

PROGRAM HISTORY AND STRATEGY

Adolescents have been of particular concern to the Children's Bureau, and later to the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), since the Children's Bureau's inception; however, special training was first funded in the 1950s, with adolescent-medicine fellowship training of pediatricians at five sites. This



initiative was in response to new research that demonstrated two important facts: (1) adolescents have special health care needs, different from those of children or adults; and (2) adolescents, as a group, have a

high rate of health problems. In the 1960s, the Children's Bureau continued to support improvements in adolescent health by sponsoring the Adolescent Seminars, a series of conferences. These meetings helped to clarify and articulate adolescent health issues.

With a clear problem identified and with growing support for adolescent health from the medical and public health communities, the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Training Program expanded its fellowship training support of physicians in 1967. During the next three decades, and up to the present time, organizations such as the Society for Adolescent Medicine, an interdisciplinary group formed out of the Adolescent Seminars with MCH Training Program support, have advocated for the health needs of adolescents while emphasizing the concept of holistic care. Other groups also identified adolescent health needs; for example, the 1976 Task Force Report on Pediatric Education, sponsored by the

American Academy of Pediatrics, concluded that the lack of training in adolescent health represented a serious gap in child health services. National data documented "new morbidities" (e.g., injuries, mental and emotional disorders, developmental problems, other complex emotional and behavioral issues) that greatly affected the health of adolescents; however, health professionals received little training on how to address these problems. At the same time, other MCH training programs were beginning to demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary training. Thus, in 1976, a new interdisciplinary adolescent health training program was established to train not only physicians, but also persons from the fields of nursing, nutrition, psychology, and social work. The goal was to develop a cadre of leaders who would secure improved care and services for adolescents through policy, research, training, and clinical care. This program has continued to the present, with relatively minor modifications. Initially, nine interdisciplinary programs were funded; however, over the years, the number has been reduced to its current level of seven.

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The purpose of the Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH) program is to prepare trainees in a variety of professional disciplines for leadership roles in the public and academic sectors and to ensure high levels of clinical competence. Training is designed to integrate biological, developmental, mental health, social, economic, and environmental issues within a public health framework. The seven interdisciplinary programs consist of the following components: (1) preparation that focuses on prevention as well as care coordination; (2) public

health training, including opportunities for trainees to interact with state adolescent health coordinators; (3) training in research methodology; and (4) development of clinical, communication, and teaching skills.

HIGHLIGHTS

Trainees. In any given year, more than 400 persons receive training through these grants; approximately 85 of the trainees are long-term (more than 299 hours) and approximately 335 trainees are short-term. The training includes classroom course work, skill development, mentoring, oral and written presentations, and clinical experience.

Faculty. Directors of LEAH projects are all board-certified pediatricians or internists with sub-board certification in adolescent medicine. Core faculty at each site also include nursing, psychology, nutrition, and social work professionals. Faculty oversee the clinical experiences of trainees, as well as research, field experiences, and academic performance. Faculty also engage in clinical health services and social epidemiological research and provide continuing education and technical assistance for the health professional and policymaking communities. These activities include special meetings, workshops, and conferences. In calendar year 1997, the LEAH projects as a group provided 1,223 presentations and more than 1,000 technical assistance consultations. In addition, during that same year, LEAH faculty published 200 articles, 53 chapters, 15 books, and 172 abstracts, thereby demonstrating a high level of productivity. Moreover, the trainees of these programs provided clinical services for more than 14,000 patient visits in that year.

PROGRAM PROFILE

- In FY 1999, MCHB funded seven LEAH projects in schools of medicine and teaching hospitals, with annual awards totaling about \$2.4 million.
- The grant awards range from \$307,000 to \$348,000 per year, with a mean award amount of \$340,000.

Present Grant Recipients

STATE	GRANTEE
CA	University of California, San Francisco
IN	Indiana University
MA	Children's Hospital, Boston
MN	University of Minnesota
NY	Children's Hospital of Rochester
OH	Children's Hospital of Cincinnati
TX	Children's Hospital of Texas

BIBLIOGRAPHY

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. 1997. *Maternal and Child Health Leadership Education in Adolescent Health: Application Guidance*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

Prescott HM. 1998. *A Doctor of Their Own, the History of Adolescent Medicine*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

