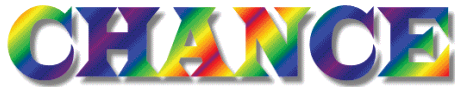


FEDERATION OF FAMILIES OF SOUTH CAROLINA SUPPORT MATTERS



Children's Health Access N Community Environments (CHANCE) Waiver Program *Mental Health Alternatives to Institutionalization for Youth*

In April of this year a new program began to be offered to families of children with serious emotional disturbance SED, (children with a high level of need for emotional, behavioral services). This special program, for children ages 4 to 19 with SED, is a Medicaid program that is NOT based on family income but rather the level of need of the child. These services are offered to keep children in the home and community instead of a having to place a child with a high level of need in a residential psychiatric facility.

Families and youth will have a choice of services and supports to help keep their child at home or when they return from a treatment facility. The child will be assessed by clinical professionals from a qualified provider list. If the child is at high risk for, or needs, the level of care that would be provided in a treatment facility and the child meets the Medicaid requirements (meaning that the child has no income or assets), they will qualify for CHANCE Waiver services.

The "CHANCE" acronym for *Children's Health Access in Community Environments*, was developed by the Federation of Families of South Carolina Youth Council In Action (YCIA). The Federation of Families of South Carolina, was selected as the family organization to assist and advocate for families as they move through the CHANCE process.

Services offered under the CHANCE Waiver are:

- Psychiatric Medical Assessment
- Case Management
- Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services
- Respite Care Services
- Caregiver peer support
- Youth peer support
- Prevocational services
- Community based and wrap around services

TO APPLY for the CHANCE Waiver , or receive more information, contact the Federation of Families of South Carolina.

In Columbia– 803-779-0402
Toll-free– 866-779-0402
info@fedfamsc.org

Families and youth will be given a list of providers for these services. Participation in this project is voluntary and will not affect any other Medicaid benefits for which your child qualifies. The CHANCE system of care is being developed based on the guiding principles of family-driven and youth-guided care. The family is always at the center of the planning process and has as much to say about the plan as the providers. The family builds a team of professionals and other's of importance in developing a plan that will be focused on the strengths of the child and family.

Services for CHANCE began in 2008 in Richland, Lexington and Fairfield counties. December 1, 2008 services will expand to Spartanburg, Union and Cherokee counties. Services will be available statewide by 2010. Over the next two years services will expand to all counties. To find out when services will be available in your county go to www.chance.sc.gov. Under Quick Links select Waiver Expansion Plan, also check out the Family Guide.

National Mental Health Parity is Signed Into Law

Mental health insurance coverage will now be treated the same as physical health coverage.

The 12-year struggle for parity between physical health coverage and mental health and addiction coverage finally came to an end on October 2nd, 2008 when the House passed the Mental Health Parity bill, and President Bush signed it into law the next day. Senators Domenici (R-NM), Kennedy (D-MA) and Enzi (R-WY), and Representatives Kennedy (D-RI) and Ramstad (R-MN) sponsored the bills and have been enthusiastic supporters of the cause.

The bill was designed to fill in the loopholes of the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996, which was not specific enough about how insurers should handle mental health and physical health equally. The 1996 Act banned putting lifetime or annual dollar limits on mental health services, but did not cover more detailed financial policy. This had disastrous consequences: the loophole allowed insurance companies to put limits on inpatient days and outpatient visits, increase insurer's co-payments and deductibles, and increase the maximum limits for out-of-pocket expenses.

Even though 42 states have laws that require mental health parity, nationwide there are still 82 million people whose employers self-insure, which means they do not have to follow state parity law. With this new federal parity law, those 82 million people plus 31 million people in other plans will now have equal mental health coverage.

Part of the reason that Mental Health Parity had such strong support from both Democrats and Republicans is because of how close to home mental illness hits. Senator Domenici's daughter has schizophrenia, Senator Wellstone (who died in 2002 in a plane crash) had a brother with severe mental illness, and Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad battled addiction.

Key Parity Act Requirements

- The Act applies to group health plans of 50 or more employees (so that small businesses of less than 50 are exempt).
- It builds on the 1996 parity law by expanding equal coverage to all financial requirements: deductibles, co-pays, out-of-pocket expenses, all treatment limitations (i.e. how often treatment is given, number of visits, and days of coverage)
- It gives broad definitions to mental health and substance use disorder benefits: they are services for mental health conditions and substance use disorders, which are defined under the terms of the plan and must be in line with Federal and State law.
- Insurers must release their criteria for defining medical necessity in a case, and also give reason for denying a claim for mental health services.
- It does not require that a plan cover mental health or substance use, but if the plan does cover MH/SA, then the plan must provide parity comparable to the coverage provided for physical health.



The new parity law will go into effect for most plans by January 1, 2010. With discriminatory financial restrictions gone, it will be easier for people to afford the mental health and substance use treatments that they need

Creating a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan:

Things to consider if your child has a disability and behavioral needs.

What is a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan?

A Positive Behavior Intervention Plan is a proactive plan, a part of a child's IEP or 504 Plan, that includes strategies to help prevent a behavior from occurring. For some students, simple interventions, such as moving a desk in a classroom may make a difference. For others, a more formal plan may be needed to address the behavior. When a child's behavior is disruptive of his or her learning or that of others, the IEP team is required by federal law to consider the use of positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports to address the problem. It is important for the team to consider ways to help your child to learn positive behavior as well as academic skills. Remember, this plan should be positive from the child's standpoint also!

Where to get information to write a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan?

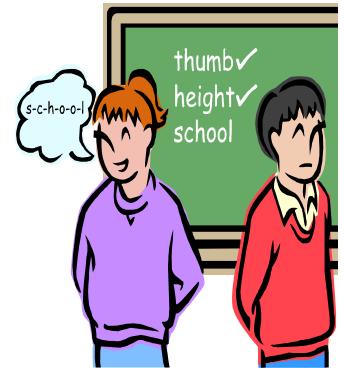
A Positive Behavior Intervention Plan should be put together with information from:

- The student
- The parents
- Teachers or other staff who know the child well
- Evaluation results, such as those from a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), to determine the reason for the behavior through a review of existing data and observations.

What should a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan include?

A Positive Behavior Intervention Plan should include the specific steps that will be taken to help your child learn new behavior skills. It should address such things as:

- Environmental changes to reduce or eliminate inappropriate behaviors
- Strategies for teaching new skills to replace the problem behaviors
- Skills training to increase the frequency of appropriate behaviors
- Support for the student to use the appropriate behaviors in various settings



School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Programs

A major move forward in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining student's behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a patchwork of individual behavioral management plans, positive behavior support for all students is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, restrooms).

Attention is focused on creating and sustaining school-wide, classroom and individual systems of supports that improve lifestyle results for all children by making problem behavior less effective, efficient and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

To find out if your school is a PBIS school, go to the Department of Education website, <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Exceptional-Children/documents/pbisschools.pdf>. If your school is not listed, contact the Federation to learn how you can advocate for your school to become a PBIS school.



Upcoming Events and Information

New Website Chat Room Offers Family Support

The Federation of Families of SC now has a chat room on the website for parents and other caregivers who are looking for information and support from others who may be having similar experiences raising a child with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs. Many families have difficulty being able to attend family support network meetings but would like to discuss issues with other parents. The Federation chat room is now available online at our website, www.fedfamsc.org.

Suggested hours to log on to chat are Monday-Saturday, 10:30-Noon and 7:30-9:00pm. These hours are unmonitored chats.

Beginning Wednesday, January 14, 2009, from 10:30-noon and Saturday, January 17, 2009, from 10:30-noon a monitored chat will be held. Check website updates for topics of monitored chats.

Please log onto the website and send suggestions and topics of interest for monitored chats. Check in regularly for updated information.



What if the Federation of Families of SC earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause?

Well, now it can!

GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add

Regional Outreach Coordinator Position Available for Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties.

Part time position available contact Diane Flashnick for more information. Toll-free 866-779-0402.

This is a parent to parent support position, parents only please apply.

The Federation of Families of SC is organizing Youth Support Networks!

Youth support networks provide social opportunities as well as educational workshops about mental health needs of adolescents and current youth topics. For youth ages 12-21 with mental health needs and/or co-occurring substance abuse issues. Friends and siblings participate in these groups too!

Contact the Youth Coordinator at jenah.cason@fedfamsc.org or 866.779.0402 to get involved in advocacy and leadership development opportunities.

Parent Consent is required to participate.

Helpline from SCDE, Office of Exceptional Children

The Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) of the SC Department of Education is pleased to announce the creation of a statewide toll-free help line to serve parents, advocates, and agency representatives who have questions about the education of children with policies, procedures,



and regulations; parent and student rights; and dispute resolution options available to address concerns.

**To contact the helpline, call:
1-866-628-0910**



TIS The Season

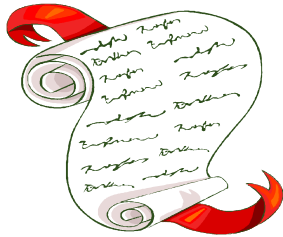


While our country is experiencing a significant financial crisis it affects us all in some way. For organizations like the Federation of Families of South Carolina the financial crisis will affect our ability to help families and youth.

Some individuals and organizations are still able to make donations at this time, if you or someone you know is looking for an opportunity to help others please consider the Federation of Families of South Carolina for your tax deductible donation. Any amount is welcome, no amount too small or too large.

Some facts about the Federation:

- In 2007-2008 the Federation staff had **2403 contacts from families of children/youth** with mental health and/or co-occurring substance abuse needs who they assisted.
- In 2007-2008 the Federation distributed **2429 informational materials to families and professionals** regarding education and information needs of families of children with mental health needs.
- In 2007-2008 the Federation **provided training for 944 family members** of children with mental health needs.
- In 2007-2008 the Federation organized a youth advisory council to its Board of Directors. The Youth Council in Action (YCIA) is made up of youth representatives from around the state and now has **11 members representing youth support networks in 7 counties**. A total of **305 youth statewide attended one or more youth activities**, which include, recreational activities, service projects, and participation in a youth council or other leadership development activities.



Federation Wish List

The Federation of Families of South Carolina has the following needs in 2009 to continue assisting family members, youth and professionals by providing information and support throughout South Carolina:



Funding to continue to print and mail this newsletter. The funding for production of this newsletter has ended. While the newsletter will continue to be available online, many family members do not have regular access.



Assistance and/or funds to network staff computers for improved assistance to families and improved ability to collect accurate data.



Office space...while our Board of Directors is developing a capital campaign, our state office staff is currently working with five staff in an office space approximately 12 X 15 ft. with no room for partitions....if anyone out there has space to donate for a year, please contact us!!!!

All donations received will be used to support these needs.

Name _____

Telephone (_____) _____

Address: _____

E-mail _____

_____ \$5 _____ \$10 _____ \$25 _____ Other

The Federation is a 501 c 3 charitable organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Mail to: Federation of Families of South Carolina, P.O. BOX 1266, Columbia, SC 29202

Medicaid for Children With Serious Emotional Disorders Is Not Based on the Family Income

When we hear Medicaid we think it is only for low income families. There are many types of Medicaid, such as the new CHANCE Waiver discussed on the front page. Many are unfamiliar with the Katie Beckett Waiver, also known as TEFRA. A child with a serious emotional disorder (SED) who requires a high level of intense treatment and may have been hospitalized or placed in a treatment facility, may qualify for Medicaid services based on the level of need required by their disability. When a child has this level of need Medicaid looks only at the child's income, not the families.

Medicaid programs for these children can be very confusing to parents. There have been many changes over the last few years. Families have made choices and selected HMO programs over regular Medicaid without really understanding if those programs will meet the needs of their child with an SED. Make sure, before you make a change, that the program you choose will meet the needs of your child. Ask questions and do your homework! Once you decide on a plan, after 90 days you are locked into that plan for one year. Compare regular Medicaid, also called "fee for service", to the HMO plan you are thinking about enrolling in.

Before you decide, ask your medical provider these questions about your child's mental/behavioral health needs:

- Will this plan cover the specific medications that my child is on for their behavioral health needs?
- If not, does my child's doctor feel that a similar but alternate medication that is covered will provide the same benefit?
- If you are happy with your child's physician, psychiatrist, counselor or therapist, do they accept payment under the plan you are considering?
- If they do accept payment under the plan are there limits to the amount of services that your child can receive? How does that differ from what you receive now?
- If your child's condition were to require hospitalization or placement in a residential treatment facility for their behavioral health needs, would that treatment be covered under this plan?
- If the plan states that it covers mental health/behavioral health services ask what those services are.
- If your child needs treatment for substance abuse is there coverage under the plan that you are considering?
- Does your child have other medical conditions that require treatment and may be interrupted by a change in the plan?

If you are concerned about, or don't understand the information that you are given, contact the Federation of Families of SC. We will assist you or find someone that can help you with your concerns or questions.

Federation of Families of South Carolina Contact Information:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PO Box 1266
Columbia, SC 29202• In Columbia: (803) 779-0402• Toll Free: 1-866-779-0402• E-mail: info@fedfamsc.org• Web: www.fedfamsc.org• Office: William S. Hall Institute
Room 204 | <p>Staff: Columbia office: (803) 779-0402, (866)779-0402
Diane Revels Flashnick, Executive Director
Donna Shaw, Staff Support
Suzanne Bowers, CHANCE Waiver Coordinator
Michelle Baker, State Family Outreach Coordinator
Jenah Cason, Youth Outreach Coordinator
Crystal Bivens, Projects Coordinator, 803-794-9796</p> <p>Call state office for regional outreach coordinators:
Anderson, Oconee, Pickens, Newberry, Abbeville,
Greenwood, Saluda, Laurens, Abbeville, York,
Chester, Lancaster, Orangeburg, Barnwell, Fairfield</p> |
|--|--|

Community Parent Networks

The Federation of Families of SC assists many parents of children with emotional, behavioral, or mental health disorders to establish community parent networks. For others we provide information and technical assistance.

If you are the parent of a child or adolescent who has been identified with a mental health disorder or is having emotional or behavior problems and you are concerned, please join other families who will understand what you and your family is experiencing.

Attending a meeting with other families experiencing similar situations at home, in school and with agencies and professionals can be a comforting experience for parents who have felt they were the only parents having such an experience with their child.

If there is not a group listed in your community please call our office toll free at 1-866-779-0402. We may be able to connect you with other parents in your community. If you live in one of the areas below you may contact the group facilitators directly.

Abbeville

Call for time and location
Luana Rath (864) 314-8705

Anderson County

2nd Thursday, 6:30pm
Anderson County Library
Jimmie Craigo (864) 338-0227
Luana Rath (864) 314-8705

Barnwell County

WINGS
Call for time and location
Catherine Mack (803) 284-1026

Beaufort County

Call for time and location
Rita Jaklitsch (843) 706-2395
Sharon Brown (843) 757-7107
Cecile Bibaud (843) 842-2743

Beaufort County

Phone Support only
Melina Lee (843) 379-4411

Charleston County

Phone support only
Kristin Jacksa (843) 881-7277
Or cell (843) 367-0199

Chester County

NAMI SC
Call for time and location
Katherine Caldwell (803) 581-7672
Chester Public Library

Dillon County

Phone support only
Laurie Caulder (843) 752-1610

Fairfield County

2nd Saturday, 10:00-11:00am
Fairfield Memorial Hospital
Kerry Johnson (803) 940-1383

Greenville County – Greer

Greer/Greenville/Spartanburg
2nd Monday, 6:15—7:30
Westminster Presbyterian Church
NAMI Greenville Office
Kelly Troyer (864) 346-7446

Greenwood

Phone support only
Tara Cothran (864) 941-8196

Hampton County

Call for time and location
Mary Morris (803) 943-9191

Lancaster County

3rd Sunday 3:00pm
Lancaster County Library
Bridgett Reeves (803) 273-9133

Laurens County

Call for time and location
Kerry Johnson (803) 940-1383

Lexington/Richland County

1st Tuesday 7:00–8:00 pm
Three Rivers Hospital – Hwy.378
Crystal Bivens (803) 794-9796

Newberry

3rd Monday 6:00-7:00pm
Newberry County Hospital
Kerry Johnson (803) 940-1383
Rynn Kinard (803) 276-3541

Oconee County

Call for time and location
Luana Rath (864) 314-8705

Pickens County

4th Saturday, 10:30am
Pickens County Library (Easley)
Luana Rath (864) 314-8705

Saluda county

Call for time and location
Kerry Johnson (803) 940-1383

Spartanburg County

Spartanburg/Greer
Natasha Lyles (864) 208-5995

Sumter County

Sumter—Phone support
Maureen Fitzgerald (803) 469-9729

Williamsburg County

Hemingway/Andrews/Kingstree
Call for date, time, and location
Glander Pressley (843) 382-8685

York County

NAMI SC
Rock Hill, call for time and location
Danice Vance (803) 324-5964
Betsy O'Brien (803) 802-4484

Check our website regularly for any changes to meeting information or new support networks added.

Family Support Network Training

Family members needed to help
organize family and youth networks
throughout South Carolina.

If you would like to work with the Federation to establish family and youth networks in your community, please contact us. Check online or call for the next training date to be posted in January. Free training is held in Columbia, expenses paid for those who volunteer to assist

Tips for Dealing with Stress- Families of Children and Youth with Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse

The stress of having a child with behavioral or substance abuse issues generally causes great stress for parents as they deal with the uncertainty of what might happen next with their child. What affects one family member affects all in some way. Stress increases as they try to also care for other children in their family and meet the demands of their jobs, duties and other roles.

Helpful Tips:

- Know the triggers that set you off and use your emotional intelligence to reduce the impact of situations that impact you. When panic or fear arise recognize their impact on your body, mind, and heart and use strategies like breathing and reframing to reduce their impact.
- During difficult times it's not unusual for people to let go of behaviors that are healthy. You need all the resources that you have to meet the challenges you're facing so remember to continue exercising, eating well, and getting as much sleep as possible.
- It's not unusual for parents to feel isolated and hesitant to share what's going on in their family with others. The added stress may also affect relationships with their spouse and with other children in the family. Reach out for help from extended family members, personal coaches and therapists. Find regular times to spend with your spouse to stay connected and maintain support between you. Create regular times for the family to be together and support one another.
- It's easy, when under significant stress, to get lost in work, to spend excessive time at the computer researching the problems we're facing, and to spend more and more time indoors at work and at home. Make time to get outside and get in touch with nature, perhaps an evening walk with your spouse. Maintain regular schedules at home that include time with other family members and regular dinner times for the family to be together.

Excerpts for this article taken from article written by Dr. Dan Kaufman on EzineArticles.com . For the article in its entirety go to: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Families-In-Crisis---Tips-For-Dealing-With-Stress&id=1721070>

FEDERATION OF FAMILIES OF SC
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COLUMBIA SC 29202

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