



Rachelle Alpern MHA MBA¹ Rachel Daily MHA¹ Michael J Craig MD MPH SFHM^{1,2}
 Patrick O'Shea MD MBA^{1,2} Escher Howard-Williams MD^{1,2} Carlton Moore, MD MS²
¹Advanced Care at Home, UNC Health ²University of North Carolina School of Medicine

Background

- Advanced Care at Home (ACH) is UNC's "hospital-at-home" (HaH) program that launched August 30, 2021, with >2,000 admissions to date.
- Provides inpatient hospital-level care to patients that can be safely cared for at home under the CMS "Acute Care in the Home" waiver.
- HaH programs face unique challenges in patient recruitment. Despite staff and resources dedicated to facilitating admissions, approximately 1/3 of otherwise eligible patients decline participation.
- Ensuring equitable access to HaH has become a key regulatory focus, with a 2024 report from CMS to Congress including key socioeconomic metrics.



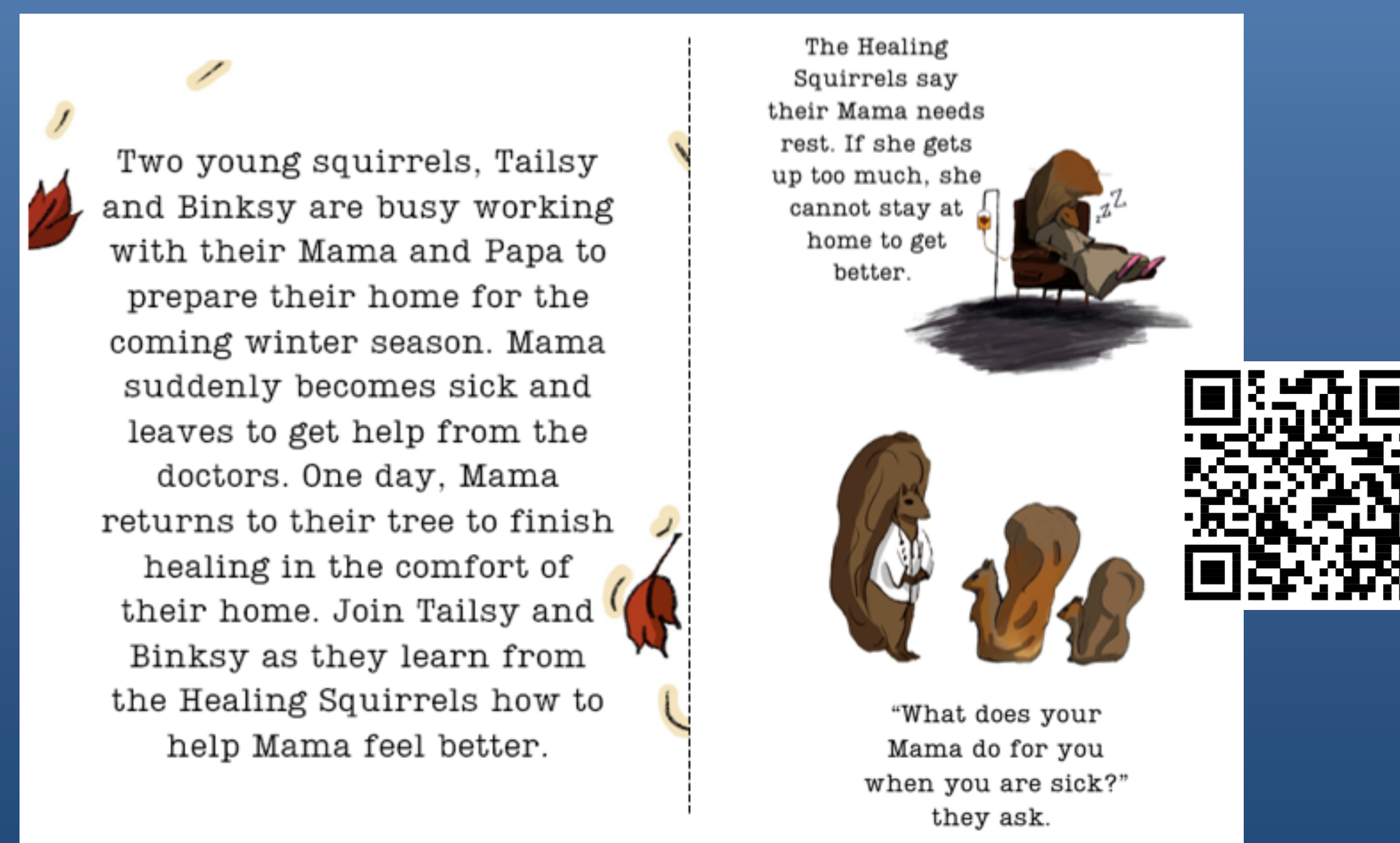
1. Patient brochure, part of revised marketing materials



2. Frame from promotional acquisition video, explaining what to expect on day of admission

Purpose & Description

- ACH conducted focus group interviews with eight UNC Health Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), each formed around shared characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, military service or disability status.
- The purpose was to investigate how to:
 - Improve recruitment strategies, both to grow the program and promote equal accessibility, and
 - Provide a positive experience across all patient populations.
- Thematic analysis was performed to identify common themes, and quotes were extracted and attributed to each theme from notes taken by focus group administrators.



4. Excerpt from 'Tails of the Healing Tree', a children's book aimed to promoting understanding of what it means to receive care at home. Available in English and Spanish.

Results

>10 common themes were identified from focus group discussions; see below for top five themes.

Theme	Sample Quotations
1. Program Pitch	"The "on-demand" aspect truly needs to be emphasized." – Veterans
2. General Barriers to Acceptance	"If the patient is a mom or wife, they may take on their normal home responsibilities instead of resting." – Women's Empowerment Network
3. Caregiver / Family Involvement	"Optimize the patient experience by ensuring family members are all included in care and decision making." – Black Alliance
4. Trust in Healthcare Providers	"In the Asian community, especially the older populations, they will not listen to anybody that they do not trust." – Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander
5. Why Patients Should Opt In	"Lead with [the] convenience of this service.. Say why patients highly recommend this" – Black Alliance

Interventions

- UNC ACH has acted on many of the insights provided by the ERGs, including but not limited to:
- Revised marketing materials that incorporate diverse representation and patient testimonials
 - Introduced a patient recruitment video detailing the patient experience focusing on admission
 - Promoted program through community leaders
 - Set family expectations through a 'Prescription for Rest' and development of a children's book