

Improving Care Across the Board

The following is a report from the CF care center at Arkansas Children's Hospital about getting people with CF and their families involved in quality improvement through the development of a Family Advisory Board (FAB).

Introduction

In July 2005, the care center at Arkansas Children's Hospital created a multidisciplinary CF Leadership Team to improve CF care in the following areas:

- Patient care
- Education
- Research
- Quality improvement initiatives
- Patient and family support
- Advocacy

How families perceive the quality of care is an important part of this objective. Our level of family involvement has been sporadic. We have received input only as requested through various surveys and through parent attendance at annual Parent Resource events.

During our annual Parent Resource day in September 2005, we presented the ideas of transparency of CF care center data and partnerships with families. Our care center set a goal to establish a Family Advisory Board to assist with the design and implementation of pilot projects, educational materials, family support services and active participation within the care center as a whole.

Method/Strategy

The care center identified 70 dependable family members – half of our center's total patient population. We mailed the selected group a letter of invitation, a job description outlining responsibilities of a FAB member, and an application. Members of the care center reviewed candidate applications and selected 12 members and four alternates as the first FAB.

To ensure broad representation, the care center included a variety of ages and geographical locations, as well as care center physicians. The major goals of the FAB include:

- Offering ideas and suggestions about policy and practice affecting family-centered care
- Reviewing recommendations and concerns as referred by other parents, staff, physicians and/or administration
- Serving in an educational role regarding the perception of care and services
- Assisting in the planning and implementation of new services/processes as requested by care center staff

Conclusion

Our care center is committed to family-centered care and wants to ensure the needs of those affected by CF are considered and met. Our FAB serves as an advisory resource committee to the care center – providing constructive input and assistance as the care center works to continually improve.

During our initial FAB meeting on March 25, 2006, we introduced the members to each other, completed hospital orientation and established Board policies. Today, we continue to incorporate the FAB in our care center's quality improvement activities and strengthen the working relationship between the FAB and the current care center staff.