

CHILD-CENTERED HEALTH HOMES IN CALIFORNIA



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Children Now is working to improve access to health homes for vulnerable children throughout California. A health home is a model for delivering health care that is patient-centered, collaborative and coordinated, and that provides preventive and early-onset disease management, treatment and care across many types of services, including medical, dental, mental health and social supports.

This multi-sector approach is particularly effective for children as it supports prevention and successful early management of chronic childhood conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, attention deficit disorder and obesity, creating the potential for great cost-savings and mitigating suffering over a lifetime.

Far too often, health care providers work in independent silos, impeding care coordination and allowing vulnerable children and families to fall through the cracks. Improved access to health homes can be an important part of the solution.

Children Now is pursuing several avenues to support and expand child-centered health homes. These include:

— > **Gleaning lessons from early implementers.**

In the past decade, California has seen a host of health homes pilot projects, several of which were analyzed in detail. Children Now is reviewing these evaluation reports, talking with the participants and reviewers and ensuring the lessons learned from these projects are shared.

— > **Disseminating best practices from current health home models.**

Several organizations are currently implementing health home projects and have developed strategies for success. Children Now will convene these organizations to identify and share best practices and determine if there are state-level opportunities or barriers that could be addressed to expand child-centered health homes.

— > **Maximizing Affordable Care Act opportunities to support health homes pilots.**

Federal health care reform offers additional resources for states to develop and test health home pilot projects. California is assessing whether to pursue this opportunity. Children Now will work with stakeholders and the state to explore the potential value of the health home pilot option for children.

— > **Providing California's perspective on Affordable Care Act regulations that pertain to Accountable Care Organization Medicaid pediatric pilots.**

Federal guidelines regarding the creation of Accountable Care Organizations—projects designed to test service delivery models that improve the quality of care while controlling costs—will soon be released specifically for children in Medicaid. Children Now will review these guidelines with other stakeholders and provide input to federal administrators in order to enable successful implementation in California.

— > **Supporting health homes legislation.**

Children Now is pleased that California is taking steps to statutorily define the health homes concept. Senate Bill 393 (Hernandez), sponsored by a large coalition of health advocates that includes the California Academy of Family Physicians and the American Academy of Pediatrics, would define the criteria for a patient-centered medical home and encourage health homes expansion in California.

For more information about Children Now's child-centered health homes work, please contact Kelly Hardy at khardy@childrennow.org or (510) 763-2444.