

# FCC TASKFORCE

# NEWSLETTER

The **first** international, multicenter, collaborative initiative solely dedicated to **quality improvement in Family-Centered Care.**

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Subscribe to our mailing list for access to free educational webinars and resources for implementing FCC!

## Poll Results

How does your unit **recruit Family Partners** for FAC/FPCs (Family Advisory Councils/Family Partnership Councils), FCC Leadership, Peer to Peer Support, and QI work?

*"We have a flyer that helps explain the NICU Family Advisory Council and how parents can become involved. These can be passed out in-patient and/or at developmental follow up visits."*

*"Usually our Social Workers, Child Life Specialist, nurses, and even providers will give names."*

*"Fliers are given at discharge and parents can register virtually through a link from hospital website"*

*"Our Family Support Specialists are in touch with many NICU families even after their babies graduate from our NICU, and that connection was very important for us to recruit families to the Council."*

Check out this 10-minute clip from our September 2022 Webinar, "How to Build and Strengthen Your Family Advisory/Partnership Council in the NICU" for recommendations on recruiting Family Partners! Full webinar recording can be found by [clicking here](#).



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## WEBINAR REVIEW

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### **“Evolution of a Family-Centered Care Program in a Safety Net NICU” with Priya Jegatheesan, MD and Sangeeta Mallik, PhD**

Priya and Sangeeta of Santa Clara Valley Medical Center NICU in California shared their 15-year journey of implementing an impressive FCC Program that currently includes three Family Support Specialists, a Family Education Specialist, and an FCC Director. Their work began in 2009 when their center became one of the first of 10 to partner with March of Dimes to introduce FCC by providing parent education materials and a kiosk with staff education. Since then, Priya and Sangeeta have committed to promoting culture change that incorporates FCC in every aspect of NICU care, including the addition of bilingual peer support in 2012, and Substance Use Disorder peer support in 2019. Read more about their incredible work in the January 2024 FCC Column of Neonatology Today at no cost [here](#).

### **“What it takes to implement Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) screening and referral in the NICU” with Erika (Gaby) Cordova Ramos, MD**

Gaby, a neonatologist at Boston Medical Center (BMC), has gone above and beyond to implement SDOH screening in her NICU and vets all resources and organizations families are referred to. In her talk, Gaby presented the steps her NICU went through to implement a SDOH screening and referral process. She reviewed the importance of screening for SDOH in the NICU, as studies have shown that adverse SDOH are common among families of preterm children and these hardships are often associated with worse outcomes. It's important for NICUs to be aware of families who are struggling and offer resources so that parents can be more present in the NICU.

Gaby's first step was choosing an appropriate SDOH screening tool and picking domains most relevant to NICU families and mandated by government agencies. The BMC NICU received input from parents focus groups before adopting their tool. The primary bedside nurses then used the tool to screen caregivers after their infants were in the NICU for at least one week. Over time, the unit created a detailed resource guide to offer families who screened positive for adverse SDOH. They had increased success with SDOH screening and helping families with use of SDOH champions, an SDOH navigator, and building partnerships with community organizations. Overall, this talk presented a truly excellent practical and doable blueprint for rolling out a SDOH screening and referral program in any NICU.

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# QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATIONS

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Are you ready to implement a Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) screening in your unit?  
The tips below will help get you started!

1. Decide **WHO**, **WHERE**, and **WHEN**. Then be sure to **TRACK** your screenings - you can't improve if you don't measure!
  - a. **WHO** will administer the screening tool?
  - b. **WHERE** will the screening be done?
  - c. **WHEN** during the visit will the screening be administered?
  - d. **TRACK** your screenings and measure the data using SDOH screening tools that suit your unit's needs.

Take a look at Boston Medical Center's Thrive Tool adapted for NICU use [here](#).

2. Explore existing local resources to address social needs. Build partnerships and **be sure to audit/get feedback** from families who are referred. Below are some great jumping off points:
  - a. Community resource aggregators
    - [Find Help](#)
    - [AAFP Neighborhood Navigator](#)
  - b. Local public health departments
  - c. Hospital social workers/family navigators
  - d. Community action agencies
    - [Community Action Partnership](#)
  - e. Non-profit and faith-based organizations (e.g., Catholic Charities)
  - f. 2-1-1 help line (availability varies by state)
  - g. [Benefits.gov](#)
3. Check out [this free resource](#) from the Vermont Oxford Network on Health Equity and SDOH.
4. Participate in the [28-day anti-racism challenge](#) through the Institute for Perinatal Quality Improvement.

### Organizations who endorse SDOH screening:

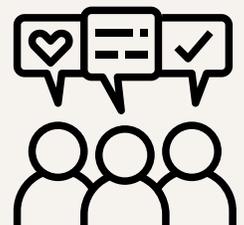
National Academy of Medicine  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services  
Joint Commission

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## FEBRUARY 2024 POLL

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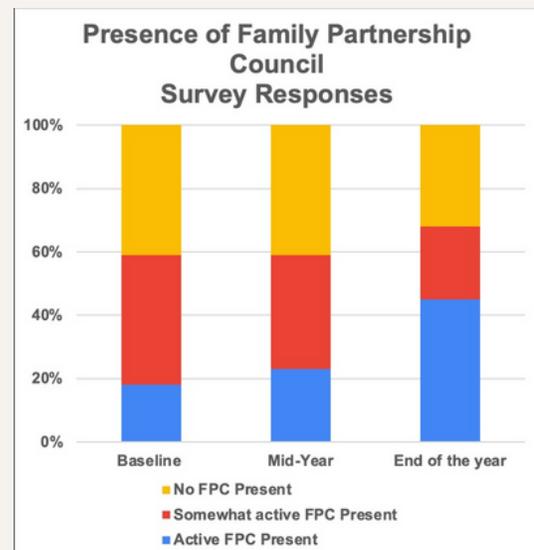
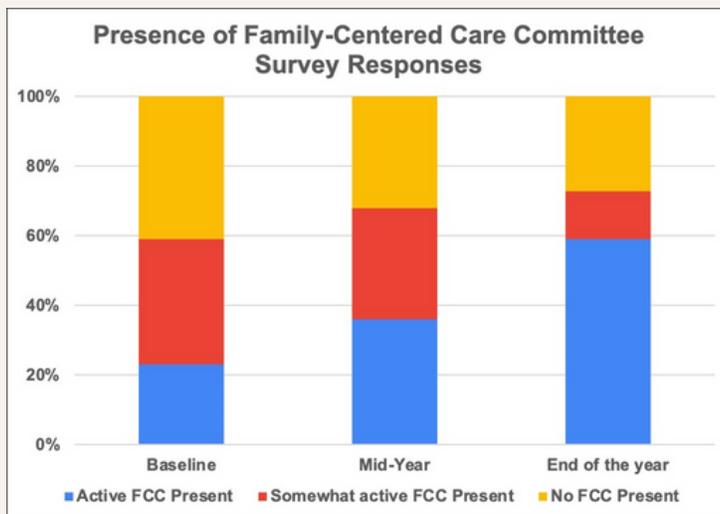
We want to hear from you, **especially those who serve as Family Partners**, as we address the following question for our [February Poll](#): Typically centers ask NICU parents to wait 1-1.5 years after discharge to join the Family Advisory Council. Considering this, **how long should a family who had a neonatal loss journey wait when they are eager to join?** Click this [link](#) to share your thoughts!



To view all past polls and responses, click [here](#).

## PHASE 3 QI WORK COMPLETION

We are thrilled to share that among 22 global centers in just one year, **we exceeded our Phase 3 QI Work goals by increasing the percentage of NICUs with a very active NICU-specific FCC Committee from 23% to 59%, and the percentage of NICUs with an active Family Advisory/Partnership Council from 18% to 46%**, as outlined by the blue portion of the graphs below. We will be sharing these results at Gravens Conference next month. Please come say hi if you plan to attend! Thank you for your tireless efforts in implementing FCC practices in your local centers. We are incredibly proud of this Taskforce and look forward to Phase 4 QI Work, which will include global benchmarking of FCC measures and Phase 4.1, Small Group Office Hours.



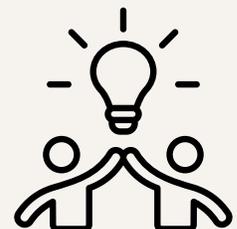
Phase 3 QI Work was completed in December of 2023. Our goal was to increase the percentage of NICUs with a very active (defined as meeting at least quarterly) NICU-specific FCC Committee by 10% and to increase the percentage of NICUs with an active (defined as meeting at least 1-2 times/year) Family Advisory/Partnership Council by 10% from January through December of 2023.

## SMALL GROUP OFFICE HOURS

To support our Small Groups, the FCC Taskforce holds monthly Office Hours to discuss challenges around implementing FCC practices and provide strategies for overcoming them. Office Hours are facilitated by healthcare professionals and Family Partners and include a variety of topics. If interested, please use the QR code below to register and receive calendar and Zoom invites!



Join us for Office Hours **Tuesday, 2/27 at 9am PT** to discuss discharge readiness and transitions home with Malathi Balasundaram, MD and Alex Zavala of The NICU Dad.



# THANK YOU FOR READING!

## FCC Taskforce

### Co-Chairs

Malathi Balasundaram, MD  
Colby Day, MD  
Keira Sorrells

### Program Manager

Morgan Kowalski

## Newsletter Committee

### Co-Chairs

Vargabi Ghei, MD, MSHS  
Morgan Kowalski

### Members

Malathi Balasundaram, MD  
Daphna Barbeau, MD  
Laura Hedli, MS  
Colby Day, MD  
Keira Sorrells  
Robert White, MD

## Mission Statement

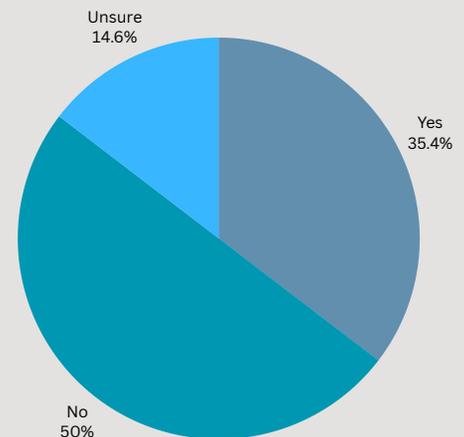
We exist to equip and support NICUs as they seek to begin or strengthen Family-Centered Care in their units.

### Why We Exist

65% of 48 responders said they don't have FCC committee in their unit.

To address the challenges that exist in implementing FCC practices, we offer free educational webinars with engaging, live Q&A sessions and use a small-group QI collaborative model. **Our key strength is equal partnership between health care professionals and family partners.**

Does your institution currently have an FCC Committee?



Want to strengthen FCC in your NICU? Click this [link](#) or scan the QR code to join the FCC Taskforce for access to free webinars & resources.

## Organizational Partners



Free Resources: [www.fcctaskforce.org](http://www.fcctaskforce.org)

Follow Us on Twitter: [@FCCTaskforce](https://twitter.com/FCCTaskforce)

Subscribe to Our YouTube Channel: [FCC Taskforce](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Contact Us: [familycenteredcaretaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:familycenteredcaretaskforce@gmail.com)



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