

Evaluation of Project DOCC-Houston at Baylor College of Medicine 2012-2013

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Summary of Findings

During the academic year 2012-2013, Project DOCC-Houston continued a training program for first year residents specializing in pediatrics or combined medicine/pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine in an effort to educate these physicians about the needs of children with chronic illnesses and/or developmental disabilities, and their families. In order to evaluate the success of this training program, Project DOCC-Houston has been gathering pre- and post-program data from the participating residents, as well as post-program data from the parent educators involved. The major findings of the evaluation are summarized below:

Parent Educators' Evaluations of Residents' Interest, Understanding, and Other Criteria

Parents rated residents' participation in the Project DOCC-Houston program very highly. A very strong majority of parent evaluations described the residents as showing interest in the family's experiences (88%), as to be attentive (98%), as asking relevant questions (99%), as asking questions in a sensitive manner (90%), and as to understand the parents' perspective (98%). The parent overwhelmingly felt that the "resident gained a better understanding of how the medical system can work for children with special needs" (100%) and reported that the residents appeared to be open to the "principle of partnering with a parent of a child with a chronic illness or disability" (98%). Parent Educators rated this cohort of residents equal to previous cohorts in all areas.

Comparison of Residents' Pre- and Post-Program Data

It is clear that the vast majority of residents who took part in the Project DOCC-Houston 2012-2013 program believe that they benefited from the program. Comparison of residents' pre- and post-program data shows statistically significant change in the direction intended by Project DOCC in the residents' perceptions of their:

- * experience with, and knowledge about, the at home care of children with chronic illness and/or disability.
- * understanding of the long-term impact that a child's chronic illness or disability has upon the entire family.
- * familiarity with and understanding of, the stages of grief for families with a child with chronic illness or disability.

Comparison of 2013 Residents' Pre- and Post-Program Data DOCC at BCM cont.

- * familiarity with, and understanding of, the coping mechanisms used by families of children with chronic illness or disability.
- * ability to assist a parent who is “burned out” by the care of a child with a chronic illness or disability.
- * familiarity with community resources available to help support parents of children with chronic illnesses or disabilities.

Residents' Evaluation of Project DOCC

Ninety-two percent of the residents surveyed rated the parent educators very highly in regard to teaching effectiveness.

Ninety percent of the participating residents indicated that participation in Project DOCC has made them more willing to work with children with chronic disabilities and their families.

Ninety-eight percent of all residents who participated in Project DOCC agreed with the statement: "From your experience in Project DOCC, did the training components change the way you approach a patient and the patient's family?" Upon analysis of the written comments regarding the impact of the program, three themes emerged:

1. Increased understanding/empathy of the impact and social issues
2. Importance of coordination of care and communication
3. Advocacy and support

Examples of the comments included:

“I understand better the relationship between the patient and families and I will approach the families with a better understanding of their love and ability to care for their child.”

“This is a wonderful education prog that emphasis compassion & love. Great to put face & personality to chronic care”

“I’m more aware of what a patient and their family have to go through on a daily basis”

“There are a lot of things that parents do and handle at home that we don’t think about, don’t address, in an office visit. In the future it would be worth it to ask these things when seeing pt's with special needs”

2013 Residents' Evaluation of Project DOCC at BCM cont.

“Just saw firsthand how they were dealing with things. I can't explain of any specific changes I'll do but I know this familiarity is extremely valuable and I hope to continue expanding it”

“Reinforced the parent-physician partnership by emphasizing how knowledgeable these parents have already become about their child & community resources & this how we can work as a team to create a health care plan and make things as easy as possible for the family”

“The DOCC parents did a wonderful job of demonstrating and teaching us what they face on a daily basis and what they went through emotionally, physically, financially from diagnosis to the present. I'm more aware of what resources and support is needed as well as how to provide it”

“Project DOCC demystified special needs care and communication with families, specifically clarifying what is important to families”

“I saw how difficult it was to care for a child with special needs in a home setting and how much extra support is truly needed”

“This makes me want to advocate for patients more and to work with this patient population in the future. “