

# Breaking Down Barriers: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Pediatric Care for Children With Disabilities



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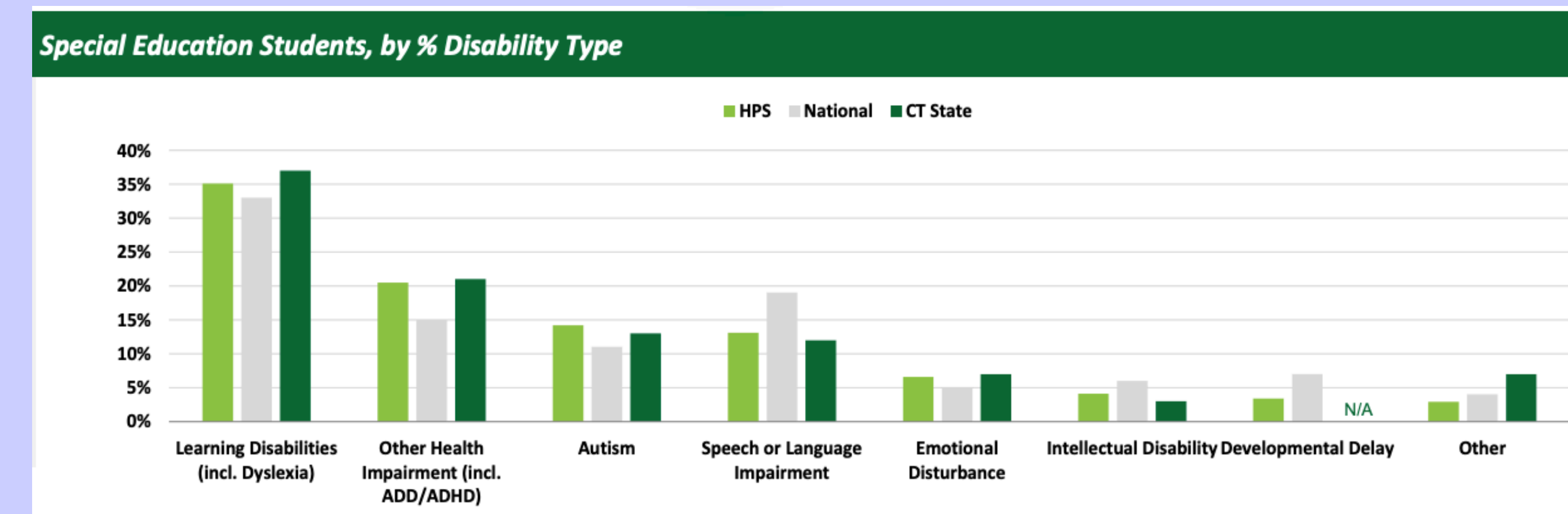
## INTRODUCTION

The pediatric interest group is a student-led initiative focused on **improving collaborative and holistic healthcare** for children with mental, behavioral, and developmental disorders (MBDDs).

IG members **highlighted case study scenarios** and **our in-person collaboration** with the adolescent IG about techniques in the pediatric physical exam as most engaging.

## BACKGROUND

- The pediatric interest group focused on investigating issues regarding **health and difficulty accessing quality care** for children with MBDDs in underserved communities.
- A 2016 study from the Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report showed **5% of children of low socioeconomic status** who saw a provider in the past 12 months **didn't receive the care they needed**, and **1/5 of these children were diagnosed with an MBDD**. However, only 0.8% of children of a high socioeconomic class who saw a provider in the past 12 months didn't receive the care needed.<sup>1</sup>
- A 2021 study of Hartford Public Schools revealed they have a higher rate of children with learning disabilities, health impairments, autism, and emotional disturbance than the national average.<sup>2</sup>



Torres-Rodriguez, L. Hartford Public Schools. Special Education Spending Analysis for MARB. <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/MARB/City-of-Hartford/2022-Meetings/3-24-22/HBOE-Special-Education-Presentation-for-MARB-01-27-2022.pdf>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & REFERENCES

- Anamaria Sousa, MPsy, Barbara Ward-Zimmerman, PhD, Robert Keder, MD, Lauren Presti, DMD, and Cecil Tengtanga, STM, CT AHEC Program
- Cree RA, Bitsko RH, Robinson LR, et al. Health Care, Family, and Community Factors Associated with Mental, Behavioral, and Developmental Disorders and Poverty Among Children Aged 2–8 Years — United States, 2016. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2018;67:1377–1383. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6750a1external icon>.
  - Torres-Rodriguez, L. Hartford Public Schools. Special Education Spending Analysis for MARB. <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/MARB/City-of-Hartford/2022-Meetings/3-24-22/HBOE-Special-Education-Presentation-for-MARB-01-27-2022.pdf>

## OBJECTIVES

- Describe the impacts of adverse childhood experiences on cognitive development and how this influences the health of the child
- Understand the four-quadrant model and how to implement changes to improve health outcomes
- Evaluate different resources for use among clinicians, families, and communities to support children with MBDDs
- Demonstrate the physical exam and assessment of children with MBDDs

## METHODS

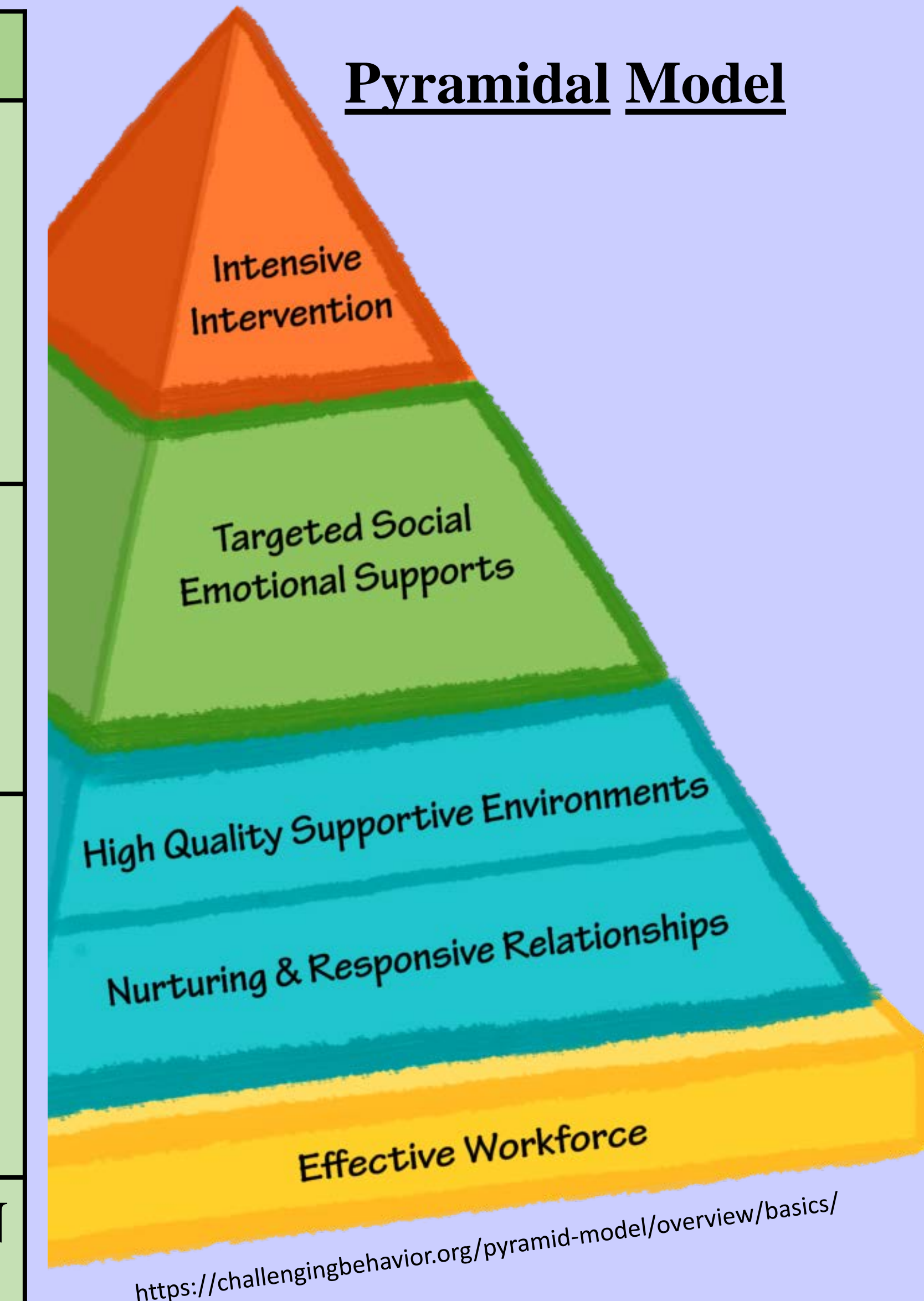
- Monthly IG meetings from November 2023 to April 2024.
- Co-leads organized surveys to prioritize the interests of the group.
- Recruited content experts to provide information based on the group's interests.
- Created an interactive environment with Q&A sessions, zoom lectures, and group case studies.
- In-person simulation lab with adolescent interest group.
- Integrated literature reviews of potential resources for children with MBDDs.



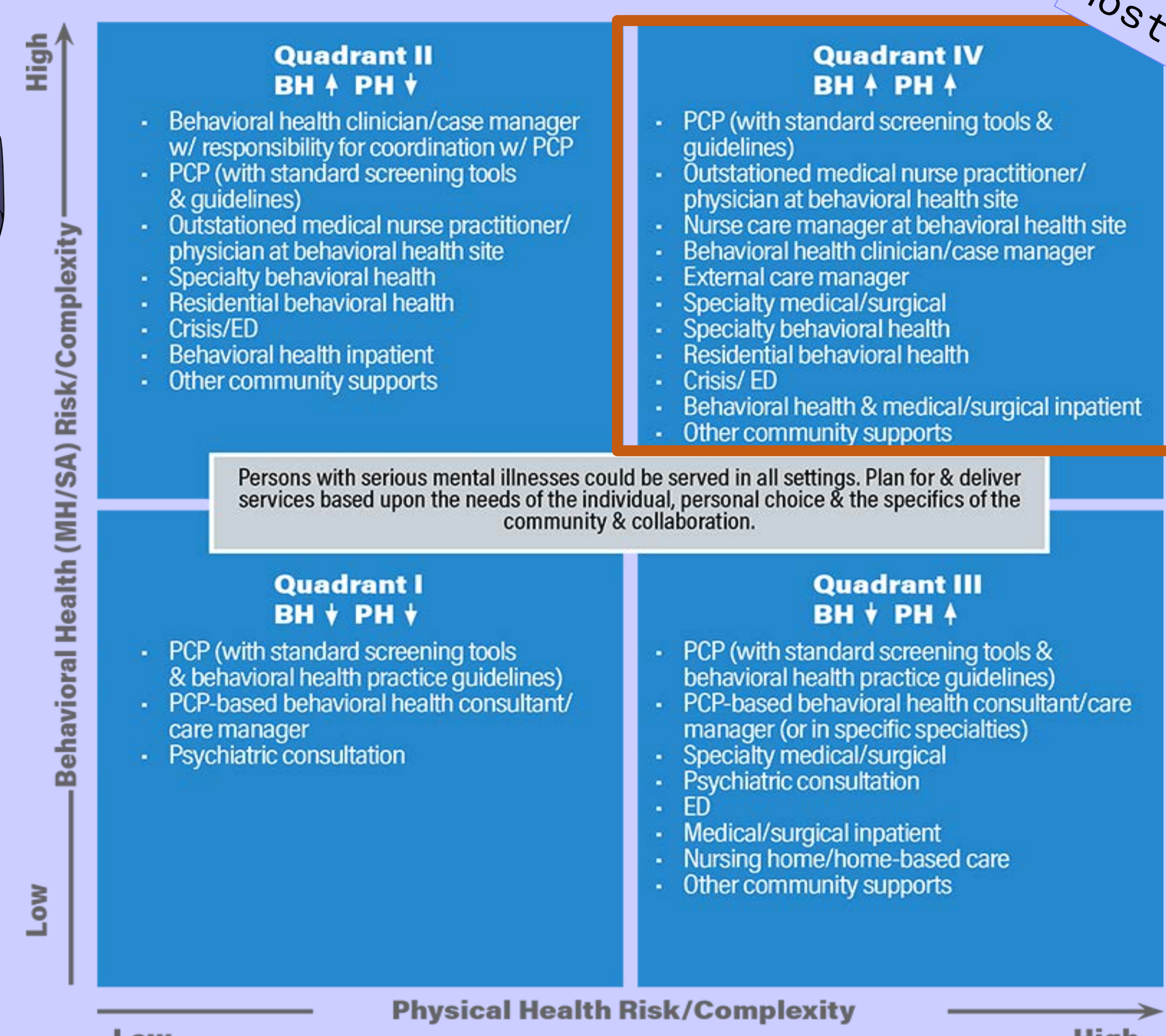
## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This Pediatrics IG was a passionate student-led group working to improve care for children with MBDDs.

Speaker	Learning points
Barbara Ward-Zimmerman, PhD Integrated care consultant for pediatric behavioral health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Described treatment gaps due to socioeconomic and geographic barriers</li> <li>Discussed integrative care methods (such as the four quadrant model) that can provide improved behavioral and physical health support</li> </ul>
Anamaria Sousa, MPsy Special Education teacher in Hartford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussed need for specialized training for de-escalation techniques</li> <li>Explained the pyramidal model for early childhood intervention in providing holistic care</li> </ul>
Robert Keder, MD Developmental pediatrician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasized the importance of a safe environment and special techniques to foster trust and open communication between providers and children with MBDDs</li> <li>Demonstrated and analyzed the physical exam for children with MBDDs</li> </ul>
Lauren Presti, DMD Pediatric dentist for children with special health care needs (SHCN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Described guidelines of the management of children with SCHN including appointment/scheduling accommodations, behavior guidance, and preventative strategies.</li> </ul>



## Four Quadrant Integration Model



**Strengths**

- Speakers were from different fields and discussed diverse topics
- Participants' involvement

**Areas of improvement**

- Meetings were mainly held over Zoom
- Scheduling challenges for service activity

**Future directions**

- Community service opportunity
- Work with children and family members to hear their experience with healthcare

For better viewing:





