



Association of Faculties of
Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

**Report of the Evaluation Workgroup of the Bright Futures for Infants, Children
and Adolescents Initiative:**

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Background on the Bright Futures Evaluation Project as provided by
Beth Zimmerman, HSR program director for the Bright Futures evaluation
2003, *Bright Ideas*, 1, (1), 3

For more than a decade, Bright Futures has been an important initiative of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Since its inception, a number of states, managed care organizations, provider associations, and individual providers have adapted and implemented Bright Futures recommendations for use in the provision of preventive care for children. However, no national evaluation has yet been conducted on the scope and impact of the implementation of Bright Futures on the national, state, or local levels.

In the fall of 2002, the MCHB awarded a contract to Health Systems Research, Inc (HSR) to conduct a multitiered 2-phase evaluation project of the Bright Futures initiative. Phase 1 of the project included a process evaluation, while phase 2 involves development of an outcome evaluation plan.

The purpose of the process evaluation was to assess the nature and extent of Bright Futures-related activities at the national, state, and community levels. Specifically, the evaluation will explore activities related to the development and dissemination of Bright Futures materials, training in the use of Bright Futures materials, and the use of Bright Futures in clinical practice, public health practice and program development, policy development, and the education and training of health care professionals. The process evaluation was conducted largely through key informant interviews with persons involved in the Bright Futures initiative at the national, state, and local levels. These interviews were supplemented with findings from several focus groups with families and pediatric providers about their experiences with health supervision discussions, guidelines, and tools. A comprehensive annotated bibliography of Bright Futures materials also is being developed in conjunction with the process evaluation.

The results of the phase 1 assessment form the basis for phase 2, the design of a plan to evaluate the outcomes of Bright Futures activities. This plan, to be developed in collaboration with a work group of Bright Futures stakeholders, will consist of a prioritized list of research questions, proposed study methodologies, and cost estimates for each component of the evaluation plan. It will eventually be used to measure the

extent to which implementation of Bright Futures has resulted in the achievement of the goals of the initiative.

Mary Margaret Gottesman, PhD, RN, CPNP, member of the Project Advisory committee representing the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, stated in the first Bright Futures newsletter, “Bright Futures provides pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) [and other child and adolescent health professionals] with useful forms and parent education materials to ensure that comprehensive evaluation and education occur on the many facets of child health and development at each and every well-child visit. The simple illustrations and easy reading level ensure that the majority of parents will be able to read and understand the information in the parent materials. With much of the information also available in Spanish, Bright Futures materials help make the information available to this growing segment of our patient population.”

As a result of the focus groups held at the annual 2003 NAPNAP and AFPNP meetings last April, PNP Faculty are now represented by Michelle A. Beauchesne DNSc, RN, CPNP on the phase 2 evaluation project. The first meeting was held at the Health Systems Research, Inc. in Washington, DC on October 3, 2003. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain input from participants on developing a plan for an outcome evaluation of activities performed in conjunction with the Bright Futures for Infants, Children, and Adolescents initiative. Representatives from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) described the goals of the outcome evaluation. Health Systems Research, Inc. (HSR) presented findings from its process evaluation of the Bright Futures initiative. MCHB and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) provided a descriptive forecast of plans for the initiative. The workgroup reviewed, augmented, and prioritized research questions that should be addressed by the outcome evaluation. The workgroup also explored alternative methods for addressing the research questions.

The objectives that were met by the end of the meeting were as follows:

1. The group prioritized a set of research questions to be addressed by the evaluation.
2. The group provided input on various options for designing an outcome evaluation for the Bright Futures initiative.

Chris DeGraw of MCHB welcomed participants and gave a descriptive overview of the goals for Bright Futures initiative outcome/evaluation plan. He also provided information on resources available for evaluation and a timeframe in which the evaluation should be conducted. The HSR presented the findings from the Bright Futures process evaluation and led a discussion of the findings. Of note, focus groups and surveys of PNP faculty revealed all 87 PNP programs have incorporated bright Futures into their curricula. A focus group of 10 PNPs in clinical practice confirmed use in practice. In a survey of pediatric and adolescent residency programs, 72% were familiar with Bright Futures, with usage noted in 52% of programs. Interestingly all pediatric residents were given a free copy of the pocket guides during their programs. In 2002, HRSA awarded two five-year cooperative agreements to the AAP to assume leadership of the Bright Futures Initiative- the Bright Futures Health Promotion/ Prevention Center and the Bright Futures Pediatric Implementation Project. MCHB and AAP described current activities

and unveiled future plans for the Bright Futures initiative. Participants expressed the hope that the initiative will continue to remain interdisciplinary in both scope and practice. HSR presented possible options for the design of an outcome evaluation of the Bright Futures initiative. The workgroup discussed the various options, listed the strengths and weaknesses, suggested modifications and alternatives, and also ranked them to inform MCHB's decisions regarding next steps in the evaluation process. Funding is available to support ongoing efforts of this group. As the process evolves more formal reports will be available. PNP faculty need to be involved at the decision making level of projects such as this that influence the care of children and families.