



Creating the NICU Advisory Council- Family-Centered From the Start

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Background

At Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, patient- and family-centered care was adopted in 2001 with the creation of the Family Advisory Council and the Family Faculty Program. In the last decade, we have expanded involvement of our families and committees, task forces, projects, and new programs throughout the Children's Hospital.

In 2011, NICU physicians requested a Family Advisor to sit on their Critical Care team. This Family Advisor attended all monthly meetings and shared perspectives on various discussions and projects.

Recognizing the value of the family perspective, NICU Physicians requested the need for a NICU Advisory Council (NICUAC).

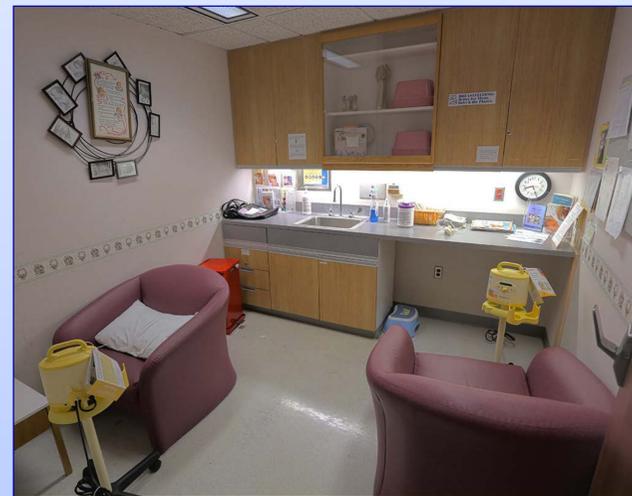
Recruitment

The Family Advisor from the NICU Critical Care Team was selected to chair the NICUAC. This Family Advisor was already part of the Children's Hospital Family Advisory Council, so was able to work closely with the Family-Centered Care Coordinator to recruit Family Advisors.

New candidates participated in a phone interview and attended both the Hospital Volunteer Orientation and a Family Advisor Orientation. Co-Chairs of the NICUAC presented the Orientation program on Family Advisor responsibilities and expectations.

Pump Room Project

The group brainstormed ideas for projects. The first project that was identified was to update the NICU Pump Room. The Pump Room had not had a renovation for decades. The Administrator sitting on the NICUAC helped guide the group in this renovation project. The Pump Room was completely renovated and redecorated within 8 months, and now provides a welcoming and pleasant environment.



Before Pump Room Renovation



After Pump Room Renovation

Outcomes

Just within the last year, the NICU Advisory Council has made quite a name for itself. NICU Staff and Faculty are aware of the group and seek the Advisory Council for feedback and input.

Staff and faculty have embraced feedback from the Family Advisors. Family Advisors provide peer to peer support and partner in proactive family care conferences for current NICU families.

NICUAC Meetings

The first meeting of the NICUAC involved both family advisors and hospital staff/faculty, including representatives from Social Work, NICU nurses, NICU Physicians, Lactation Consultants, Children's Hospital Administration, and Women's Health nurses.

They reviewed, revised, and approved Operational Guidelines, detailing purpose, term limits, and representatives of the NICUAC.

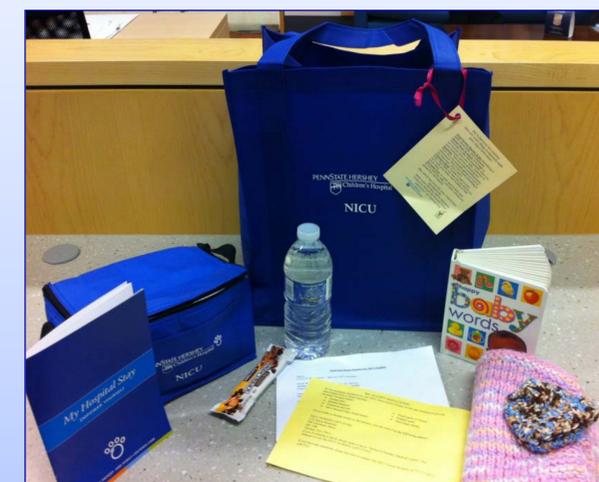


NICU Survival Kit Project

The second project suggested by a Family Advisor who shared that she had started to make NICU Survival Kits for families, but could not keep up with the numbers. The NICUAC discussed how to make this project sustainable.

The group designed NICU bags and NICU insulated totes. With the help of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central PA, the first NICU Survival Kits were assembled with items such as baby books, journals, snacks, bottled water, knitted blankets and hats, and important contact information.

Any family who is newly admitted to the NICU now receives a NICU Survival Kit, courtesy of the NICU Advisory Council.



Lessons Learned

Commitment and participation from the multidisciplinary team have helped with the success of this Council.

Depending on the project, monthly group meetings are periodically scheduled to work on project details. This allows projects to continue moving forward.