



JFK Partners

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

# Reducing Uncertainties during the Transition from Inpatient Rehabilitation to the Bridge Program at Children's Hospital Colorado (CHCO)

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# WHAT IS THE BRIDGE PROGRAM?

- Outpatient therapy program through CHCO for children after newly acquired neurological injuries
  - Team includes PT, OT, SLP, Rehabilitation psychologist, education specialist, and social work
  - Patients come at least 2x per week, typically 2-3 hours each day
  - Treat about 25 patients per year
  - Most common diagnosis: Traumatic brain injury
  - Goal: Continued rapid recovery of neurological injuries after patients have left the hospital, through multiple therapies, in one location.
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# BACKGROUND



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



DESIRE TO EASE  
TRANSITION



IMPROVE THERAPY  
FOLLOW-UP



PROMOTE BEST  
OUTCOMES

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## Goal statement

- Improve family and provider knowledge about the Bridge program to reduce uncertainties related to the transition into Bridge.

## Scholarship of teaching<sup>1</sup>

- Focuses on the development of new teaching methods, assessments of learning outcomes and preparation and dissemination of highly effective curricula and other instructional materials.



# LITERATURE REVIEW

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## Experiences of patients with traumatic brain injury and their carers during transition from in-patient rehabilitation to the community: a qualitative study<sup>2</sup>

- Respondents expressed that lack of coordination between services lead to **confusion** and **delays in receiving follow-up care**.
  - Carers did not understand each medical professionals' role and who to contact for what.
  - "Transitions of care place more **responsibility** on caregivers."
  - Caregivers **need support from staff** to help make sense of the trauma, manage their emotional response, organize family commitments, mitigate financial pressures, and arrange schedules.
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# LITERATURE REVIEW P2

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## **The Role of Rehabilitation Professionals in Care Transitions for Older Adults: A Scoping Review<sup>3</sup>**

- **Well-planned and executed transition of care** lead to improved quality of life, reduced healthcare costs, decreased hospital readmission rates, and fewer medication errors.
- **Case manager involvement** is imperative in the success of care transitions.
- **Timely follow-up** is necessary to optimize outcomes for patients.

## **Caregiver Perspectives During the Post Inpatient Hospital Transition: A Mixed Methods Approach<sup>4</sup>**

- Patients expressed fears related to **social relationships, coping skills, academic performance, and relationships with school personnel** upon discharge.
  - Caregivers desired more **assistance organizing** after school activities, mentoring, in-home support services, appointment transportation, and family therapy.
  - Caregivers wished schools would be more proactive in providing services for their children.
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# LITERATURE REVIEW P3

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## **Experiences of patients, parents, and healthcare professionals in the process of transitioning from hospital to community after inpatient pediatric rehabilitation among children with special health care needs<sup>5</sup>**

- Successful medical rehabilitation includes **supporting patients' reintegration into to the community**, including return to school and access to education.
  - **Clear and timely communication** is imperative in reducing stress during the return to school experience.
  - Caregivers recommended a **post-discharge bridge program** combining healthcare and educational support to aid a successful reentry into school.
  - Full-day outpatient programs were beneficial for patients, especially those with acquired brain injuries, in continuing therapeutic rehabilitation and providing educational support.
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# LITERATURE REVIEW P4

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## Transitions to Outpatient Care After Traumatic Brain Injury for Hispanic Children<sup>6</sup>

- **Barriers to obtaining outpatient rehabilitation** included lack of providers close to home, insufficient transportation, lack of support resources, poor understanding of patient's illness, and poor communication.
  - It is critical to receive **timely initiation of therapy** after hospital discharge as the highest rate of functional recovery happens in the first year after TBI.
  - Caregivers reported a lack of **coordinated support and communication** between the hospital and their child's school.
  - **Family centered** care, support for **school retry**, and assistance with community reintegration were positive indicators for children following a TBI.
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# LITERATURE REVIEW P5

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## **Improving transitions of care for complex pediatric trauma patients from inpatient rehabilitation to home: an observational pilot study<sup>7</sup>**

- Confusion regarding follow-up care after hospitalization decreases efficiency and effectiveness of these services.
- Caregivers of children with brain injuries report feeling “abandoned and stressed” during the transition from inpatient rehabilitation to outpatient services.

### **Statistics**

- 84% of families identified difficulty in obtaining needed treatment or resources.
- 84% of families reported confusion navigating follow-up recommendations.
- 23% of caregivers had difficulty making appointment or were unsure of which specialists they needed to see.
- 38% of families had difficulty making appointments or finding providers.
- 22% had difficulty obtaining or using the equipment.
- 29% had difficulty transitioning back to school or daycare.

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# GATHERING INFORMATION

- Approved by the International Review Board (IRB) as “quality improvement” - November 2024
  - Did not need ethics review
- Surveys created- November 2024
  - Emailed to providers
  - Communicated with Bridge scheduler for patient/caregiver survey→ Pivoted to QR code for patients



# PROVIDER QUESTIONS



## Bridge information for providers

**B** *I* U  

Form description

What should families and patients know about the Bridge program prior to starting?

Long answer text

What should therapists know about Bridge when referring patients here?

Long answer text

How can the Bridge program better inform providers and families about the program? (i.e. A brochure, web page, verbal communication etc.)

Long answer text

# PATIENT/CAREGIVER QUESTIONS



## Bridge program feedback

**B** *I* U [↗](#) ~~X~~

Form description

What should families and patients know about the Bridge program prior to starting?

Long answer text

What should families and caregivers expect or know during the transition from inpatient rehabilitation to the Bridge program?

Long answer text

How can the Bridge program better inform patients and families about the program? (I.e. A brochure, web page, verbal communication etc.)

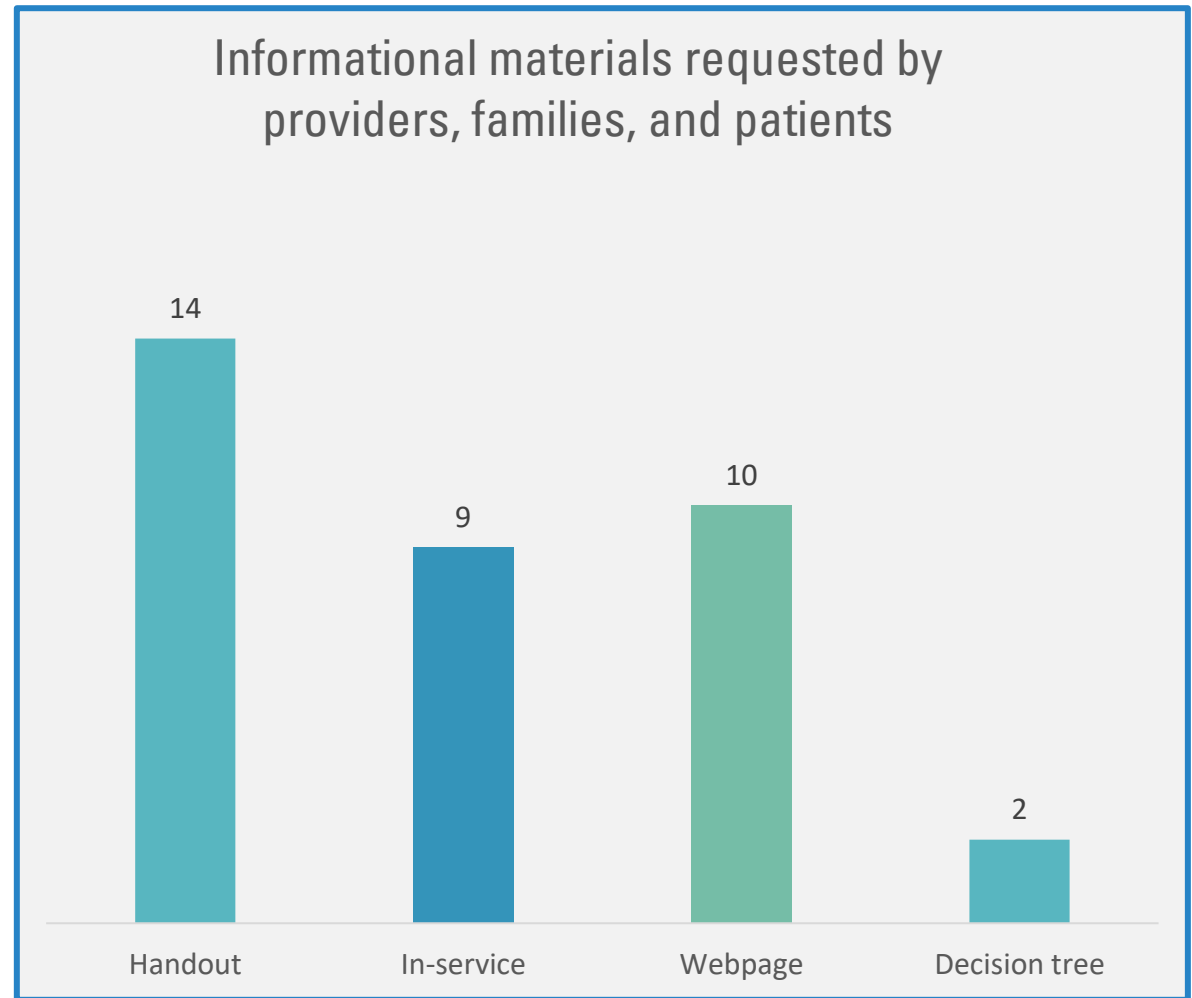
Long answer text

# RESULTS

- 2 responses from patients/caregivers
- 20 responses from providers

## Common themes:

- Families and providers should know...
  - Expected frequency of sessions
  - Availability within Bridge
  - Length of care
  - Steppingstone to typical outpatient
- Providers should know...
  - How to refer
  - Who is a good candidate



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## 5 PRODUCTS CREATED

Handout for families  
(November 2024-April 2025)

Draft Children's Hospital of Colorado Webpage  
(November 2024-April 2025)

Decision tree for providers  
(December 2024-March 2025)

In-service for CHCO therapists  
(April 2025)

LEND Scholarly Project Symposium  
(May 2025)

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# MEETING WITH MARKETING<sup>8</sup>

- Jennifer Labac, Director of Digital Communication Strategy
- December 11, 2024
- 12 million people per year use the CHCO website
- Prioritize communication to bring in new patients
- Requirements: 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level, focus on keywords that people are searching
- Accessibility: Health literacy, current focus on creating website in Spanish



Image of CHCO Main Website Landing Page<sup>9</sup>

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# HEALTH LITERACY

Submitted handout 2/4/25

Approved with edits 3/19/25

- Updated format
- Ensured reading level requirements
- Simplified

Submitted for Spanish translation 3/19/25



# HANDOUT FOR FAMILIES

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REHAB MEDICINE – PHYSICAL THERAPY

## Welcome to the Bridge Program

Your child has been referred to the Bridge program for continued therapy services. The Bridge program will allow your child to receive therapy services from multiple professionals at the same location.

### Who we are

The Bridge program includes team members who specialize in caring for children who have neurological injuries (such as brain, spine, or nerve injuries). Our goal is to support your child's recovery after they leave the hospital, so they can go back to their everyday activities at home, in the community, and at school.

### What to expect

- On your child's first day at Bridge, the team will go over their needs and history, and decide which therapies (OT, PT, SLP, and psychology) will help them the most.
- Your child will be scheduled for therapy sessions at least 2 days a week, for at least 2-3 hours each day to build on the skills they are learning. The Bridge team will decide how often your child will need to come in based on their first visit.
- You must stay in the building during all therapy sessions.

### Who is on the team

#### Physical Therapy (PT)

Works with your child to improve movements such as walking, standing, using stairs, strength, coordination, and balance.

#### Occupational Therapy (OT)

Helps your child with tasks like self-care, using their hands and arms, thinking, vision, and feeding or swallowing.

#### Speech Therapy (SLP)

Works with your child on improving their communication, thinking tasks, feeding and swallowing, and using communication devices.

#### Rehab Psychology

Works with your child and family to adjust and cope with their new injury or illness. Our Bridge psychologist focuses on emotional, mental, and behavioral health.

#### Education Specialist

Helps your child with learning, thinking, and behavior at school. Our educational specialist works with you and your child's school team to ease the transition back to school after being in the hospital.

#### Social Worker

Assesses your child and family's needs and offers supportive counseling, resources, and education. Our Bridge social worker visits in-person with families, as well as over the phone or during other hospital visits, to continue communication outside of Bridge.

## Location

Children's Hospital Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

13123 E 16th Ave, Aurora, CO 80045

### Directions:

- The Bridge program is located on the 6th floor.
- Check-in at the main entrance where they will direct you to Admissions for registration.
- After Admissions, go to the main elevators at the back of the lobby.
- Take the elevators up to the 6th floor and check in at the security desk. Your therapist will come out to meet you here.
- Caregivers are welcome to stay in the gym during therapy or find another spot in the hospital to wait.

## Contact

- If you have questions or concerns about scheduling, please call Shartel Evans at 720-777-4275.
- If you need to cancel an appointment or reach out to your therapist, please use MyChart.
- For questions about MyChart, email [mychart@childrenscolorado.org](mailto:mychart@childrenscolorado.org), or call 720-777-6939.

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[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SmC\\_Jy6xo9u-GPcNR08Rtu1hRNRLLVfc/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SmC_Jy6xo9u-GPcNR08Rtu1hRNRLLVfc/view?usp=sharing)

# HANDOUT FOR FAMILIES (SPANISH)

## MEDICINA DE LA REHABILITACIÓN – FISIOTERAPIA

### Le damos la bienvenida al Programa Bridge

Su hijo(a) ha sido derivado al programa Bridge para continuar con sus terapias. Con el programa Bridge, su hijo(a) recibirá terapias de diversos profesionales en un solo lugar.

### Quiénes somos

El programa Bridge está formado por especialistas en la atención de pacientes pediátricos con daños neurológicos tales como daño cerebral, daños en la médula espinal o daños en los nervios. Nuestro objetivo es apoyar la recuperación de su hijo después de que sale del hospital para que pueda retomar sus actividades cotidianas en casa, en la escuela y como parte de la comunidad.

### Qué puede esperar

- En el primer día de su hijo en Bridge, el equipo repasará los antecedentes y las necesidades clínicas y decidirá las terapias más adecuadas para su hijo, tales como ergoterapia, fisioterapia, logopedia y terapia psicológica.
- Las sesiones de terapia para su hijo se programarán al menos 2 días a la semana, con un mínimo de 2 a 3 horas por día para desarrollar las habilidades que necesita aprender. El equipo Bridge determinará la frecuencia de las consultas en función de resultados de la primera consulta.
- Deberá permanecer en las instalaciones durante toda la duración de las sesiones de terapia.

### Quiénes integran el equipo

#### Fisioterapeuta

Se enfoca en mejorar los movimientos de su hijo(a), como caminar, pararse, usar escaleras, así como el fortalecimiento muscular, la coordinación y el balance.

#### Ergoterapeuta

Se enfoca en habilidades relacionadas con el cuidado personal, el uso de manos y brazos, la capacidad cognitiva, la vista, la alimentación y la deglución (capacidad para tragar).

#### Terapeuta del habla o logopeda

Se enfoca en mejorar la comunicación, las habilidades cognitivas, la alimentación y la deglución (capacidad para tragar) y el uso de dispositivos de apoyo para la comunicación.

#### Psicólogo de la rehabilitación

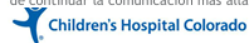
El psicólogo de Bridge se enfoca en ayudar al niño y a la familia para que puedan adaptarse y afrontar la situación relacionada con el daño o la lesión, mediante el fortalecimiento de la salud emocional, mental y conductual.

#### Especialista en educación

El especialista de Bridge se enfoca en las habilidades de aprendizaje, cognitivas y conductuales necesarias para el entorno escolar. Trabaja en colaboración con usted y el equipo de la escuela de su hijo(a) para facilitar el regreso a la escuela después de la hospitalización.

#### Trabajador social

Evalúa las necesidades del niño(a) y de su familia y brinda asesoría, recursos y educación de apoyo. El trabajador social de Bridge lleva a cabo consultas con la familia en persona, por teléfono, o durante otras consultas en el hospital a fin de continuar la comunicación más allá de las sesiones en Bridge.



Children's Hospital Colorado complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. • ATENCIÓN: el habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-720-777-1234. • CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 1-720-777-1234.

### Dirección

Children's Hospital Colorado, Centro Médico Anschutz  
13123 E 16th Ave, Aurora, CO 80045

### Instrucciones para llegar:

- El programa Bridge se encuentra en el piso 6.
- Registre su llegada en la entrada principal donde le pedirán que vaya a Admissions (Admisiones) para registrarse.
- Después de ir a Admissions, vaya a los elevadores principales en la parte de atrás del vestíbulo.
- Tome el elevador al piso 6 y regístrese en el mostrador de seguridad. Su terapeuta saldrá a recibirle.
- Los cuidadores pueden quedarse en el gimnasio durante la terapia o en otro sitio del hospital mientras esperan.

### Contacto

- Si tiene preguntas o inquietudes sobre la programación, llame a Shartel Evans al 720-777-4275.
- Si necesita cancelar una cita o comunicarse con su terapeuta, utilice MyChart.
- Si tiene preguntas sobre MyChart, envíe un correo electrónico a [mychart@childrenscolorado.org](mailto:mychart@childrenscolorado.org) o llame al 720-777-6939.

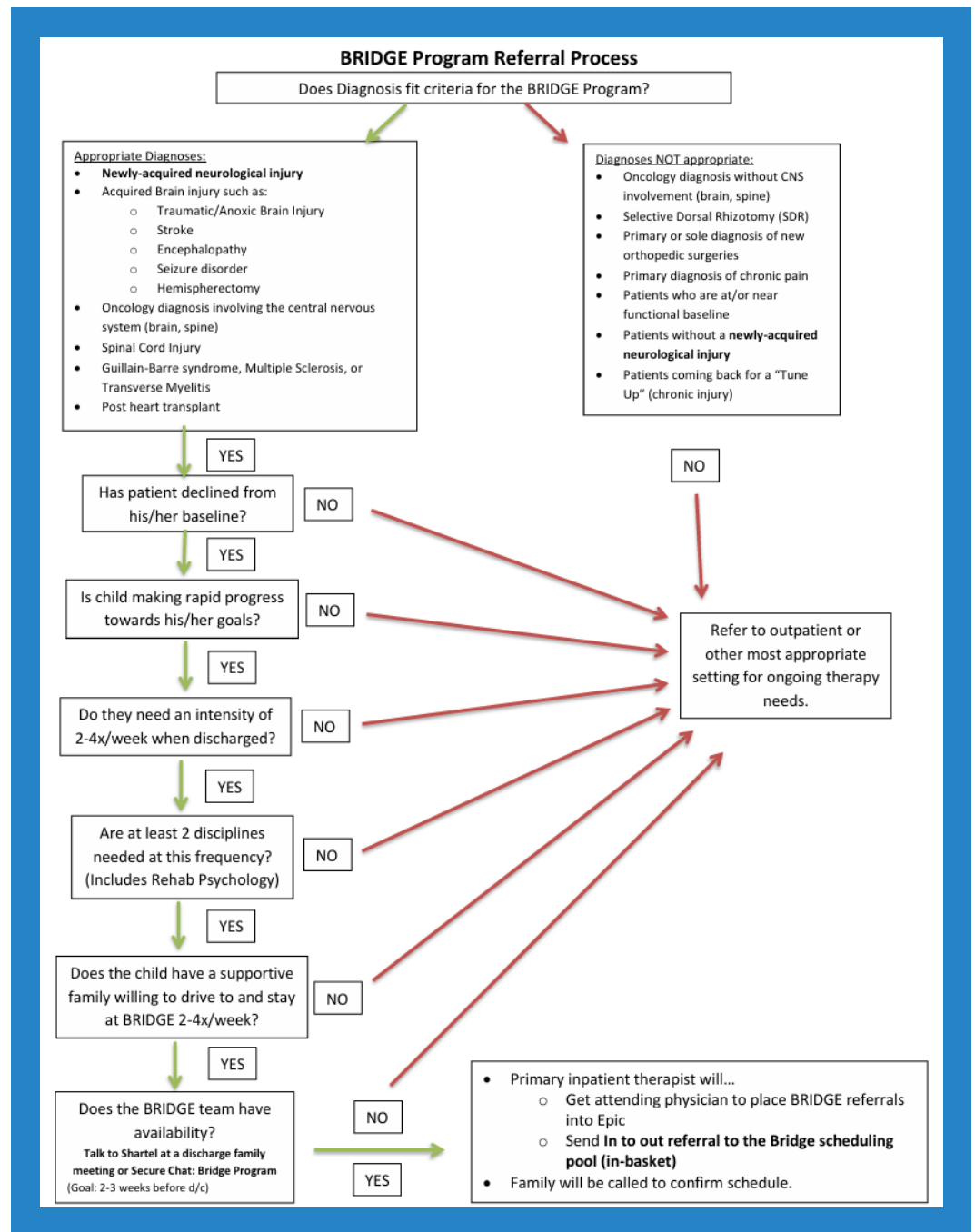


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# DECISION TREE FOR PROVIDERS

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12U4IGhR5D26JshBQkZn1GPVvUsiMS9cX/view?usp=sharing>





## DRAFT WEBPAGE

Steps to create a webpage

1. Fill out "CHCO Program Landing Webpage Template
2. Submit to Marketing and Communications
3. CHCO writing team makes edits
4. Content management system publishes

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1I7JtGRUFVj1o7IcTluYultQCYUISSHme/view?usp=sharing>

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# IN-SERVICE

- Occurred 4/10/2025
- Inpatient therapists from all disciplines (OT, PT, SLP) attended
- Discussed referral process and new materials
- Feedback survey
- Created dot phrase for EPIC



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## ONGOING NEEDS

1

Increase feedback  
from families and  
patients

2

Move forward  
with publishing  
Bridge webpage

3

Ensure materials  
are being used

4

Present at APTA  
Pediatric  
Conference

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# THANK YOU!

Kat Denlinger, mentor for the Bridge Program  
And the entire Bridge team!

Meghan Hernandez, Director of Residency

Inpatient therapists at Children's Hospital Colorado

Families and patients of Bridge

Jennifer Labac, Marketing Director  
And the CHCO Health Literacy team

LEND program faculty and colleagues

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