

Increasing Access to Mental Health Services for Children, Adolescents, and Their Families

Campaign for America's Kids—Access Initiative

The Campaign for America's Kids – Access Initiative fosters early identification, prevention, and treatment of mental illnesses in children and adolescents. It funds initiatives and projects through the generosity of AACAP members, individuals, foundations, and corporations that help improve children and adolescents' mental health.

The following are snapshots of projects made possible by supporters of the Campaign for America's Kids – Access Initiative:

Mobile Mental Health Services Clinic

Hurricane Katrina's devastation displaced more than 1,600 individuals served by the New Orleans Adolescent Hospital (NOAH). Behavioral health experts forecast that 30 to 40 percent of child and adolescent survivors of Katrina will need mental health treatment. To address this, the Campaign awarded NOAH \$50,000 to create a mobile clinic. The clinic will serve between 150 to 200 emotionally disturbed children and adolescents in its first year of operation and will continue to serve the youth of New Orleans for many years to come.

The Trauma Drama Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that almost 6,000 individuals ages 10 to 24 are murdered each year—an average of 15 a day. Children who are victims or witnesses of violence can exhibit signs of fear, aggression, and depression. To alleviate the impact of violence on children and adolescents, the Campaign funded the Trauma Drama intervention program with a \$23,377 grant. The program, directed by the Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute in Massachusetts, is a 24-week, clinically-guided, theater-based program that seeks to reduce youth's risk of perpetrating or becoming victims of violence. After participating in the program, many youth demonstrated constructive behavioral changes. The funding that the Campaign provided will help the Trauma Drama program reach more schools, treatment facilities, and outpatient clinics.



Project CLIMB

Project CLIMB (Consultation/Liaison/in Mental Health and Behavior), developed by the Denver Children's Hospital, is a collaborative initiative between child and adolescent psychiatrists and pediatric primary care physicians to increase access for children living in low-income households. It trains pediatricians to assess and treat mental illnesses. With a \$25,000 grant, the project will embed mental health services into primary care settings and improve the capacity of pediatric primary care physicians to screen, identify, and treat common mental illnesses.

The Campaign for America's Kids – Access Initiative focuses on enhancing mental health and preventing behavioral problems and mental health disorders.

The Oregon Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Telemedicine Network

Rural areas often lack mental health services and specialists, worsening the impact of mental illnesses. Less than 10 percent of U.S. counties with fewer than 2,500 individuals have a child psychiatrist. To address this, the Oregon Health & Science University initiated the Oregon Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Telemedicine Network (OCAP-TN), a resource available to state mental health agencies and pediatric primary care physicians in rural Oregon. The *Campaign* awarded the OCAP-TN \$25,000 to expand the network. With additional funding, this program can meet child psychiatric needs, improve links between mental health agencies and pediatric primary care physicians, and assist rural communities in developing systems of care approaches for youth with special needs.

Pikes Peak Mental Health, a System of Behavioral Health Care Access

In recognition of the importance of collaboration, the *Campaign* awarded Pikes Peak Mental Health \$5,000 to develop a system to provide child and adolescent psychiatry consultation services to pediatricians in the Colorado Springs Children's Hospital. The system expands child and adolescent psychiatrists' reach through behavioral

health rounds, telephone consultations, and referral services. The *Campaign's* funding has strengthened the pediatrician/psychiatrist relationship. The *Campaign* hopes to provide future funding to the program to further implement telephone consultation services. These services will serve as a model in rural areas where access to mental health professionals is limited.

Children's Wellness Initiative

Despite evidence that early treatment works, only a fraction of children and adolescents with mental illnesses ever receive help. The *Campaign* provided the Children's Wellness Initiative in Boston, Massachusetts, with an Access Initiative grant of \$25,000 to help eliminate barriers to treatment. The initiative has taught more than 900 children about mental health through the Boston Public School System and has provided direct, culturally competent, mental health services to 25 percent of children attending these schools. Organizers of the initiative report that without it, the majority of the children participating in the program would not have access to quality mental health services.

Best Practices in the Detection, Assessment, and Treatment of Adolescent Depression

Most adolescents who receive treatment for depression will do so by their primary

care physicians. Until recently, best practice guidelines for primary care physicians on assessing youth depression did not exist. The Guidelines for Adolescent Depression in Primary Care (GLAD-PC), developed by the Center for the Advancement of Children's Mental Health at Columbia University, were created to educate primary care physicians in the best methods of evaluating and treating pediatric depression. The *Campaign's* \$25,000 Access Initiative grant supports the guidelines' distribution. The program's main goal is to improve outcomes for children and adolescents living with depression by supporting collaboration between primary care providers and child and adolescent psychiatrists.

Vermont Child Health Improvement Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that more than 1.6 million school-aged children have ADHD.

Seven percent of parents with children aged 6-11 report being told by their primary care physician that their child has ADHD, yet no treatment was ever given. The Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP) is working to improve the clinical skills and confidence of pediatric primary care physicians involved in diagnosing and managing ADHD in school-aged children. VCHIP is employing telecommunication, remote database access, tele-monitoring, tele-video conferencing, e-mail, and instant messaging to provide pediatric primary care physicians with educational support to help them treat their patients remotely. With a \$25,000 Access Initiative grant, the VCHIP purchased software and equipment to start the program. With additional funding, the project will help young children living in Vermont with ADHD receive the treatment that they need so that they may reach the positive outcomes they deserve.

This is not a profession that you can do alone; it requires the involvement of a whole family that researches, teaches, advocates, and administers to make what we do effective and possible. The Academy is the spirit and structure of that family. Contributing is the natural outgrowth of family membership. -Alan Axelson, M.D.