

I. **A New Tool for Tracking and Improving NCS Community Outreach and Engagement: The NCS Community Partnership Action Index (PAI)**

**Introduction:** The NICHD has recognized the critical importance of community engagement to successful enrollment and retention in the National Children's Study. While MDES operational measures of engagement are focused on quantities of people reached at events, arguably the most important community engagement work consists of building and sustaining partnerships with key organizations in NCS communities.

**Methods:** To capture the strength of NCS community partnerships, outreach staff at several high-low Study Centers (SCs) developed the NCS Community Partnership Action Index as part of the Hi/Lo CoIN dashboard. The PAI, a five point ordinal scale, measures the level of partner engagement in NCS outreach activities for each community partner identified by a SC. Two summary measures were developed: 1) partnership breadth (total number of partners) and 2) partnership depth (% of partners with a score  $\geq 4$ ).

**Results:** Four Hi-Low SCs implemented the PAI over a period of 4-6 months. Scores over time exhibited a range of patterns across SCs. Comparisons of scores over time, across segments, and by organization type helped inform and improve specific outreach and engagement strategies.

**Discussion:** The PAI is a useful measure of community partner engagement in NCS outreach activities. It is highly communicable to a broader audience of NCS scientists and community stakeholders. This tool's use prompted a more systematic look at what NCS SCs can offer local partners over the duration of the study so that these relationships are reciprocal and sustainable.