



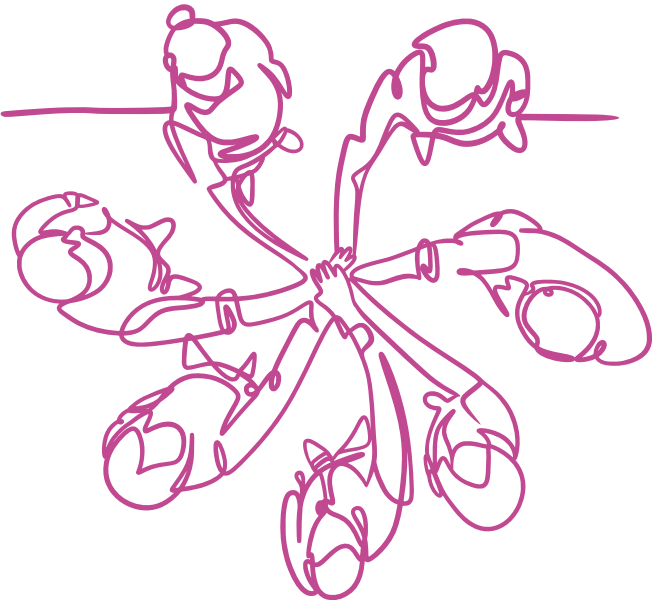
**Boston Children's Hospital**  
Family Advisory Council

# FY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

*October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024*

Boston Children's Hospital-Wide Family  
Advisory Council

---



- 01 A message from our co-chairs
- 02 About the Family Advisory Council (FAC)
- 03 Membership
- 04 How we work
- 05 Key highlights
- 06 Impact story
- 07 Partnership spotlights
- 08 Next steps
- 09 Acknowledgements and contact information

# Table of Contents

# A message from our co-chairs

At Boston Children's Hospital, we believe in partnering with our patients and families to shape the future of our organization. Our Family Advisory Council plays a significant role in this by partnering with Boston Children's leadership and staff on projects that influence patient and family experiences before, during and after their hospital experience.

This year, we are pleased to share with you some key highlights from our journey that speak to leadership, creativity and innovation.

Above all, we are grateful for the dedicated and passionate patient and family advisors who commit their time and experiences to this council, and for the Boston Children's workforce who continue to welcome patient and family voices into important improvement conversations and decisions.



Erin Poirier  
Parent Co-Chair  
(2023-25)



Jon Whiting  
DNP, RN, NE-BC, CCRN,  
Vice President and  
Associate Chief Nurse,  
Nursing/ Patient Care &  
Clinical Operations,  
FAC Senior Leadership  
Co-Chair

# About the FAC

## Overview

- Founded in 1982
- Volunteer membership
- Co-led by senior hospital leader and elected caregiver
- Driven by a culture of progress through partnership

## Mission

Drawing on the lived experience of Boston Children’s patients and families, we advance patient and family-centered engagement to achieve the highest standard of safe, comprehensive, and compassionate care. We collaborate with leadership, staff, and other families to impact decisions across the system of care.



*“Boston Children’s Family Advisory Council members provide essential perspectives to strengthen our ability to provide high-quality and equitable care. Family voices shape how care is delivered and guide us in all we do.”*

Laura J. Wood, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN,  
EVP Patient Care Operations and  
System Chief Nurse Executive,  
Spring Carpenter Chair for Nursing

FAC members engage with the hospital in three key ways:



### Advise & Share

Provide feedback at monthly council meetings and in focus groups, workgroups, and committees.



### Partner & Support

Participate in hospital committees that are focused on the strategic and corporate goals of Boston Children’s.



### Drive & Lead

Identify and drive projects that are important to the FAC, working with hospital departments along the way.

# Family Advisory Council Members

## Active members

Ronny Bachrach  
 Katie Baker  
 Jackey Bennett  
 Lisa Cleary  
 Alisha Durant  
 Steve Favulli  
 Kevin Flynn  
 John Kornack  
 Amanda Lane  
 Jinah Lee  
 Esterlina  
 MacInnes  
 Ali Mahady  
 Sarah Morris  
 Erin Poirier  
 (parent co-chair)  
 Padmaja Raman  
 Suzanne Roma  
 Maria Alice Melo  
 de los Santos  
 Margot Schwartz  
 Erin Sullivan  
 Maria Valencia-  
 Devin



## Emeritus members

Natasha Aljalian  
 Brenda Allair  
 Kate Bazinsky  
 Lisa Burgess  
 Valerie Fleishman  
 Emily Martins  
 Sue McCarthy  
 Bill O'Donnell  
 Aimee Williamson



	Jon Whiting, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CCRN VP & Associate Chief Nurse, Clinical & Patient Care Operations Senior leadership Co-Chair		Sara Toomey, MD, Mphil, MPH, MSc SVP, Chief Safety & Quality Officer, Chief Experience Officer Physician Liaison to FAC		Lisa Rubino, MBA Director of the Office of Experience FAC Staff Member		Katie Litterer Program Manager, Family Partnerships FAC Staff Member
--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--

# How we work

Driven by our formal strategic plan, we work to weave the voices of patients and families into improvement efforts across Boston Children's. Our efforts are rooted in the following values.



## CREATIVITY

We aim to tailor family partnership engagements to individual body of work, workgroup members, timelines, schedules, priorities and barriers.



## INNOVATION

As our membership continues to evolve, our council must also evolve in order to remain member-focused and member-driven.



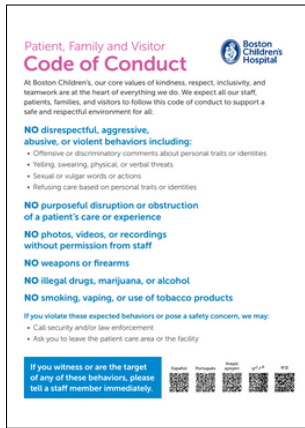
## SHARING

We share our learnings and our successes to advance improvement efforts within and beyond our organization.



# Key highlights

Family Advisory Council members participated in a wide variety of work including staff and workforce education, serving on workgroups focused on patient safety, bringing family perspectives to Project Mosaic before, during, and after our transition to an Epic-based electronic health record (EHR). The highlighted projects below impact every patient and family seeking care and every workforce member at Boston Children's.



**Patient, Family and Visitor Code of Conduct**

At Boston Children's, our core values of kindness, respect, inclusivity, and teamwork are at the heart of everything we do. We expect all our staff, patients, families, and visitors to follow this code of conduct to support a safe and respectful environment for all.

**NO disrespectful, aggressive, abusive, or violent behaviors including:**

- Offensive or discriminatory comments about personal traits or identities
- Yelling, swearing, physical, or verbal threats
- Sexual or vulgar words or actions
- Refusing care based on personal traits or identities

**NO purposeful disruption or obstruction of a patient's care or experience**

**NO photos, videos, or recordings without permission from staff**

**NO weapons or firearms**

**NO illegal drugs, marijuana, or alcohol**

**NO smoking, vaping, or use of tobacco products**

If you violate these expected behaviors or pose a safety concern, we may:

- Call security and/or law enforcement
- Ask you to leave the patient care area or the facility

If you witness or are the target of any of these behaviors, please tell a staff member immediately.



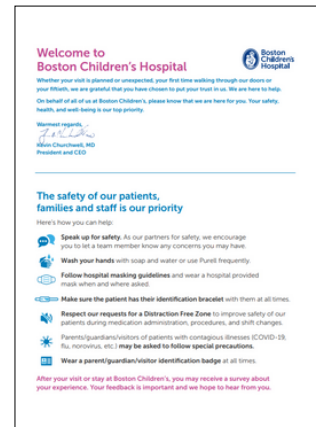
## Patient, Family & Visitor Code of Conduct

Provides clear behavior expectations for patient, families and visitors in support of a safe space for all.




## Welcome Materials

Patients and families receiving care in inpatient, outpatient or Emergency Department settings receive consistent welcome materials to support a safe and compassionate care experience.



**Welcome to Boston Children's Hospital**

Whether your visit is planned or unexpected, our first step is making sure you and your family are safe. We are here to help. On behalf of all of us at Boston Children's, please know that we are here for you. Your safety, health, and well-being is our top priority.

Warmest regards,  
  
 Alan Chermak, MD  
 President and CEO

**The safety of our patients, families and staff is our priority**

Here's how you can help:

- **Speak up for safety.** As our partners for safety, we encourage you to let a team member know any concerns you may have.
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water or use Purell frequently.
- **Follow hospital masking guidelines** and wear a hospital provided mask when and where asked.
- **Make sure the patient has their identification bracelet** with them at all times.
- **Respect our requests for a Distraction Free Zone** to improve safety of our patients during medication administration, procedures, and shift changes.
- **Parents/guardians/visitors of patients with contagious illnesses (COVID-19, flu, norovirus, etc.) may be asked to follow special precautions.**
- **Wear a parent/guardian/visitor identification badge** at all times.

After your visit or stay at Boston Children's, you may receive a survey about your experience. Your feedback is important and we hope to hear from you.



**Boston Children's Hospital is a place of hope and healing**

With your patience and partnership we will be able to support all of the families here today.

- **Respect the personal space and privacy** of those around you
- **Keep children close to you** for their safety
- **Use headphones with your devices** for music or entertainment
- **Step outside the waiting area** for personal video chats or phone calls
- **Help us keep our area clean** by picking up after yourself

Our goal is to partner with you in a kind and respectful manner. We ask that you treat our staff the same way.



## Waiting Area signage

Designed to provide clear guidelines for behaviors in any Boston Children's public waiting area.

# Impact story

Average visit time  
**REDUCED** by

## Phlebotomy Visit Time Improvement Project



### Project overview

In early 2024, the main Phlebotomy clinic observed that **only 41% of patients** were completing lab appointments in under 20 minutes. Recognizing an opportunity for improvement, Laboratory medicine leadership partnered with the Boston Children's Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) to address this.



### Partnership

The project team partnered with staff, patients and families. Their feedback validated the need to improve wait times and highlighted areas where communication and clinic processes could be improved. Patient/family insights were gathered through an E-Advisors survey, a live conversation with the Family Advisory Council and collaborating directly with a family advisor.



### Results

As of September 2024, **77% of patients** are completing their visit in under 20 minutes. Key changes include a more efficient registration process, clear/concise staff roles and a new room management process. A new patient registration form was introduced based on family feedback, giving families the opportunity to share their child's individual needs.

*"Partnering with FAC members made a huge impact on this project. Their honest feedback gave us a deeper understanding of patient needs and helped us make meaningful changes that directly improved the clinic experience."*

– Enterprise Project Management Office



# Partnership spotlight



## Digital Health

Insights from the Family Advisory Council and E-Advisors are instrumental to the work of the Digital Health Experience team. We need to understand their needs and issues with our digital products (such as the MyChildren’s patient portal and virtual visits) to learn what improvements are most needed.

In FY2024, we leveraged the knowledge and experience of both groups via surveys, feedback at FAC meetings, written correspondence, and one-off feedback from families about:

- Wording and timing of emails and texts sent before an appointment
- MyChildren’s Portal content – what’s important to know, and how to write it so it’s understandable
- Participation in a longitudinal study of portal usage during the period surrounding an appointment
- Discharge summary preferences
- Post Epic go-live experience with the portal



*“It’s really our patient families that we rely on. As the end users of our products, the voices of our patient families are crucial to ensure our digital health products are as usable as possible.”*

Liz Hurley  
Digital Health Experience  
Design Manager

# Partnership spotlight



## Virtual Care

The Family Advisory Council provided feedback on recent Digital Health Project Mosaic changes and workflows during a June 2024 listening session, helping guide the Virtual Care team's priorities for improving patient and family experiences with the new Epic-based platform (e.g., eCheck-in).

### Key insights from FAC members included:

- Confusion around the consent forms required before each visit
- Unclear communication regarding the visit modality
- Concerns that the eCheck-in process is too lengthy overall
- Concerns that the eCheck-in process includes questionnaires that are not relevant to virtual visits.

Thanks to feedback received from Family Advisory Council members, the team addressed eCheck-in as a top priority for post go-live optimization and has worked to improve each of the above insights in an effort to streamline the patient and family experience and make it as straightforward as possible.

## Virtual Visits Team

“Family voices are essential to driving **meaningful change** at Boston Children’s and should always be considered as we work to improve the patient and family experience. Our product team has gained a **deeper understanding** of how our technology and workflows affect patient and family experience by listening to those experiences, and we have also been able to work towards improvements that are truly **patient and family centered.**”



Christina Brown  
Director, Patient Virtual Care

Katie Finn  
Product Manager

Sara Canoy  
Product Associate

# Next steps

The FAC is currently half way through our 2023-25 strategic plan. We continue to focus on action items that have been identified as priorities by our volunteer membership. Some of those efforts, guided by member feedback collected during the summer of 2024, include:



## FAC Member Experience

- Enhanced member connection opportunities: during FAC meetings, in-between FAC meetings, digital, in-person, etc.
- ED&I education for members (ongoing)
- Expanded engagement opportunities: Disability Competent Care, ED&I, Education & Training for staff



## Patient & Family Experience

- Welcome information for patients and families
- Care Bundles Program
- Committee, workgroup and project engagements



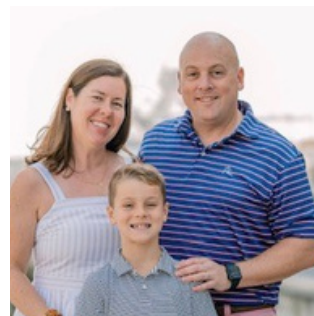
## Workforce Experience

- Increase educational touchpoints for staff
- Provide patient/family-perspective education to medical learners
- Best in Care Award celebration
- Partnership Seal recognition program

# Acknowledgments

We are deeply grateful for the time, energy and efforts contributed by our team of volunteer Family Advisors.

Additionally, we extend a sincere and heartfelt 'thanks' to Boston Children's leadership and staff for opening doors and welcoming the voices of patients and families into strategic decision-making conversations and improvement efforts.



## Connect with us.

Contact FAC staff member Katie Litterer, Program Manager for Family Partnerships, to start a conversation.



[Katherine.Litterer@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:Katherine.Litterer@childrens.harvard.edu)