Pediatric Pulse: Training Opportunities

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Over the last year, I have had the opportunity of to train as a developmental and behavioral pediatrics (DBP) mini-fellow at the UC Davis MIND institute. A DBP mini-fellow is a new requirement that has been set-forth by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) for all training programs who receive MCHB funding. In California, these training programs include UC Davis, Stanford, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, and UC San Diego. Kaiser Permanente is also considering setting up a similar program.

There is a shortage of fellowship-trained developmental pediatricians nationwide which is expected to continue to grow. In 2023 the available fellowship positions only had a 55% match rate. In addition, there continues to be long wait times for an initial autism assessment, which can average 18 months - 2 years in many states. As a result, the DBP mini fellowship is designed to give general pediatricians 1 year of extra training to develop skills to manage many of the commonly occurring neurodevelopmental conditions in our own clinics. There is the added benefit of providing funding to cover the participant's time.

While each mini fellowship may look slightly different, over the past year I spent one day a week at the MIND Institute. During this time, I became familiar with intakes and assessments for autism spectrum disorder and medication management for complex ADHD and co-occurring behavioral and sleep issues. In addition, I have become more familiar with available community resources, therapies and reviewing IEPs and educational assessments. I have been trained on the RITA-T, a level-2 screener for autism in toddlers that takes 10-15 minutes to perform. I use this in conjunction with the DSM V criteria which now allows me to make an expedited diagnosis of autism in my general pediatric office in clear cut cases.

These types of training opportunities are critical to better serve kids and families in California. The mini fellowship can increase confidence in DBP-related care under the mentorship of DBP faculty. In addition, it improves collaboration and creates a pipeline between community pediatricians and DBP programs. I encourage our AAP Chapter members who may be interested in similar opportunities to reach out to their local DBP training programs to learn about availability and the application for the DBP mini fellowship.



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