

## **ABSTRACT: 2018 ELAM Institutional Action Project**

**Project Title:** Using Nature to Heal: Exploration of Academic Health Center Green Space for Children

**Name and Institution:** Tara Sabo-Attwood, PhD; University of Florida

**Collaborators and Mentors:** Mentors—Dean Michael Perri, PhD, ABPP; Collaborators—Annie Hermansen-Baez, PhD; Shelly Collins, MD, FAAP; Wayne Zipperer, PhD; Captain Charles Higgins, MS, USPHS; Lindsay Thompson, MD; Linda Cottler, PhD, MPH; Rebecca Austin-Datta, MS.

**Topic Category (choose 1):** Administration Clinical Education Faculty Development Research

### **Background, Significance of project:**

Implementation of 'green spaces' to encourage interaction with nature has shown remarkable health benefits through influence on physical, mental, and social outcomes. Efforts have been established to improve the health of children in the general population, but few are designed for sick children. Even less attention has been paid to securing the environment (i.e. air quality), which is particularly important, as nature wellness programs are gaining traction in urban settings. University of Florida (UF) Health does not have nature-based outdoor space for patients. Therefore, there is need and opportunity to enhance clinical care and to provide patients their best experience possible through nature-based efforts.

### **Purpose/Objectives:**

To address this issue, a 'healing garden' will be created that will be accessible to hospitalized children. My objectives encompass both assessing environmental issues and short- and long-term health outcomes by 1) Information gathering from the literature, experts and stakeholders; 2) Participating in the landscape design and providing input on environmental health factors; 3) Leading an evaluation team to measure health and hospital outcomes; and 4) Developing a sustainability plan.

### **Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy:**

Methods include: 1) Perform a systematic review on nature-healing programs at other health facilities; 2) Interview stakeholders to understand health and hospital needs; 3) Define environmental health needs; 4) Execute environmental monitoring; modify landscape design accordingly; 5) Evaluate short- and long-term metrics for hospital and health outcomes, with prioritization of IRB approval and development of survey tools; 6) Encourage and sustain patient interaction with nature through a prescription park program.

### **Outcomes/Results:**

An environmental assessment team is performing air monitoring of the designated space due to the garden located adjacent to a high traffic road and diesel bus stop. Based on our results, we will recommend modifications to the garden design. My evaluation team is designing surveys to quantify the impact of the garden on health and hospital metrics prioritized from stakeholder interviews, which include length of stay, patient satisfaction, and pain management. Finally, to address sustained use we have developed a partnership with 'Kids in Parks' and plan to implement 3 trails initially, one at the UF Health healing garden, that will be linked to a national prescription program.

### **Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact:**

We anticipate this environmentally safe healing garden will enhance clinical care. As the first hospital site for the Nature Explore platform, our garden will serve as a model for other health facilities nationally and the first to consider environmental health in the design. This project also provides a robust research platform, opportunities for student engagement, and expansion to other UF Health populations.