

# Population Health Clerkship 2018

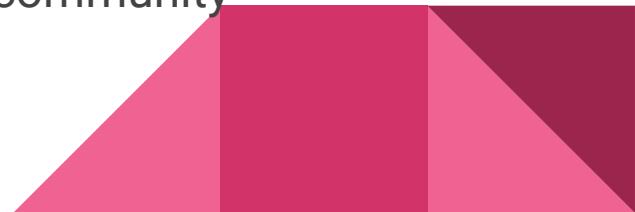
Parenting and Family Stability

Pernet Family Health Services

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# Population of Focus: Key Demographics

- Pernet Serves: **9,200 clients** each year in all programs, focussed mainly on the **Green Island area** (01610)
- Many refugees live in this neighborhood:
  - Common countries of origin: **Southeast Asia, Albania, Brazil, West Indies, the Mideast and Africa.**
- Approximately **38% are White, 36% are Hispanic, 13 % are African American or African, 4% are Southeast Asian** and the rest are from Mideastern or Eastern European countries.
- Demographics derived from US census data and field research indicate a **severe level of poverty**, lack of formal **education**, high **unemployment**, inferior **housing**, and a dramatic **foreclosure** rate resulting in **family destabilization**
- There is no neighborhood school, no branch library, no community development corporation, no youth-serving agency or organization




# Population of Focus: Risk exposures

## Medical

- Substance use in the home and/ or active addiction
- Parental chronic illness (mental or physical)
- Developmental disabilities
- Limited prenatal care
- Barriers in access to health care
- Smoking

## Social:

- Lack of maternal education
  - Lack of social support
  - Lack of adequate food or clothing
  - Housing instability
  - Lack of accessible transportation
  - Risk positive for child abuse/neglect, domestic violence
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# Interprofessional Teams of Care

## **Staff Members at Pernet:**

Non-profit Leadership Staff

Emergency Assistance Coordinator

Community Development Staff

Maternal Child Health Nurse

Parent Aide

Early Intervention Service Coordinators including:


Early Intervention Social Workers

Early Intervention Developmental Specialist


Early Intervention Nurse




# Maternal-Child Care Nurse

- **Qualifications:** RN
  - **Scope of Practice:**
    - Provide maternal-child care support to new mothers
    - Check on moms for whom DCF has some concern
    - Report to DCF on any moms who appear to be showing neglect for their child
    - Provide basic medical care for the child, such as checking weight gains and trouble-shooting any problems (sleep issues, eating concerns, developmental questions)
  - **How they provide care:** in-home appointments at the mother's convenience
  - **Strengths:** provides direct support for the mom and child in their home, provides someone who can check on the wellbeing of the child in the case of abuse or neglect
  - **Limitations:** Small team
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# Early Intervention (Social Workers and Developmental Specialists)

- **Qualifications:** Masters in social work or special education with a focus on early childhood intervention
  - **Scope of Practice:**
    - Provide assessments on a child's cognitive, linguistic, and overall development
    - Provide therapy in three categories: occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech therapy
    - Playgroups provide a setting where kids have access to educational toys and can socialize with kids their age
  - **How they provide care:** in-home assessment and therapy (weekly, biweekly, monthly options)
  - **Strengths:** children are provided with early developmental support at no cost to the family, the family has full control over what services they would like
  - **Limitations:** Only available until they are 3 years old, the family can deny help for their child even if the assessment shows large deficits
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# Parent Aide


- **Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree in social services or psychology, and/or experience in the field
  - **Scope of Practice:**
    - Provide parents with a large variety of support depending on their specific situation
    - Supervised visits with separated children
    - Family-building activities like a halloween party for parents and children
    - Helping the parent build a support network or counseling, reconnect with separated children, help them with transportation and support for court hearings
  - **How they provide care:** in-home visits and group sessions at Pernet
  - **Strengths:** parents who have been referred to DCF for whatever issue that was identified in their home has someone who can help them overcome a large variety of challenges and improve family function
  - **Limitations:** short time limit for aid makes long term follow-up difficult
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# How can providers interact with these professionals?


- When you refer a child or family to DCF, know what resources DCF will connect them with
  - When you have a patient who is in one of these programs, you can connect directly with these professionals providing them with in-home support if you have a particular question or concern
  - If you're concerned about a child's development, you can refer them to Early Intervention before the age of 3 to connect them with developmental specialists and therapy to tackle the problem early on
  - Patients with autism may benefit greatly from the Early Intervention program as well. Know who can diagnose a child with autism (Developmental Pediatricians) and how that qualifies them for further resources
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# Mental Health Project

- Pernet found a need for better mental health services in their population through a survey they gave to existing clients
  - Pernet procured a grant (from UMASS and CHIP) to address this mental health disparity
  - Our role: to help plan, organize, and launch a new method of connecting their clients with mental health services
    - Mental health survey to assess clients needs
    - Survey about desired services and programs to inform future Pernet mental health services
    - Follow-up system to help track how well their program is working
      - Follow-up forms to see how well the client's mental health needs are being addressed, any barriers to care, what types of programs worked well for them
    - Addressing the mental health stigma
    - Information hand-out for Pernet to distribute to clients about mental health in general and their new mental health programming
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# Population Health Advocacy: Department of Children and Families


- **Major Area of Advocacy:** Protects children from abuse and neglect
    - Supports young adults, age 18-22, transitioning from DCF custody to independent living
  - **To Whom are they Advocating:** Referrals to organizations such as Pernet Family Health Services for home health aid to parenting woman at risk for poor health outcomes
  - **Successes:** Maintained relationships with organizations such as Pernet Family Health Services
    - Pernet's service provides parenting support services for families under DCF supervision
    - DCF focuses on getting families to a safe point, so their families could be reunited
  - **Challenges:** Families may have difficult time committing to home visits or attending helpful parenting workshops
    - DCF sends a referral for a family, but the family does not follow through with support
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# Population Health Advocacy: Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children of Worcester County

- **Major Area of Advocacy:** Speaking for the best interest of abused and neglected children in Worcester County Courts
  - Allow children to grow up in a safe home with a sense of hope and a future
  - Maintaining a safe home environment is important for good health and wellbeing
- **To Whom are they Advocating:** Gather and present information and make recommendations to a judge in the best interest of the child
- **Successes:** Advocates are assigned to one case at a time, so each case is taken as the number one priority
- **Challenges:** Once children turn age 18 they can emancipate from foster care and once they leave the system, they would lose their Advocate
  - Improvement: Development of Fostering Futures program geared to directly advocate for older youth age 14-21



# Healthcare Providers as Advocates

- Pernet Family Health Services accepts referrals for many of their programs from health care providers at local hospitals
  - Important as providers to be able to identify problems within a family when a children or parent is being taken care of in a health care setting
  - Important to ask questions about social history as part of their medical history
  - If any issues are identified, families should be referred to Department of Children and Families, so they could take appropriate measures to help the family
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*Pernet*  
Family Health Service

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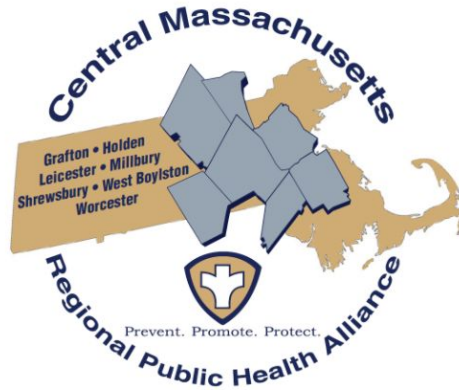


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Supporting family success in every community.

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