

For Immediate Release

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New Report Highlights Need for Primary Care Support for Kids and Families Exposed to Adverse Experiences

Concord, NH – The Institute for Health Policy and Practice at the University of New Hampshire has released a new study conducted by the NH Pediatric Improvement Partnership. The report, [Addressing Childhood Adversity and Social Determinants in Pediatric Primary Care](#) identifies approaches to better address the short- and long-term impacts of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the social determinants of health on children’s health and wellbeing. ACEs encompass physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and other household challenges including household substance use such as opioids. Social determinants are features of the environment where a person lives that can effect health, such as availability of jobs and play areas for children.

“Children and families in our state are often faced with adversity that impacts their ability to live happy, healthy lives,” said Lisa DiBrigida, M.D., Pediatric Medical Director for Child Health Services at the Manchester Community Health Center. “This report highlights the critical need for a focused approach in addressing childhood adversity in our state.”

When exposed to ACEs and other negative social determinants, a child’s stress response system is activated, which, if prolonged and excessive, can lead to toxic levels of stress that derail development. Pediatric primary care plays a critical role in prevention and early intervention.

“Health care providers play a key role in helping families rebound from difficult situations,” says lead researcher Holly Tutko with the NH Pediatric Improvement Partnership. “Giving clinicians the skills and resources to address these concerns is vital. Equally important is making sure we have supports in the community to help all families thrive.”

The report offers recommendations for continuing education, increasing public awareness, and improving care coordination and outreach surrounding local resources and services. It also emphasizes the importance of involving policymakers and the public in these processes to better support children and families affected by adverse childhood experiences and negative social determinants of health.

“As a next step, we look forward to wide dissemination of the report to primary care practices, policymakers, government officials and other key stakeholders,” said Program Director Kim Firth, who represents the Endowment for Health, the state’s largest health foundation and one of the study’s underwriters. Additional support for this study was provided by Spark NH.

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The Institute for Health Policy and Practice (IHPP) is an applied research institute located within the College of Health and Human Services at the University of New Hampshire. IHPP conducts and disseminates high-quality, cutting-edge applied research and policy work that enables health system partners to implement evidence-based strategies to improve population health.

The New Hampshire Pediatric Improvement Partnership (NHPiP) is a state-level multi-disciplinary collaborative of private and public partners dedicated to improving health care quality for all NH children through the use of systems and measurement-based quality improvement processes.

The Endowment for Health works to improve the health and reduce the burden of illness for the people of New Hampshire – especially the vulnerable and underserved. Since 2001, the Endowment has awarded more than 1300 grants totaling \$50 million to support a wide range of health-related projects in New Hampshire.

Spark NH is the governor appointed early childhood advisory council for New Hampshire.

