

## Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

### 2026 HAP Achievement Award Living the Vision Award

#### Comprehensive Opioid Response and Education (CORE) Program

##### The Goal

Substance use and overdose had become the region's top community health priority, yet pediatric systems had limited resources to identify youth at risk and connect them with appropriate care. Children and adolescents also faced significant barriers to treatment, leaving families with few options for support. A more connected pediatric response was needed to close gaps in care for young people and families affected by substance use.

##### The Intervention

The organization expanded its existing opioid stewardship work into CORE, which later grew into EMPOWER to reflect a broader focus on substance use prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and community education. The program brought together clinical leaders, community partners, and a full-time program manager to align work that had previously been fragmented.



The work included developing an inpatient adolescent withdrawal pathway, expanding substance use screening, pursuing state licensure for youth treatment services, and strengthening naloxone co-prescribing and distribution. Community education, drug take-back



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efforts, electronic health record tools, and the Poison Center partnership helped extend the program beyond the hospital and into the community.

### **Results**

The program advanced pediatric substance use care in both clinical and community settings. A published inpatient adolescent withdrawal pathway gave clinicians a consistent approach for managing youth during hospitalization and contributed to stronger follow-up after discharge. The program also expanded access to adolescent substance use services through three licensed care locations, maintained strong naloxone co-prescribing, and secured new funding to support long-term sustainability.