

Two Birds, One Stone: Linking Improvements in Developmental Screening to an MOC Part 4 Project

A Project Coordinated by Help Me Grow Ventura County

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The Help Me Grow Quality Improvement Project

Earning ABP-approved MOC Part 4 credits can be time-consuming, expensive and even confusing for practicing pediatricians.¹ Fortunately, many organizations are stepping up to the challenge of simplifying the process of completing quality improvement (QI) projects. One such project is the *Developmental Surveillance, Screening and Linking Children to Services: The Help Me Grow (HMG) System* which was developed by Help Me Grow National in collaboration with the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Help Me Grow (HMG) is a system that aims to connect at-risk children with services in their community. Built upon the idea of collaboration amongst providers in healthcare, early intervention, early care, and family support, HMG acts as a liaison and community partner between pediatric staff and other community agencies to specifically provide support around developmental surveillance, screening and subsequently referral to community agencies. Locally, Help Me Grow Ventura County was established as an affiliate partner in 2013 through the collaboration between several agencies including leadership from the Landon Pediatric Foundation, Ventura County Public Health and Tri-Counties Regional Center.

As an affiliate to the national HMG network, Help Me Grow Ventura County has been given the opportunity to offer the *Developmental Surveillance, Screening and Linking Children to Services: The Help Me Grow (HMG) System* Quality Improvement Project to pediatricians practicing within its boundaries. The goal of the project is to help pediatric offices evaluate their

practices of developmental surveillance, developmental screening and use of the HMG system to link children to evaluation and intervention services. Pediatricians who register and participate in the project can earn 25 MOC Part 4 Performance in Practice credits and/or 13 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits. Alternatively, can also earn 13 CME's through the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. The project itself is a chart-audit based QI project. Participating practices collect 6 months worth of chart data and enter this data into an online database. Monthly data collection includes review of up to 20 charts of a 9-, 12- or 18-month well-child visit. Pediatric support staff may complete data entry as long as participating pediatricians have reviewed screening results at the well-child visit. A great feature of the HMG QI project is that it is practice-based and not individually focused, meaning that any pediatricians in a participating practice may choose to register and earn credits. Registration costs are \$50 per physician and, in addition to monthly data collection, individual physicians are asked to complete initial project-specific training, complete QI methodology training, participate in at least 4 monthly meetings and review monthly progress reports. In turn, Help Me Grow Ventura County will offer support for trainings as well as offer resources for connecting children to services.

Quality Improvement in Developmental Surveillance and Screening

In addition to earning MOC and CME credits, the bonus feature of this project is that it follows and supports research literature suggesting that surveillance and screening protocols can be successfully implemented in a demanding pediatric workflow. Projects such as this can offer not only support for individual licensure/certification, but may also have long-term impact in improving the pediatric workflow around early identification of developmental delays and disabilities. Studies have shown that quality improvements within practices around screening and early identification are most likely to occur when pediatricians and other pediatric staff are

engaged as a team and given support through professional training and data-driven feedback.² At the same time this must balance the need for practice management, providing quality care and maintaining licensure/certification requirements.³ As we know, pediatricians continue to play a vital and central role in identifying children with developmental disabilities including autism. Pediatricians and other pediatric personnel are often the first point of contact and, arguably, the first line of defense for families of young children at risk for developmental disorders. Recent studies looking at prevalence rates for children with developmental disabilities are reported to be between 12-17%. This translates to approximately 10 million children in the United States.^{4,5} In addition to these staggering numbers, it has been well established that identifying these children as early as possible is critical for supporting their short- and long-term outcomes. Research has shown that early intervention services, those provided before the age of 3, can positively change a child's developmental trajectory and early intervention is not only more effective, but also less costly, when provided as early as possible.^{6,7}

The Help Me Grow Quality Improvement Project provides pediatricians in participating areas an opportunity to access state of the art tools for improving developmental screening and early identification protocols within a practice-setting. It offers individual pediatricians MOC and CME credits while providing the larger practice with QI training and HMG support for implementation and referral resources. Additionally, the HMG QI Project aligns nicely with other initiatives aimed at improving quality care such as the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Medical Home Standards. For more information about this project or for pediatricians/practices in Ventura County interested in participating in the HMG QI project, please contact us at 805-981-6617.

Additional Resources:

Help Me Grow Ventura County: www.helpmegrowvc.org

Help Me Grow National: www.helpmegrownational.org

Connecticut Children's Medical Center: www.connecticutchildrens.org

References

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