

## Media Relations

January 23, 2013

### **UNH Institute to Coordinate Improved Children's Health Care in N.H.**

DURHAM, N.H. – The New Hampshire Institute for Health Policy and Practice at the University of New Hampshire has been tapped to coordinate development of the state's first child health improvement partnership, or CHIP. The Endowment for Health awarded NHIHPP a nine-month grant to develop the infrastructure for this new collaboration of public and private health care partners aimed at improving the quality of children's health care in the state.

With the grant, for more than \$30,000, the NHIHPP will develop an operational plan to implement the CHIP model in New Hampshire, drawing on success of CHIPs in other states, including Vermont. In addition, the NHIHPP will secure resources for the CHIP to undertake child health improvement projects.

"Despite being one of the healthiest states in the nation, New Hampshire has many opportunities to improve the health of its children," says NHIHPP deputy director Jo Porter, who is principal investigator for the project. Dr. Alison Holmes, a pediatrician practicing at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and an assistant professor of pediatrics at Dartmouth's Geisel School of Medicine, will serve as the NH CHIP's medical director.

The state's capacity to address several priorities identified by the Children's Alliance of New Hampshire and the N.H. Maternal and Child Health Bureau – routine screening for and earlier diagnosis of developmental delays and autism spectrum disorders; ensuring the safety and well-being of children at home, school, and play; and improving access to oral health care – would be significantly expanded with the CHIP, which would coordinate the efforts of many child health agencies throughout the state.

"CHIPs across the nation have formed quality improvement collaboratives to better many pediatric health concerns, linking together the domains of direct medical care, public health, pediatric research, health insurance and not-for-profit interests. Improvement efforts can be undertaken in primary care practice, in hospitals, in emergency departments, in mental health settings —anywhere that children receive health care services. The aim across all of this is to bring the most up-to-date medical evidence to all New Hampshire children," says Holmes.

During this infrastructure-building phase, this project will build a network of primary care practices providing pediatric care and identify child health issues of interest to them, develop an operational plan for the N.H. CHIP, and identify funding to support implementation of the CHIP's first child health improvement project.

As the institutional home for the N.H. CHIP, NHIHPP will draw on expertise from other UNH resources, including the Institute on Disability and department of health management and policy. NHIHPP is an applied research institute located within the College of Health and Human Services

(CHHS) at UNH. Its mission is to maximize the ability of the health system to assure the conditions for a healthy population through the development and implementation of high-quality applied health policy and research projects. In 2012, NHIHPP managed \$4.2 million in state, federal, and private foundation grants and contracts. NHIHPP has a full time staff of 20 project directors, researchers, and data analysts, the majority of whom are trained at the graduate level. NHIHPP has four major areas of focus: delivery system and payment reform, public health and health promotion, health analytics and informatics, and long-term care and aging.

The Endowment for Health was established in 1999. Since 2001, the Endowment has awarded more than 900 grants totaling more than \$36 million to support a wide range of health-related programs and projects in New Hampshire. For more information about proposal guidelines and funding priorities for the 2013 program year, visit [www.endowmentforhealth.org](http://www.endowmentforhealth.org).

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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