

# Children with Special Health Care Needs Section



## Facts from Washington

- About 17% of children ages 17 years and younger (approximately 260,000 children) have special health care needs.
- The number of children with special health care needs varies by sex, age, income, and race or ethnicity. The rate of children with special health care needs is higher among children older than age 5 years than among those aged less than 5 years. About 18% of boys have special health care needs compared to 17% of girls. Non-Hispanic white children are more likely to be classified as having a special health care need than Hispanic children.
- About 30% of children with special health care needs live in families with incomes less than 200% of the federal poverty level. This means that a family of four earns less than \$38,700 in one year.
- Families report that only 10% of youths with special needs between the ages 13 – 17 years receive the services they need to make transitions to adult life.

## CSHCN promotes comprehensive health care services through:

- Training health care providers;
- Developing care guidelines;
- Seeking and promoting parental involvement in program planning and health policy development; and
- Partnering with other state and community agencies to identify and address barriers to obtaining services.

The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Section within the Office of Maternal and Child Health (OMCH) promotes an integrated system of services for infants and children up to age 18 years who have or are at risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions and require health and related services of a type or amount beyond the usual for children.

## Activities

- Promote connections to high quality health services by working with public health nurses in local health jurisdictions, family organizations, and neurodevelopmental centers, and by collaborating with other programs and agencies, such as the Health & Recovery Services Administration (Medicaid), the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Children's Administration and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Identify emerging issues and initiatives, and inform and educate others about how these new issues may affect the CSHCN population through trainings and the development of health information and resources.
- Create opportunities for families to play a pivotal role in identifying and addressing health care issues for children with special health care needs by working with the Washington State Fathers Network, Parent to Parent, Family Voices, and other family organizations.
- Sustain and support work to collect, evaluate, and share data about access to primary care or specialty providers, the number of children with special health care needs, the use and cost of services, and inclusion of families.
- Identify and promote opportunities to work with other state agencies such as the Health & Recovery Services Administration, Work First, the Division of Mental Health, and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to collect and share data relevant to quality assurance measures.

### Medical Home...

“An approach to providing health care services in a high-quality and cost-effective manner. Care is received from a pediatric health care professional whom the family trusts. Care is accessible, family-centered, continuous, comprehensive, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally effective.”

-American Academy of Pediatrics

### 2007—09 Funding and Staffing

Funding for CSHCN activities comes from a variety of sources including, the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant (Title V), other federal funds and grants, and the State General Fund. CSHCN employees include a section manager, a family involvement coordinator, a nursing consultant, a nutrition consultant, an assessment coordinator, a program integration coordinator, and budget and administrative support. Additional section staff support the legislatively mandated Autism Task Force and a federal grant, Epilepsia en Washington.

### For more information about the Children with Special Health Care Needs Section, please contact:

Maria Nardella, Section Manager  
(360) 236-3573  
[maria.nardella@doh.wa.gov](mailto:maria.nardella@doh.wa.gov)

### Web site:

[www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/mch](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/mch)

### For information about services in local communities for children with special needs contact:

**ASK Line** (Answers for Special Kids): 1-800-322-2588 or 711/TTY

Or visit the Web site of **The Center for Children with Special Needs** at Children’s Hospital & Regional Medical Center:

<http://www.cshcn.org/resources/Resourceguides.cfm>

### Outcomes and Benefits

- Timely and accurate information about children with special health care needs is available for decision-making related to program planning, policy development, and resource allocation.
- Families are included as essential participants in policy development, planning, and training.
- New and emerging health issues identified for children with special health care needs and their families are shared with local health jurisdictions and other CSHCN partners.
- Families, providers, health plans, and policy makers have consistent sources of information about services for children with special health care needs.

### Trends and Emerging Issues

- Access to primary care, care coordination, and specialty care continues to be a priority for the children with special health care needs and their families.
- Information and planning for adolescents who are moving from pediatric or child-focused services to adult services and opportunities continues to be less than optimal.
- Access to mental health services is a challenge for the increasing number of young children and adolescents with emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs.
- Promoting medical homes where children receive all medical and non-medical services to reach their full potential continues to be an important focus.
- Decreasing barriers for families to find needed information and to access a full array of services remains a priority.