

**Project Title: Washington Integrated Services Enhancement for Children with Special Health Care Needs**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Organizational Setting:** The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is the Title V agency for Washington State, and a member of the State Interagency Coordinating Council. The Children with Special Health Care Needs Program (CSHCN) is housed within the Office of Maternal and Child Health. CSHCN capacity and strength is expanded through contractual agreements and collaborative working relationships with the Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs and Chronic Health Conditions at Children’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center (CCCHC), the University of Washington Medical Home Leadership Network, and local health jurisdictions. CSHCN has strong working relationships with the state agencies responsible for social services, early intervention services, education, and Medicaid. DOH prides itself in its partnership with families in addressing policies, programs, and practices affecting them and their children.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Washington Integrated Services Enhancement (WISE) for CSHCN Project is to promote cross agency policies and infrastructure that will improve the access, availability and continuity of services for children with special needs and their families. Changes in policy and infrastructure will be instituted that will result in common enrollment, integration of data systems, improved care coordination, and blended funding for services to children with special needs in our state. These enhancements will improve access and continuity of services, and ease transition between services. These enhancements will promote attachment to a medical home, and improve communication between service providers. Ultimately, this will result in better integration of services for children and families, and make them easier for families to use.

**Challenges:** Currently, multiple agencies serve children with special health care needs 0 – 8. State agency services, data collection, and enrollment criteria for children with special health care needs differ from agency to agency. Collaboration among local extensions of the state agencies varies from community to community. Concerns over confidentiality, varying degrees of readiness and acceptance of advances in technology, and development costs are challenges to developing shared data systems. State and federal reporting requirements, differing eligibility criteria, and lack of policy differences are barriers to the implementation of common enrollment forms. The intertwining of health, social, education and developmental issues of children with special needs, and the complex network of service providers confound the issue of care coordination. Braiding funding for services to children with special needs 0-8 is a challenge due to the categorical nature of funding streams, the complexity of connecting a child to all available resources, and difficulties in accessing insurance.

**Goals and Objectives:** The purpose of the Washington Integrated Services Enhancement (WISE) for CSHCN Project is to promote cross agency policies and infrastructure that will improve the access, availability and continuity of services for children with special needs and their families. This purpose will be achieved through the following four goals: 1) Simplify Enrollment, 2) Enhance communication

and care coordination for families, 3) Develop policies and infrastructure that support shared data systems, 4) Maximize and braid funding.

**Methodology:** A thorough assessment of the infrastructure, policies and practices related to information systems, enrollment processes, care coordination and funding of each of the partner agencies in the proposal will be conducted. An assessment of community capacity for integration of cross agency practices will be completed. Gaps and overlaps in these areas will be noted, and strategies for overcoming impediments to integration developed. These strategies will be piloted, and final recommendations, including strategies for statewide multi-agency implementation drafted.

**Evaluation:** Process, system and outcome evaluations will be conducted for the project. Process evaluation will be based on the timeliness, completeness and quality of all activities and objectives of the project. Focus groups of family members and providers will be structured to capture their experience, perception, and receptiveness to the four objectives of the proposal and 5 key areas of measuring service integration: access to services, care coordination, access to insurance, transition between services and access to a medical home. Customer satisfaction surveys will be conducted with providers, end users, and families to measure outcomes. Systems outcomes will be measured based on the degree to which policy promulgation and infrastructure development reflects and supports the implementation of the integration strategies outlined in the project. Impacts on interagency service integration will be measured using a self-evaluation tool administered to the steering committee, executive oversight committee, and in the pilot communities.

**Text of Annotation:** The purpose of the Washington Integrated Services Enhancement (WISE) for CSHCN Project is to develop and implement cross agency policies and infrastructure that will improve the access, availability and continuity of services for children with special needs. We propose to do this by focusing on four primary areas associated with integration of services: common enrollment, care coordination, braided funding, and integrated data systems. We will identify strategies to address each area, pilot those strategies, and make recommendations for statewide, or in the case of state level strategies, expanded implementation.

**Key Words:** Integrated services, children with special needs, care coordination, common enrollment, early intervention, integrated data systems, braided funding, measuring levels and changes in integration.