



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **2012 Child Health Innovation Research Fund Awards Grants to Yale & UConn Schools of Medicine**

*Grants to Create Smartphone App for New Moms with Depression and to  
Address Pediatric & Mental Health Provider Collaboration*

Farmington - The Children's Fund of Connecticut (CFC) and Yale Center for Clinical Investigation (YCCI) have jointly awarded 2012 Child Health Innovation Research Grants to two projects that address important children's health and mental health issues. One project, to be led by Dr. Megan Smith at Yale, creates an iPhone/Smartphone app and web-based social network to support the mental health of new mothers with depression. A second project, awarded to Dr. Julian Ford at the University of Connecticut Health Center, seeks to establish more effective referral and communication practices between pediatric primary care and children's mental health providers.

### **\$75,000 Awarded to Yale School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry for the Two-Year: Momba Web-Based Community Project**

Social ties and community connectedness are extremely important for maternal mental health, which in turn has implications for infant mental health. Evidence shows that 12-20% of mothers of young children and new mothers experience depressive symptoms, with higher rates among low-income, minority women. Dr. Megan Smith, project developer and assistant professor at the Yale School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, wants to apply the latest social networking technology to reduce isolation, increase access to information and foster social support among first-time moms struggling with depression.

The Momba innovation grant project will develop and test a Smartphone application through a partnership with Preview Labs, a company specializing in rapid prototyping of mobile device applications. Dr. Smith's team will recruit a sample of first-time low-income moms delivering infants at Yale-New Haven Hospital and exhibiting minor to major depressive disorder to pilot test the Momba application. The mothers will be provided with a smartphone, internet connectivity, training and access to the web-based community (Momba). Researchers will collect data measuring maternal and infant mental health for 8 months post delivery.

### **\$75,000 Awarded to UConn Health Center, Department of Psychiatry for the Two-Year: Development of a Practitioner-Informed Model to Facilitate Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

Pediatric primary care providers play a key role in the early detection of mental health problems in children and adolescents, and report that as many as one-quarter of their patients have behavioral health issues. Most pediatric primary care providers refer these patients to a mental health specialist, yet still want to remain involved in their patient's ongoing psychosocial care. Unfortunately, collaboration is not easy. Psychology and medicine have historically had separate training, education and treatment approaches, and few health and mental health practitioners are co-located within the same practice site.

This innovation grant project addresses existing barriers to communication by engaging health and mental health providers in the development of a replicable and sustainable system for collaboration. Principal investigator, Dr. Julian Ford and his research team will work with two pairs of pediatric and behavioral health practices to develop and implement communications tools and protocols. The research team will evaluate patient and practice outcomes.

### **Child Health Innovation Research Grants**

Since 2003, the Children's Fund of Connecticut (CFC) has awarded 13 grants totaling \$1.39 million for local primary and preventive pediatric and mental health initiatives that can lead to sustainable improvements in direct practice and service systems throughout the state. In 2011 and 2012, CFC has partnered with the Yale Center for Clinical Investigation (YCCI) to jointly fund and administer these grants. Each innovation grant project fulfills CFC's vision of providing access to effective, community-based health care as well as YCCI's mission to move research findings that improve patient care from "bench to bedside" and out into the community.

For further information about Child Health Innovation Grants, please contact *Julie Tacinelli* [[jtacinelli@uchc.edu](mailto:jtacinelli@uchc.edu)], *Communications Director, CHDI, 860-679-1519* or *Frederic De Pourcq*, [[frederic.depourcq@yale.edu](mailto:frederic.depourcq@yale.edu)], *Associate Director, Community Research and Engagement, YCCI, 203-785-3482*.

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