

# ANNUAL REPORT

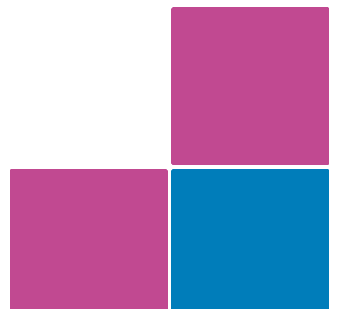
---



Boston Children's Hospital  
Family Advisory Council

FY20  
October 1, 2024 -  
September 30, 2025  
25

Boston Children's Hospital-Wide  
Family Advisory Council



# Table of contents

---

1. A message from our co-chairs
2. About the Family Advisory Council (FAC)
3. Membership
4. How we work
5. Key highlights
6. Impact story
7. Partnership spotlights
8. Next steps
9. Acknowledgements and contact information

# 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 supporting our patients and families, educating workforce members and creative partnerships.

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  
FAC 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.



*"The Family Advisory Council has informed meaningful improvements across Boston Children's. By bringing the voice of patients and families to strategic conversations, whether in council meetings or on hospital committees, they strengthen our promise to deliver the highest quality, equitable care. We are deeply grateful for their continued dedication and partnership."*

Sara Toomey, MD, MPhil, MPH, MSc  
SVP, Chief Safety and Quality Officer,  
Chief Experience Officer  
Physician Liaison to FAC

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

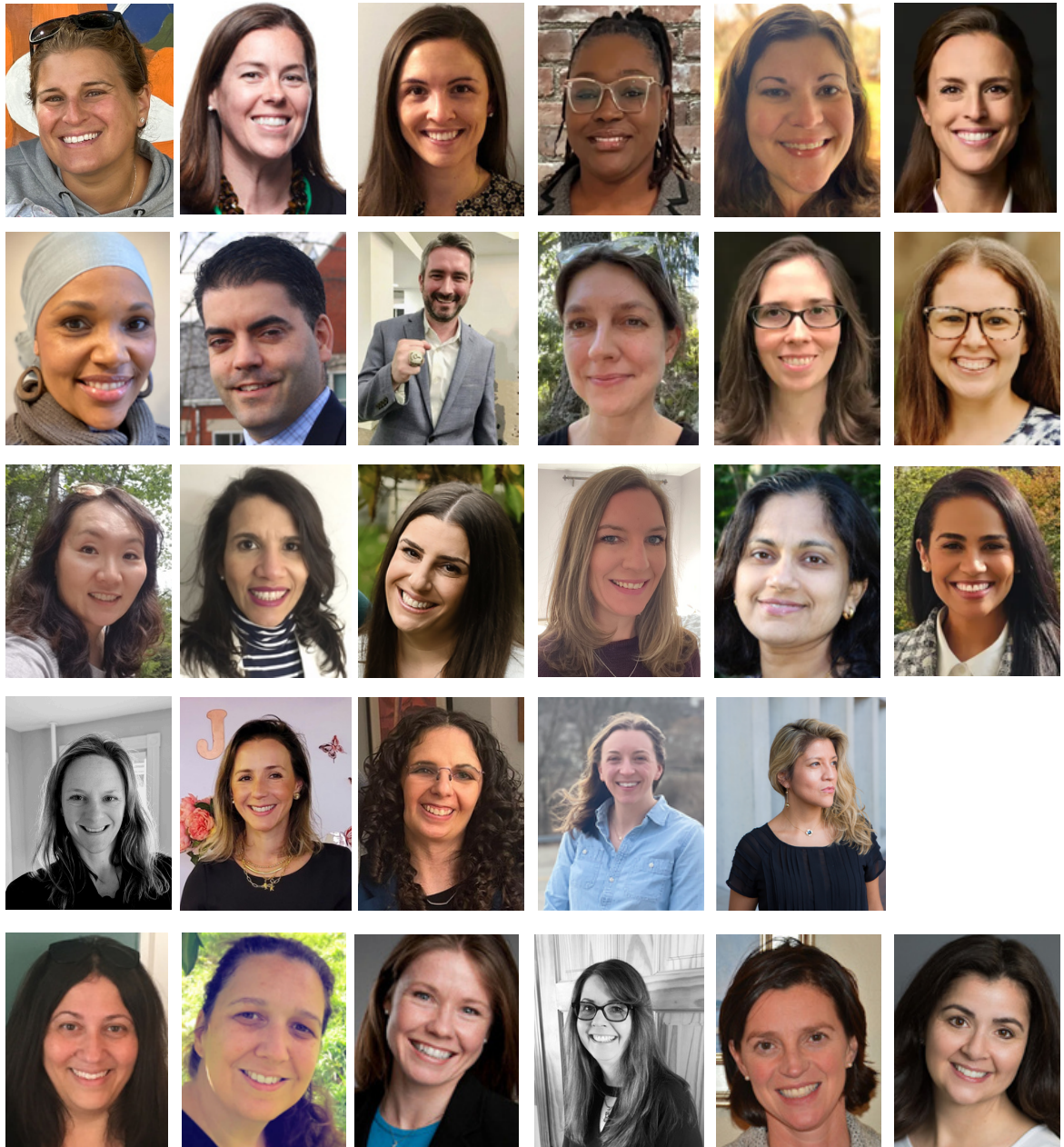
Identify and drive projects that are important to the FAC, working with hospital departments along the way.



# Family Advisory Council Members

## Active members

Ronny Bachrach  
Katie Baker  
Jackey Bennett  
Tiffany Benson  
Lisa Cleary  
Melissa Crimmins  
Alisha Durant  
Steve Favulli  
Kevin Flynn  
Amanda Gannaway  
Andrea Johnston  
Amanda Lane  
Jinah Lee  
Esterlina MacInnes  
Ali Mahady  
Erin Poirier  
(parent co-chair)  
Padmaja Raman  
Yolanda Ramos  
Suzanne Roma  
Maria Alice Melo  
de los Santos  
Margot Schwartz  
Molly Urban  
Maria Valencia-  
Devin



## Emeritus members

Natasha Aljalian  
Brenda Allair  
Kate Bazinsky  
Lisa Burgess  
Valerie Fleishman  
Sue McCarthy  
Sarah Morris  
Bill O'Donnell  
Erin Sullivan  
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 a 3-year strategic plan supported by annual goals, 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.

**01** Progress through partnership



**02** Inclusion and belonging



**03** Shared accountability and measurement of impact



**04** Alignment with Boston Children's enterprise goals and strategies



## CREATIVITY

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



## INNOVATION

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



## SHARING

We share our learnings and our successes in a variety of ways to demonstrate the benefits of partnership within and beyond our organization.



# Key highlights

The highlighted projects below illustrate different ways in which the FAC supports Boston Children's strategic priorities and core values. FAC member efforts positively impact not only our Boston Children's community but also extend to sharing what we have learned with others.



## Care Bundles Program

Since 2021, members of the FAC have been organizing this initiative, which offers staff small care and comfort items to address the essential human needs of patients and families.



## Family Partnerships in Brazil

Our Portuguese-speaking Family Advisor and FAC staff worked to support the establishment of the first family partnerships program at a pediatric hospital in Brazil.



## Disability Competent Care

FAC members evaluated and offered feedback on the learning modules designed to educate BCH nursing staff about Disability Competent Care—what it entails and how to effectively provide it. These educational resources are now being implemented for other clinical staff, with plans to adapt them for administrative personnel as well.



## IPFCC Learning Community

A team consisting of FAC members and a hospital leader engaged in a nine-month learning community, collaborating with 14 other pediatric hospitals. The focus of this initiative was to enhance FAC functionality, ensuring that the voices of those we serve are effectively represented in our work.

# Impact story

## Inpatient Adaptive Equipment

65 new pieces of  
adaptive  
equipment  
purchased



### Project overview

The **Inpatient Adaptive Equipment Task Force** was established in June 2024 to address concerns raised by patients and families about the accessibility of adaptive equipment during inpatient admissions. This **equipment aims to meet the needs of pediatric patients, adolescents, young adults, and individuals of size.**



### Partnership

The Family Advisory Council and E-Advisors were integral in providing valuable input for this initiative. Family advisors first helped to **identify key items that were needed** based on their prior experiences, including bathing, toileting, mobility and options. Next, they were able to **provide feedback during a virtual demonstration** to **assist with decision-making and equipment selection.**



### Results

With guidance from patient families and staff, **several new pieces of adaptive and specialized equipment have been purchased** for our inpatients to assist with mobility, eating, toileting and comfort. Additionally, a **catalogue of standard equipment** to be used at Boston Children's has been created to promote **consistency** in meeting inpatient adaptive needs across all inpatient spaces.



Meghan Church  
Sr. Program Manager  
Employee Safety and  
Injury Prevention  
Environmental Health  
& Safety



Megan Dakhlian, PT,  
DPT, MBA, PCS  
Manager of Operations -  
Physical Therapy  
Department of Physical  
and Occupational  
Therapy

*"Feedback from our patient and family advisors enabled the interdisciplinary team to identify gaps and prioritize equipment that significantly enhances patient health outcomes by improving out of bed mobility, hygiene, and the ability to leave their rooms."*

-Meghan Church



# Partnership spotlight

## Learning Experience for Newly Licensed Nurses



**The Transition to Nursing Practice (TNP) Program** is a year-long nurse residency program that supports newly licensed nurses through key first-year transition themes, such as organization enculturation, communication, time management, confidence, well-being, and safety. Since 2023, **FAC members have addressed over 400 nurses** through this program.

At the heart of nursing are patients and families. One of the class days focuses on developing therapeutic relationships, and members of the Family Advisory Council come speak with TNP participants about their personal experiences at BCH.

Hearing directly from parents of patients offers nurses valuable first-person insights into **how to build rapport, establish trust, and provide the exceptional care**. This partnership provides a rare **opportunity for nurses to engage with family advisors uninterrupted**-- without distractions such as phones or bedside alarms--allowing them to openly engage, reflect, and share their experiences.



*“Having been a new grad nurse myself, I wish I had the chance to engage with a parent, not as their bedside nurse, but as their student, learning from them.”*

Kate Ulukaya MSN, RN, NPD-BC, CCRN  
Professional Development Specialist  
Clinical Education, Informatics, Practice and Quality

# Partnership spotlight

## Human Factors and Systems Design: *Co-Designing the Patient and Family/Caregiver Accommodations Screening Tool and Provision Process*

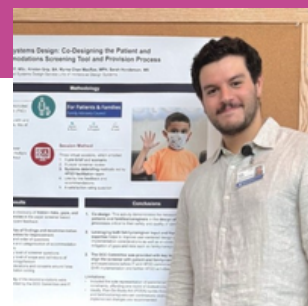
The Immersive Design Systems (IDS) Human Factors and Systems Design (HFSD) team is collaborating with the Disability Competent Care (DCC) Committee to use human factors methods to evaluate and co-design a new accommodation needs screening tool for patients and families/caregivers. In addition, HFSD is using human factors methods to create and test the process for:

- Identifying what accommodations patients and families/caregivers need before they get care.
- Gathering information on these needs and ensuring the right support is provided.
- Using the electronic health record (EHR) to document and share information about the support patients and families/caregivers need during their care.

*"To ensure we meet (and exceed) our mission and goals, the IDS Human Factors and Systems Design team led a series of co-design sessions with Family Advisory Council members to develop a new Patient Accommodations Screening Process.*

*Family members provided us crucial and personal insights on design, layout, and content for the patient accommodations screener tool and their insights will directly shape a more accessible, responsive system to patient needs at Boston Children's.*

*We're grateful for their partnership and proud to be designing with—not just for—our patients and families."*



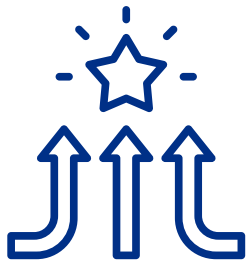
David Lieber, Systems Design Specialist, on behalf of the IDS project team (Kristen Grip, Mirette Dubé, Myrna Chan-MacRae, and Sarah Henderson)

# Next steps



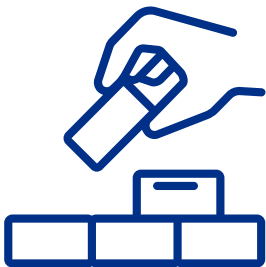
## Review and refresh 3-year FAC strategic plan (2026-28)

Engaging in strategic planning as a team guarantees that we will prioritize the needs of our entire group while staying committed to our member-driven approach. We also embrace a shared responsibility for the success or failure of our strategic objectives.



## Align FAC strategic goals with Boston Children's priorities

As a standard practice, we ensure that FAC efforts are in sync with the strategic priorities and core values of Boston Children's. This alignment showcases our commitment to supporting the organization through the work carried out by the FAC. Together, we are united in our mission to enhance the care experiences of our patients, families, and workforce.

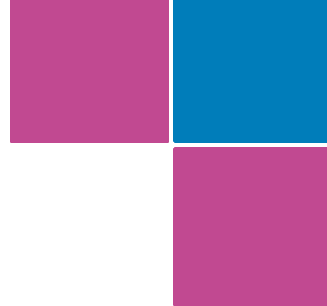


## Commit to fundamental principles that enhance FAC effectiveness

We will persist in fostering a culture of trust and mutual respect within our internal council. Our dedication to our partnership with the leadership and staff at Boston Children's remains strong, and we are committed to our consultative advisory relationships that help us advance our initiatives as opportunities present themselves.



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

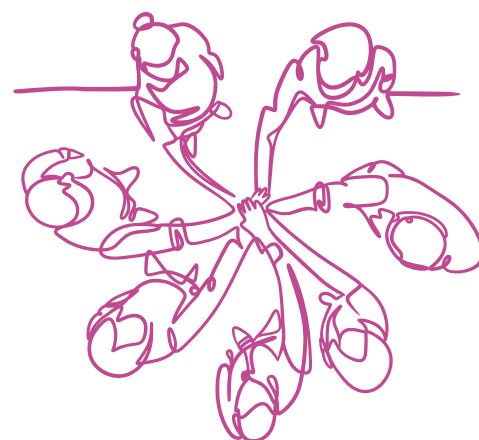


# A Heartfelt Thank You

We are profoundly appreciative of the time, energy, and dedication provided by our team of Family Advisors.

Furthermore, we express our deep gratitude to the leadership and staff at Boston Children's for their willingness to welcome the perspectives of patients and families into strategic decision-making and improvement initiatives.

We are fully committed to the belief that the best and most sustainable outcomes will be achieved through our collaborative efforts as partners for progress.



## 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)