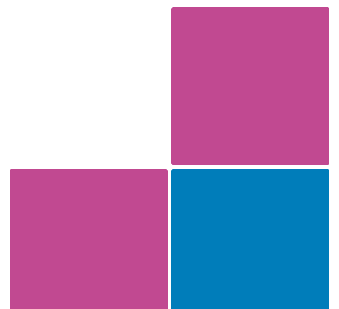


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A message from our co-chairs

At Boston Children's Hospital, we believe in partnering with our patients and families to shape the future of our organization. Our Family Advisory Council plays a significant role in this by partnering with Boston Children's leadership and staff on projects that influence patient and family experiences before, during and after their hospital experience.

This year, we are pleased to share with you some key highlights from our journey that speak to supporting our patients and families, educating workforce members and creative partnerships.

Above all, we are grateful for the dedicated and passionate patient and family advisors who commit their time and experiences to this council, and for the Boston Children's workforce who continue to welcome patient and family voices into important improvement conversations and decisions.



Erin Poirier
FAC Parent Co-Chair
(2023-25)



Jon Whiting
DNP, RN, NE-BC, CCRN
Vice President and
Associate Chief Nurse,
Nursing/Patient Care &
Clinical Operations,
FAC Senior Leadership
Co-Chair

About the FAC

Overview

- Founded in 1982
- Volunteer membership
- Co-led by senior hospital leader and elected caregiver
- Driven by a culture of progress through partnership

Mission

Drawing on the lived experience of Boston Children's patients and families, we advance patient and family-centered engagement to achieve the highest standard of safe, comprehensive, and compassionate care. We collaborate with leadership, staff, and other families to impact decisions across the system of care.



"The Family Advisory Council has informed meaningful improvements across Boston Children's. By bringing the voice of patients and families to strategic conversations, whether in council meetings or on hospital committees, they strengthen our promise to deliver the highest quality, equitable care. We are deeply grateful for their continued dedication and partnership."

Sara Toomey, MD, MPhil, MPH, MSc
SVP, Chief Safety and Quality Officer,
Chief Experience Officer
Physician Liaison to FAC

FAC members engage with the hospital in three key ways:



Advise & Share

Provide feedback at monthly council meetings and in focus groups, workgroups, and committees.



Partner & Support

Participate in hospital committees that are focused on the strategic and corporate goals of Boston Children's.



Drive & Lead

Identify and drive projects that are important to the FAC, working with hospital departments along the way.

Family Advisory Council Members

Active members

Ronny Bachrach
Katie Baker
Jackey Bennett
Tiffany Benson
Lisa Cleary
Melissa Crimmins
Alisha Durant
Steve Favulli
Kevin Flynn
Amanda Gannaway
Andrea Johnston
Amanda Lane
Jinah Lee
Esterlina MacInnes
Ali Mahady
Oana Geambasu
Morin
Erin Poirier
(parent co-chair)
Padmaja Raman
Yolanda Ramos
Suzanne Roma
Maria Alice Melo
de los Santos
Margot Schwartz
Molly Urban
Maria Valencia-
Devin



Emeritus members

Natasha Aljalian
Brenda Allair
Kate Bazinsky
Lisa Burgess
Valerie Fleishman
Sue McCarthy
Sarah Morris
Bill O'Donnell
Erin Sullivan
Aimee Williamson



Jon Whiting, DNP,
RN, NE-BC, CCRN
VP & Associate
Chief Nurse,
Clinical & Patient
Care Operations
Senior leadership
Co-Chair



Sara Toomey, MD,
Mphil, MPH, MSc
SVP, Chief Safety
& Quality Officer,
Chief Experience
Officer
Physician Liaison
to FAC



Lisa Rubino,
MBA
Director of the
Office of
Experience
FAC Staff
Member



Katie Litterer
Program
Manager,
Family
Partnerships
FAC Staff
Member

How we work

Driven by a 3-year strategic plan supported by annual goals, we work to weave the voices of patients and families into improvement efforts across Boston Children's. Our efforts are rooted in the following values.

01 Progress through partnership



02 Inclusion and belonging



03 Shared accountability and measurement of impact



04 Alignment with Boston Children's enterprise goals and strategies



CREATIVITY

We tailor family partnership engagements to individual bodies of work, workgroup members, timelines, schedules, priorities and barriers.



INNOVATION

As our membership continues to evolve, our council practices and norms also evolve in order to remain member-focused and member-driven.



SHARING

We share our learnings and our successes in a variety of ways to demonstrate the benefits of partnership within and beyond our organization.



Key highlights

The highlighted projects below illustrate different ways in which the FAC supports Boston Children's strategic priorities and core values. FAC member efforts positively impact not only our Boston Children's community but also extend to sharing what we have learned with others.



Care Bundles Program

Since 2021, members of the FAC have been organizing this initiative, which offers staff small care and comfort items to address the essential human needs of patients and families.



Family Partnerships in Brazil

Our Portuguese-speaking Family Advisor and FAC staff worked to support the establishment of the first family partnerships program at a pediatric hospital in Brazil.



Disability Competent Care

FAC members evaluated and offered feedback on the learning modules designed to educate BCH nursing staff about Disability Competent Care—what it entails and how to effectively provide it. These educational resources are now being implemented for other clinical staff, with plans to adapt them for administrative personnel as well.



IPFCC Learning Community

A team consisting of FAC members and a hospital leader engaged in a nine-month learning community, collaborating with 14 other pediatric hospitals. The focus of this initiative was to enhance FAC functionality, ensuring that the voices of those we serve are effectively represented in our work.

Impact story

Inpatient Adaptive Equipment

65 new pieces of
adaptive
equipment
purchased



Project overview

The **Inpatient Adaptive Equipment Task Force** was established in June 2024 to address concerns raised by patients and families about the accessibility of adaptive equipment during inpatient admissions. This **equipment aims to meet the needs of pediatric patients, adolescents, young adults, and individuals of size.**



Partnership

The Family Advisory Council and E-Advisors were integral in providing valuable input for this initiative. Family advisors first helped to **identify key items that were needed** based on their prior experiences, including bathing, toileting, mobility and options. Next, they were able to **provide feedback during a virtual demonstration** to **assist with decision-making and equipment selection.**



Results

With guidance from patient families and staff, **several new pieces of adaptive and specialized equipment have been purchased** for our inpatients to assist with mobility, eating, toileting and comfort. Additionally, a **catalogue of standard equipment** to be used at Boston Children's has been created to promote **consistency** in meeting inpatient adaptive needs across all inpatient spaces.



Meghan Church
Sr. Program Manager
Employee Safety and
Injury Prevention
Environmental Health
& Safety



Megan Dakhlian, PT,
DPT, MBA, PCS
Manager of Operations -
Physical Therapy
Department of Physical
and Occupational
Therapy

"Feedback from our patient and family advisors enabled the interdisciplinary team to identify gaps and prioritize equipment that significantly enhances patient health outcomes by improving out of bed mobility, hygiene, and the ability to leave their rooms."

-Meghan Church

Partnership spotlight

Learning Experience for Newly Licensed Nurses



The Transition to Nursing Practice (TNP) Program is a year-long nurse residency program that supports newly licensed nurses through key first-year transition themes, such as organization enculturation, communication, time management, confidence, well-being, and safety. Since 2023, **FAC members have addressed over 400 nurses** through this program.

At the heart of nursing are patients and families. One of the class days focuses on developing therapeutic relationships, and members of the Family Advisory Council come speak with TNP participants about their personal experiences at BCH.

Hearing directly from parents of patients offers nurses valuable first-person insights into **how to build rapport, establish trust, and provide the exceptional care**. This partnership provides a rare **opportunity for nurses to engage with family advisors uninterrupted**-- without distractions such as phones or bedside alarms--allowing them to openly engage, reflect, and share their experiences.



“Having been a new grad nurse myself, I wish I had the chance to engage with a parent, not as their bedside nurse, but as their student, learning from them.”

Kate Ulukaya MSN, RN, NPD-BC, CCRN
Professional Development Specialist
Clinical Education, Informatics, Practice and Quality

Partnership spotlight

Human Factors and Systems Design: *Co-Designing the Patient and Family/Caregiver Accommodations Screening Tool and Provision Process*

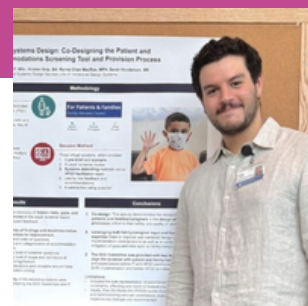
The Immersive Design Systems (IDS) Human Factors and Systems Design (HFSD) team is collaborating with the Disability Competent Care (DCC) Committee to use human factors methods to evaluate and co-design a new accommodation needs screening tool for patients and families/caregivers. In addition, HFSD is using human factors methods to create and test the process for:

- Identifying what accommodations patients and families/caregivers need before they get care.
- Gathering information on these needs and ensuring the right support is provided.
- Using the electronic health record (EHR) to document and share information about the support patients and families/caregivers need during their care.

“To ensure we meet (and exceed) our mission and goals, the IDS Human Factors and Systems Design team led a series of co-design sessions with Family Advisory Council members to develop a new Patient Accommodations Screening Process.

Family members provided us crucial and personal insights on design, layout, and content for the patient accommodations screener tool and their insights will directly shape a more accessible, responsive system to patient needs at Boston Children’s.

We’re grateful for their partnership and proud to be designing with—not just for—our patients and families.”



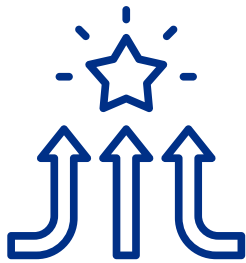
David Lieber, Systems Design Specialist, on behalf of the IDS project team (Kristen Grip, Mirette Dubé, Myrna Chan-MacRae, and Sarah Henderson)

Next steps



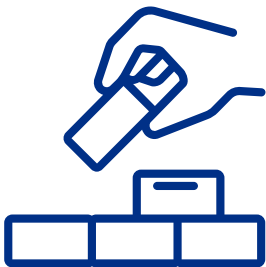
Review and refresh 3-year FAC strategic plan (2026-28)

Engaging in strategic planning as a team guarantees that we will prioritize the needs of our entire group while staying committed to our member-driven approach. We also embrace a shared responsibility for the success or failure of our strategic objectives.



Align FAC strategic goals with Boston Children's priorities

As a standard practice, we ensure that FAC efforts are in sync with the strategic priorities and core values of Boston Children's. This alignment showcases our commitment to supporting the organization through the work carried out by the FAC. Together, we are united in our mission to enhance the care experiences of our patients, families, and workforce.

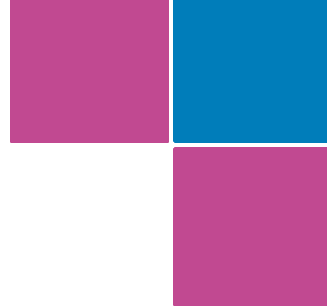


Commit to fundamental principles that enhance FAC effectiveness

We will persist in fostering a culture of trust and mutual respect within our internal council. Our dedication to our partnership with the leadership and staff at Boston Children's remains strong, and we are committed to our consultative advisory relationships that help us advance our initiatives as opportunities present themselves.



Boston Children's Hospital
Family Advisory Council

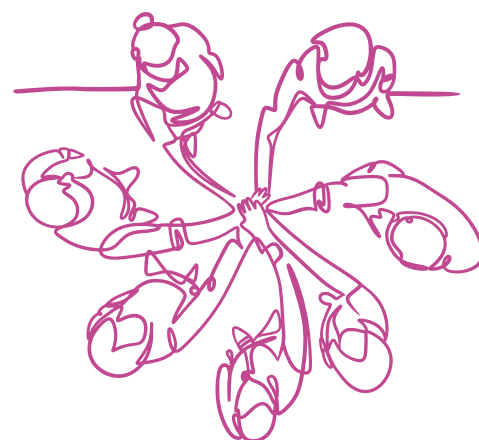


A Heartfelt Thank You

We are profoundly appreciative of the time, energy, and dedication provided by our team of Family Advisors.

Furthermore, we express our deep gratitude to the leadership and staff at Boston Children's for their willingness to welcome the perspectives of patients and families into strategic decision-making and improvement initiatives.

We are fully committed to the belief that the best and most sustainable outcomes will be achieved through our collaborative efforts as partners for progress.



Connect with us.

Contact FAC staff member Katie Litterer, Program Manager for Family Partnerships, to start a conversation.



Katherine.Litterer@childrens.harvard.edu