



**Mount
Sinai**

Health Communication Hub Partnership with The Epilepsy Program

**FINAL REPORT
MARCH 2024**

Alyssa Gale, MPH
Sona Jani, MPH
Maya Korin, PhD, MS

ABOUT

The Health Communication Hub is a holistic model for addressing the health literacy needs of diverse patient populations across our health system. Over the past six months, we have partnered with Epilepsy Division leaders and staff to identify patient education gaps and develop patient-driven solutions.

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

ENGAGING STAFF PERSPECTIVE

All HCH activities were guided by the invaluable perspectives of the staff serving epilepsy patients and caregivers. We convened three distinct sub-committees dedicated to patient focus groups, professional development planning for staff, and patient education needs.

CAPTURING PATIENT VOICE AND EXPERIENCE

In January 2024, five patient focus groups were held to solicit the unique perspectives and experiences of five distinct patient/caregiver subpopulations: 1. Newly diagnosed patients; 2. Established patients; 3. Caregivers of adult patients; 4. Caregivers of pediatric patients; and 5. Women of reproductive age.

Attendees offered dozens of suggestions to improve care at Mount Sinai, including:

- Educational Content: A centralized repository of information where patients may access medication instructions, educational resources, and FAQ, as well as resources on seizure types, first aid/rescue, women's reproductive health, lifestyle changes, adolescent development, seizure dogs, employer communication and accommodations, epilepsy basics for family, friends, and community members, and creating inclusive environments for children with epilepsy at school.
- Inpatient Communication: Improved communication around wait times and pacing of care, evaluation of the visitor policy for patients who require a caregiver present, evaluation of discharge and care plan materials, and improved communication across team members to support a more team-based experience and feeling of care provision.
- General Support: CPR training and training on administering first aid/rescue medications, a clinician-led support group to connect with peers, strategic follow-up communications via MyChart and other modalities, information around SUDEP that is compassionate and action-oriented, and enhanced use of MyChart messaging features.

CREATING A PATIENT EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

To ensure access to high-quality, health literate, clinically accurate and up-to-date information, a process has been created to support staff in requesting the development of new patient education resources.

CREATING AND REVISING PATIENT EDUCATION RESOURCES

New content has been developed based on focus group feedback, and existing content has been updated to meet health literacy standards and better address the needs of patients and caregivers. These resources include: "*Advanced Epilepsy Care*"; "*Service Animals and Seizure Dogs*"; and "*Preparing for Your EMU Admission (Adults)*". Updates to the website are also in progress.

TRAINING STAFF IN BEST PRACTICES FOR HEALTH LITERATE COMMUNICATION

An interactive 60-minute "Introduction to Health Literacy" training will be facilitated for Epilepsy administrative staff and EEG technologists at both MSH and MSW.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP



ALYSSA GALE, MPH **DIRECTOR OF HEALTH EDUCATION**

Alyssa Gale serves as the Director of Health Education for the Mount Sinai Health System, addressing health-related inequities and disparities through patient-centered health education programming and through professional development training for health system staff. Prior to her role at Mount Sinai, Ms. Gale held positions at the NYC Department of Health, Planned Parenthood of Illinois, and at Kaiser Permanente in Northern California. She received her Master of Public Health from the University of Michigan.



MAYA KORIN, PHD, MS **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, EMPH**

Maya Korin is an Associate Professor at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai where she teaches graduate classes in socio-behavioral health, qualitative research methods, and health literacy in the Graduate Program of Public Health and the Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Program. Her current research focuses on incorporating health literate information into the development of mobile health applications. She received her PhD and MS at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.



SONA JANI, MPH **HEALTH EDUCATOR**

Sona Jani is a Health Education Specialist in the Department of Health Education at the Mount Sinai Health System. In addition to supporting the department's health literacy initiatives, Sona develops and facilitates equity-focused health education and empowerment programming for the community. Prior to her work at Mount Sinai, Sona worked in youth development and reproductive health education at Northwell Health. She received her MPH from the University of Michigan.



EPILEPSY PROGRAM LEADERSHIP **DR. LARA MARCUSE AND DR. MADELINE FIELDS**

Lara V. Marcuse, MD, and Madeline C. Fields, MD, are the co-directors of the Mount Sinai Epilepsy Program. Dr. Marcuse and Dr. Fields are committed to taking care of children and adults with epilepsy, and providing support and resources to patients and families. The Mount Sinai Epilepsy Program comprises a multidisciplinary team including neurologists, neurosurgeons, researchers, nurses, neuro-psychologists, technicians, nutritionists, and psychiatrists. The program has been accredited as a Level 4 Center by National Associations of Epilepsy Centers.

