

Date: December, 8, 2022  
To: Dr. Robert Blackburn Award Review Committee  
From: Adam E. Barry, PhD.  
RE: Nomination of Whitney R. Garney, PhD, MPH for Dr. Robert Blackburn Award

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to formally nominate Dr. Whitney Garney for the Dr. Robert Blackburn Award. Dr. Garney is an Associate Professor in the Health Behavior Department within the School of Public Health at Texas A&M University and leads the laboratory for Community Health Evaluation and Systems Science. Throughout Dr. Garney's career, she has focused on systems thinking and ecological approaches to health. Dr. Garney has worked on a variety of projects with a focus on adolescent health including teen pregnancy prevention; expansion and evaluation of telebehavioral health services in rural areas; policy, systems and environmental interventions for nutrition, physical activity and tobacco; and an overall focus on reducing health disparities. The common thread throughout this work is a systems-level perspective to health interventions.

One recent and extremely pertinent example of Dr. Garney's work comes from her role as Co-Principal Investigator for the Comprehensive Healthcare for Adolescents Initiative (CHAI) project which is currently in progress. Through the CHAI project, Dr. Garney and the CHAI team convened a group of stakeholders from across the country to develop innovative approaches to improve adolescent access to and enhance experiences with healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health. To set the stage for innovative program development, Dr. Garney led the development of a literature review focused on barriers to adolescent healthcare access and developed a systems map to identify leverage points. From there, the CHAI evaluation team, led by Dr. Garney conducted focus groups with stakeholders at five diverse healthcare organizations across the U.S. to gain more context on impact and relevance of the identified leverage points on adolescents accessing healthcare within their organizations. This information was used to set the stage for a series of design sessions, using human-centered design methodology, with subject matter experts, partner organizations, and a teen advisory group (all of which were located throughout the U.S. to provide national representation and input). Ultimately, two programs resulted from this process that are currently undergoing pilot testing in

multiple healthcare organizations: 1) Confident Teen and 2) Total Teen. The Total Teen Program Manual is included as an artifact with this application.

Both of the interventions developed through CHAI aim to increase healthcare access at a systemic level. Confident Teen includes an organizational policy that ensures healthcare organizations offer adolescent patients confidential time with a healthcare provider, without the presence of a parent or guardian, during which time the adolescent patient can discuss sensitive topics and questions. Total Teen aims to increase access to behavioral health and sexual and reproductive healthcare through a standardized confidential survey to assess adolescent behaviors and needs. The assessment provides real-time results for providers to confidentially review and further discuss with patients. Upon reviewing results and identified needs or questions, providers will offer immediate care based on their identified needs through patient education, micro visits, follow-up appointments, and /or referrals to specialists as needed. Both programs create organizational change that impacts how adolescents receive and experience healthcare resources and services. Dr. Garney's role as Co-PI throughout this process demonstrates her commitment to policy and systems-level interventions.

I believe that Dr. Garney is an ideal candidate and truly fits the intention of the Dr. Robert Blackburn Award to highlight professionals who have committed their careers to advancing health education through policy and systems-level approaches. Please contact me if you would like any additional information about the work of Dr. Garney.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adam E. Barry".

School of Public Health | Texas A&M University