Insights

NICHQ Employee Spotlight: Matthew Biewener

In celebration of over 20 years improving health outcomes for children, we're sharing insights, memories and goals from the NICHQ team.

Full name and title:

Matthew Biewener, Senior Manager, Technology and Business Solutions

Years with NICHQ: Four

How has your background/experiences led you to join a national children's health organization?

My graduate academic training was in maternal and child public health, and from there I sought out opportunities at companies working to improve the health and lives of underserved populations. Early on, I saw many ways in which the functioning of the projects and teams on which I was working could benefit from breaking down systems into components, eliminating redundancies, and introducing automation and online mechanisms for engagement and collaboration. What I found at NICHQ was a culture of integrity and teamwork, as well as the opportunity to support a mission to improve health by creating products that live out in the world and reach children and their families. Before NICHQ, I led technology solutions at Education Development Center for a large national substance abuse prevention contract, where I oversaw web and product developers and worked to strengthen internal protocols and capacity to ensure

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consistency and quality in implementation, operation, and maintenance.

Favorite memory from a NICHQ:

There are so many! But I think one of my absolute favorites was early on when I had first joined the team and we went on a scavenger hunt around Boston. In groups of four, we looked for landmarks, people, and symbols, practiced our "elevator speech" with unsuspecting pedestrians, and learned about one another. To solve the last clue ("Take a photo with the letters NICHQ outside of the office"), we bent our bodies into shapes of the letters—and even grabbed one of our partners at [Agaric](#) just as he was stepping into an elevator to serve as our "Q".

How does your role support projects and overall operations at NICHQ?

In my current role, I oversee multiple streams of work supporting organizational effectiveness, including grant and contract administration, vendor management, knowledge management, federal IT security compliance, measurement of programmatic outcomes and impact, testing and quality assurance, and adoption of enterprise technologies. I also manage and lead the development of the organization's online properties, including this site (NICHQ.org), the NICHQ "Collaboratory", and various other internal- and external-facing applications.

What advice do you have for organizations that are new to operating remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic?

I'd argue that transparency, flexibility, and investment in technology infrastructure are all key pieces of supporting a positive and productive work culture during this (and any future) pandemic:

- Transparency, in that leadership decisions regarding policies and expectations should be grounded in the needs expressed by staff themselves and communicated in a way that invites comment and engagement;
- Flexibility, in that there is still a lot to learn about what works best—depending on the varied conditions in which an organization operates (e.g., business type, size, available technology, prior experience with a work-from-home arrangement)—and so organizations need to be open to not-so-business-as-usual ideas as well as accommodating unique staff circumstances;
- And an investment in staff and organizational technology infrastructure that facilitate internal communication, physical comfort, speed, and reliability.

What are you most proud of from your time with NICHQ?

I'm proud that our organization has made health equity a key dimension through which we assess ourselves, our impact, and the opportunities available to us. Our size means that we can all participate in a shared vision and ethos, working with one another toward a world in which children and their families receive equitable and sufficient resources to protect and strengthen their health.

What are your goals for NICHQ's future?

As a technology nerd, I would love for NICHQ to engage directly in non-traditional domains, partnering with other organizations to find solutions to shared technical challenges and supporting the effort to make software more open and to ensure that its rewards support a more equitable and efficient economy.