

***Congratulations to the 2021 AAP Anne E. Dyson Child Advocacy Award Winners!***

## Section on Pediatric Trainees Program

**CONGRATS!**  
**Anne E Dyson**  
**Award Winners**

Anthony Bui, MD & Melissa Martos, MD

Project title: Seattle Health Equity Rounds

University of Washington/Seattle Children's Hospital

Han Yu Stephanie Liou, MD

Project title: Project PEACHES: Pediatricians Engaging Adolescents for Contraception, Health Education, and Safe Sex

University of Chicago

Alyssa Morse, MD

Project title: Direct Emergency Department Referrals to Primary Care  
Children's Hospital of Los Angeles



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### **Direct Emergency Department Referrals to Primary Care**

By Alyssa Morse, MD

Children's Hospital of Los Angeles

The AAP Bright Futures Initiative recommends every child see a primary care pediatrician (PCP) regularly for routine well-child checks, developmental screenings, and immunizations. Families without access -- or with poor access -- to primary care, often utilize the Emergency Department (ED) for their emergent and non-emergent healthcare needs. We sought to determine the number of patients without a PCP visiting the Children's Hospital Los Angeles ED. We found that there were 20-30 patients seen per week who did not have a PCP. However, no system existed to connect them to primary care. The objectives of this quality improvement project were to (1) standardize a direct referral process from the ED to a network of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and (2) increase timely access to primary care for families in the ED seeking a pediatrician. We chose an FQHC network with multiple locations to address potential transportation barriers. A new bilingual patient navigator role was established at the FQHC to assist with scheduling the referred patients and to assist with insurance difficulties. We then created a new referral order in the electronic medical record. ED physicians were educated on how to screen patients for lack of access to a PCP and how to place the referral order.

From January 2020 to June 2021, 465 referrals were placed and 184 patients were successfully connected to a PCP. For patients who completed their FQHC appointment, there was a 56%

decrease in the number of ED visits during the 6-month post-referral period. For patients who did not complete their appointment, there was no decrease in ED visits ( $p=0.1$ ). At their first visit, 65% of patients were due for, and received, a vaccination. 13% of the referred patients also screened positive for food insecurity and were subsequently referred to the clinic's social work team.

This project demonstrated that the Emergency Department is an effective place to identify patients who lack access to primary care. The post-referral analysis showed that many referred patients were lacking recommended preventive care, and that a coordinated referral process to an FQHC helped to fill those gaps. Further data will be needed to see if this type of referral process can result in a significant decrease in Emergency Department utilization.



Alyssa Morse, MD is now an Emergency Transport Attending Physician at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. She recently completed her pediatric residency at the Children's Hospital Los Angeles where she was in the Community Health track. She received her undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley in Integrative Biology with a minor in Public Policy. She attended medical school at the Keck School of Medicine at USC. Her research and advocacy interests include access to care, resident advocacy education, and racial equity and inclusion. In her free time, she enjoys baking, boxing, fishing, and camping.