

Strategies to Effectively Engage Medical Providers

Providers have limited time and require brief, focused information that will be useful to them and their patients. The availability of a system for referring children and families to programs and services is an incentive to talk with families about their developmental and behavioral concerns, especially for those children who may not be eligible for early intervention and preschool special education services.

Lay the groundwork

- Learn about the medical environment, including the culture, language, and realities of the medical providers in your community.
- Build relationships with providers, clinics, and organizations over time.
- Recognize and acknowledge barriers, and clearly define the role you are asking the provider to play.
- Be able to explain why a provider is essential to the work.

Define the type of medical provider you think you need

- Who has the necessary knowledge or experience?
- Consider someone in pediatrics, someone in a particular organization, or someone with a specific skill set.
- For additional information on what a Medical Provider Champion is, see the *Help Me Grow Kansas Implementation Toolkit: Medical Provider Overview*

Identify potential medical provider partners

Use existing networks to identify partners:

- State AAP chapter: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/chapters-and-districts/Pages/Chapters-and-Districts.aspx>
- Reach Out & Read affiliates: <http://www.reachoutandread.org/about-us/our-organization/affiliates/>
- Help Me Grow Kansas: <https://helpmegrowks.org/contact/>
- Identify medical providers or practices that your team, coalition members, etc. use in your community
- Use Google Map Search to identify physicians and practices in your community

Make your work relatable and understandable

- Make it easy for a medical provider to help you– be clear what you are trying to do by explaining things in simple terms, providing context, background information, and key concepts.
- Explain overall strategy and potential benefits to the provider, their organization, and the community.
- Have an elevator pitch or “Your Why” ready and practiced
- For additional resources on “Finding Your Why” see *HMG Kansas Toolkit, The Five Why’s Exercise Template*

Make specific requests and facilitate success

- Make personal asks to a provider or an organization.
- Make the time commitment explicit, and plainly explain goals and impact.
- Ask what the provider needs from you; offer support and coaching.
- Say thank you, follow up and let them know the impact of their efforts.

Additional Outreach & Engagement Tips

- Keep a log of all visits, to streamline communication and outreach and reduce duplication or over communication with a provider
 - *Date*
 - *Provider*
 - *Notes (important or follow up)*
- Include the office staff in outreach and communication because implementing screening and utilization requires staff collaboration
- Walk in or send informational materials, business card, appointment calendar (iPhone), and ink pens (people love them!).
- Remember to honor the practice's schedule: presentations must stick to the time allotted; providers will be late and leave early, and emergencies will keep some from attending, presentations may be 10 minutes to 2 hours in length and may be done in shifts
- Be flexible in terms of providing practices with the information they want. Some already screen and have a list of referral options. Bring or send resources that will help the practice implement screening and referral such as magnets with the call line's telephone number, sample copies of screening tools, and stickers for charts that remind providers those children have been referred
- During your presentation:
 - *Customize or change information, messaging, and materials to meet the target audience*
 - *Provide relevant and useful information*
 - *Use stories and examples*
 - *Highlight billing policies, as helpful and relevant*
 - *Provide connection to community services including Part B and Part C*
 - *Offer ongoing support including workflow integration*
 - *Get feedback as you are able*

- After interaction, presentation, etc. send thank you card and business card or email
- Distribute feedback forms as you can assess how your presentations are going. Regularly review feedback and adjust accordingly
- Be prepared to conduct a spontaneous (one on one) presentation with provider
- Be persistent, it may take several attempts (calls or visits) to book a presentation