

2021 - 2022
ANNUAL REPORT

NATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK

American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)



OUR MISSION: The mission of the AAFP National Research Network is to cultivate, conduct, and disseminate primary care research that improves health care and benefits the health of patients, families, and their communities.

AAFP national research
— network —



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OUR VISION: Family physicians engaged to advance knowledge that promotes and provides optimal primary health care to all.

LETTER FROM OUR LEADERS

The **AAFP National Research Network** has proudly collaborated with physicians, clinicians, researchers, academic partners, industry leaders, and patients in primary care for close to 25 years. Our network provides a unique space for family physicians to participate in primary care research where physicians and practices can help answer the most important, relevant, and innovative questions at the frontline of family medicine. We strive to lead the nation in practice-based research in primary care to facilitate and disseminate new evidence and innovative models for 'what works' in real-world settings, empowering health care teams to provide exceptional care every day. Additionally, our team continues to focus on growing research capacity through enhancing relationships with the AAFP, state chapters, potential collaborative partners and funders (federal, foundation, and industry), and through the **Rapid Cycle Scientific Discovery and Innovation** (RapSDI) program.

This past year, the AAFP National Research Network concluded several studies. One was the **PeRson EmPowered Asthma RElief** (PREPARE) study—a five-year study on asthma in African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx patients.

Simultaneously, the AAFP National Research Network continued to work on more than 25 active projects. Topics included continuous glucose monitoring education and implementation, opioid use disorder education, shared decision making for depression treatment, cancer screening, and more.

One study we are particularly excited about is a recently awarded multi-year study supporting a partnership with the AAFP, DARTNet Institute, and Penn State College of Medicine, entitled Individualizing Treatment for Asthma in Primary Care (iTREAT-PC)—a \$31 million asthma study funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI).

In 2022, the AAFP National Research Network returned to in-person conferences to present our research findings. We hosted a workshop and reception at the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN) Conference. Next, we participated in sessions and workshops and held a reception at the Family Medicine Experience (FMX) event. Lastly, NAPCRG celebrated its 50th anniversary during its annual November meeting. The AAFP National Research Network was there to celebrate and share 16 research presentations directly involving primary care practices and clinicians. In addition, we held a reception at NAPCRG, where those who attended were actively engaged in the content, conversation, and networking.

We invite you to explore our 2021-2022 annual report. Again, and always, we thank you for your contributions to the mission and vision of the AAFP National Research Network, and we hope to connect with you in 2023.



Christina Hester, PhD, MPH
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Director



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A YEAR IN REVIEW

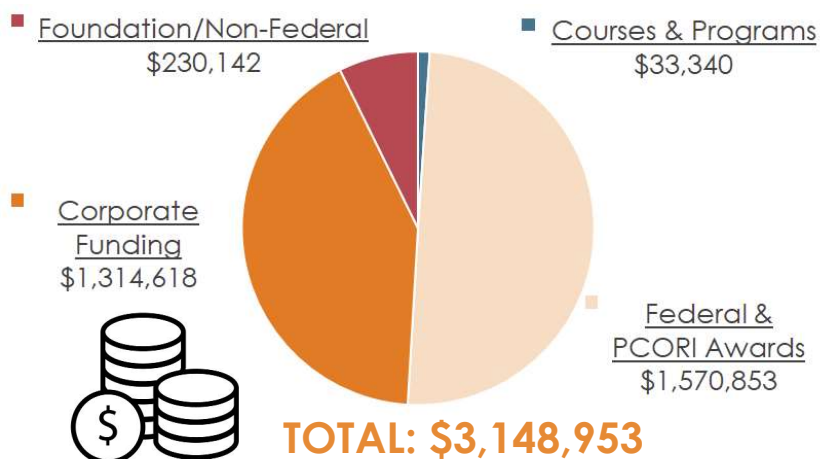
2021 - 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

PROJECTS

More than 25 active research projects on topics including:

- Adult ADHD
- Asthma
- Chronic Cough
- COVID-19
- Depression
- Diabetes and Continuous Glucose Monitoring
- Mental health
- Migraine
- Opioid Use and Pain Management
- Physician Well-Being
- Vaccinations

FUNDING SOURCES



DISSEMINATION

50+ Journal articles and conference presentations published

For more information on our studies and recent publications, visit www.aafp.org/nrm

MEMBER SNAPSHOT

More than 870 practice sites

More than 2,400 AAFP National Research Network members. Our members are:

- Physicians
- PhDs
- Public Health Experts
- Dentists
- Nurses
- and more



CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

We encourage you to learn more about courses developed with faculty expertise and advisor input from family physicians and patients to share and elevate study results and provide valuable education for our members.

These products are in the AAFP catalog. Check them out!



Clinician-facing videos:
Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM)



Patient-facing videos: Monitoring
Your Blood Sugar Level

FAMILY MEDICINE DISCOVERS RAPID CYCLE SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY AND INNOVATION



MEET THE NEW SCHOLARS

The AAFP National Research Network and AAFP Foundation would like to congratulate Dr. Michael Arnold and Dr. Allene Whitney for being selected as 2022-2023 Family Medicine Discovers Rapid Cycle Scientific Discovery and Innovation (FMD RapSDI) scholars.

Captain Michael Arnold, MD, is an associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine in Bethesda, MD. He will examine how patient-applied lidocaine prior to intrauterine device (IUD) placement will impact patient and provider experience.

"For military service members, the convenience of a birth control method that can last up to 7 to 12 years can be helpful as they look to deployments and going to sea or the field frequently," Arnold said. "Some IUDs can also help with heavy or painful periods. Obviously, these benefits are important to many individuals who aren't in the military as well."



Allene Whitney, MD, MS, is a faculty member and obstetrics (OB)/newborn curriculum lead at the Alaska Family Medicine Residency program in Anchorage, AK. She will examine methods that combine traditional visits with telehealth

strategies to increase and improve prenatal care among pregnant individuals facing socioeconomic challenges, particularly those experiencing substance use disorders.

"The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to think of prenatal care delivery in a new way," Whitney noted. "Although we would not in the past have thought of video visits as a viable option for prenatal care...I would like to look at how such telehealth visits can be leveraged to supplement prenatal care in the future for those who struggle to successfully attend in-person visits."

For more information about RapSDI and ways to get involved visit the QR code above.

2021-2022 SCHOLAR REPORTS



Iman Majd, MD, conducted the study, "Auricular acupuncture group visit feasibility study." The study identified factors that affect or limit the implementation of group visits for acupuncture, such as space and visit timing. Overall, the participants

expressed positive experiences in acupuncture group visits. He presented his work at the Academic Consortium for Integrated Medicine and Health Conference in May 2022.

Sanjay Batish, MD, conducted the study, "An evaluation of the SaFETy score as a predictor of gun violence in adolescent-young adult patients in a primary care setting." He screened adolescent patients for risk of future gun violence exposure. The results were presented at the 2022 National Research Conference on Firearm Injury Prevention and NAPCRG Annual Meeting, earning a Pearl Award at NAPCRG for research that will impact clinical practice.



The AAFP National Research Network congratulates Dr. Iman Majd and Dr. Sanjay Batish, and their teams on completing their studies and disseminating their findings.

AAFP NATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Driven by a desire to explore ways to work smarter, Karen L. Smith, MD, FAAFP, continually nurtures her practice's participation in research. For Smith, "clinical office-based studies are of great interest, specifically studies [addressing] common problems in the office." She particularly hopes to address the lack of representation of her patient population in research, which she says "necessitated our office-based research initiatives."

Smith has participated in several studies, including the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) project. This project was a natural segue for Smith to then work with the AAFP National Research Network on the Home vs. Office for Medication Enhanced Recovery (HOMER) study, a national study comparing three methods of induction for medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder.

"The 'restricted' thought of induction being completed in only one format was becoming a challenge for patients who desired to participate in MAT but were not able to connect due to the need for face-to-face onsite induction," said Smith.

Since joining HOMER, Smith has substantially impacted her community and beyond. Not only has she recruited many patients for HOMER, but she has offered her time to support other practices in their recruitment efforts.

Another instance of her impact on HOMER was Smith's response to a patient's self-harm alert. After being notified by the AAFP National Research Network team, Smith quickly transferred the patient to emergency care, which may have saved that individual's life. The close collaboration between practices and the AAFP National Research Network is very important to Smith.

"Supported studies seem to work better for both practices and patients," she said. In her experience collaborating with the AAFP National Research Network, she reflected that "the small practice can be easily distracted from the project due to other daily demands. The support mechanism helps to ensure participation is ongoing."

Smith encourages other family medicine physicians to participate in studies.

"Physician well-being is often enhanced when we engage in inspirational activities, satisfying curiosities, and maybe contributing to health care delivery in ways not previously imagined," Smith stated.

She believes that "if we can explore ways to work smarter via office-based research, it may very well improve practice [and] professional longevity. It is important for physicians to be part of creating, testing, and validating initiatives before they become performance requirements imposed on the practice."

As a champion in her community and a leader in practice-based research, we appreciate Smith's support of the AAFP National Research Network and look forward to seeing her ongoing contributions to research and the field of family medicine.



Karen L. Smith, MD, FAAFP

PERSON-EMPOWERED ASTHMA RELIEF (PREPARE)



Asthma imposes a significant burden on medically underserved populations in the U.S. for morbidity, costs to society, individual suffering, loss of productivity, and mortality. For example, African American/Blacks (AA/B) and Hispanic/Latinx (H/L) individuals have almost twice the rate of emergency room visits and asthma-related deaths compared to white individuals. However, efforts to reduce these disparities have been expensive and mostly unsuccessful.

The PeRson EmPowed Asthma RELief (PREPARE) study was a pragmatic, randomized trial to find a way to help improve asthma outcomes for AA/B and H/L individuals with moderate to severe asthma. The AAFP National Research Network partnered with Brigham Women's Health, DARTNet Institute, and others for this study. PREPARE builds on the evidence that adherence to routine daily controller inhalers is poor. This study assessed whether inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) as part of rescue therapy could lessen symptoms and improve the quality of life for AA/B and H/L individuals. A total of 603 AA/B and 598 H/L adults 18-75 years with poorly controlled asthma were enrolled. Participants were randomized into one of two groups: 1) PARTICS (Patient-Activated Reliever-Triggered Inhaled CorticoSteroid) plus usual care, or 2) Usual Care, with each group followed for 15 months.

The PARTICS group, who were instructed to "take one puff of inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) for each puff of rescue inhaler" or "five puffs of ICS after their nebulizer/machine treatment," showed a decrease in asthma attacks by 15% compared to the Usual Care group. This was 13 fewer asthma attacks per 100 patients a year compared to the Usual Care group. Also, the PARTICS group had better asthma control and quality of life and missed fewer days of work, school, and usual activities when compared to the Usual Care group (www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2118813). PREPARE publications, podcasts, videos, clinician and patient resources, and more study information are available at: www.preparestudy.net.

BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Behavioral and mental health receive a lot of attention in the press, and the AAFP National Research Network is very aware of the challenges that family physicians, care teams, and patients face in the wake of new and ongoing stressors. In partnership with our AAFP colleagues and other organizations in our network, we participated in several behavioral and mental health research initiatives. Three such studies include:

- Training learners in integrated behavioral health in family medicine residency programs
- Equipping family medicine physicians to lead change in their practices and organizations to improve overall well-being
- Addressing and reducing burnout and mental health challenges while building resiliency among medical students and family medicine residents

We continue to seek opportunities to expand our work in behavioral and mental health research. Please scan the QR code to answer a short survey if you are interested in participating in future initiatives.

As always, these initiatives would not have been possible without the participation of the AAFP National Research Network practices, individual care team members, residents, medical students, and patient participants. We thank them for their essential contributions to these vital endeavors.



AAFP NATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK STAFF

We welcomed Joseph LeMaster, MD, MPH, as Director of the AAFP National Research Network in 2022. He has been active in the network for more than 10 years and is a tenured professor and practicing family physician in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Kansas Medical Center. LeMaster plans to seek new ways to engage the network to advance AAFP's strategic initiatives.



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STRATEGIST

TARIN CLAY, BA
DATA COORDINATOR

We also welcomed Daijah Jones, BA, as a research coordinator. We are excited to have her on our team.



Thank you to Ashley Kucera, MPH, who served as a research coordinator. We appreciate her expertise, professionalism, and leadership. We wish her the best in her new endeavor.



Wishing peace and comfort to all who knew John Hickner, our founding director. www.crawfordfuneralhomes.net/obituaries/Dr-John-M-Hickner?obId=25694106

