

Other CSHCN Work

KSKidsMAP Neurodevelopmental Expansion

To strengthen care for children and youth with special health care needs, including those with autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions, Kansas will continue to expand KSKidsMAP neurodevelopment-focused services, contingent on funding availability. These efforts are designed to increase primary care physician and clinician (PCP) capacity to identify, manage, and coordinate care for children with complex developmental and behavioral health needs.

KSKidsMAP will continue to provide real-time psychiatric and developmental consultation to support PCPs in addressing diagnostic questions, co-occurring mental health conditions, medication management, and care coordination for neurodivergent children and adolescents. These consultative services are particularly critical given long wait times for specialty evaluations and limited access to developmental and behavioral health specialists, especially in rural areas.

In addition to consultation, KSKidsMAP will deliver targeted training opportunities focused on autism and neurodevelopmental care in primary care settings. Trainings will include topics such as early identification and screening, managing common medical and behavioral concerns, addressing psychiatric comorbidities, and supporting families while awaiting formal diagnosis. These offerings aim to equip PCPs with practical, evidence-informed strategies that can be immediately applied in clinical practice, improving early identification and reducing delays in care.

KSKidsMAP will also continue to convene its annual in-person neurodevelopment-focused conference, which brings together primary care physicians and clinicians, specialists, and community partners to address emerging topics and best practices in supporting neurodivergent youth. A key focus of the conference is the transition to adulthood, including preparing adolescents with special health care needs for changes in healthcare systems, education, and community supports. This event offers an important opportunity to build cross-sector connections, enhance practitioners' knowledge, and promote coordinated, lifespan-oriented care.

Systems Navigation Training for Families

The Systems Navigation Training for Families (SNTF) program is designed to strengthen families' knowledge, confidence, and self-efficacy in navigating complex systems of care, including healthcare, early intervention, special education, behavioral health, and social services. The training is family-led and grounded in lived experience, with families who have successfully navigated these systems serving as facilitators and peer educators for other families.

Over the past year, the training curriculum and implementation model have undergone a comprehensive review and redesign process in close collaboration with families with lived experience to ensure the program remains relevant, practical, and responsive to family needs. Before FFY27, the training will be prepared for its initial relaunch; however, ongoing efforts throughout FFY27 will continue to focus on refining,

evaluating, and strengthening the program to support successful statewide implementation and long-term sustainability.

Key FFY27 activities will include:

- Reviewing and refining relaunch materials to ensure content is clear, accessible, concise, and family-friendly;
- Planning and scheduling multiple SNTF training opportunities throughout FFY27 to increase statewide accessibility and participation; and
- Gathering feedback from participating families to inform continuous quality improvement related to curriculum content, delivery methods, and facilitation approaches.

By the end of FFY27, Kansas Title V anticipates full reimplementation of the Systems Navigation Training for Families program, supported by a trained team of family facilitators prepared to provide accessible, family-centered guidance and peer support to families navigating complex systems of care.

Kansas Statewide Autism Coalition

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment, in partnership with the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, will continue supporting the Kansas Statewide Autism Coalition (KSAC). This collaborative initiative brings together individuals with autism, families, providers, educators, state agencies, and community-based organizations to strengthen support systems across Kansas. Building on the foundational work established in prior years, the coalition has transitioned into a more structured, action-oriented phase focused on advancing systems-level improvements informed by stakeholder engagement and lived experience.

During FFY27, the coalition will continue convening quarterly full-group meetings to strengthen statewide collaboration, share progress across initiatives, and align ongoing efforts among stakeholders. In addition, the Access, Policy, and Workforce workgroups will continue meeting more frequently to advance workgroup-specific priorities and begin implementing action plans informed by the 2021 Autism Task Team Report and ongoing stakeholder input.

Although each workgroup continues refining specific objectives and implementation strategies, the coalition has identified several key focus areas intended to support meaningful systems change across Kansas:

Access: The Access Workgroup is focused on improving navigation pathways and access to services and supports for individuals with autism and their families across the lifespan. Activities include identifying gaps in service availability, increasing awareness and visibility of existing resources, improving coordination among systems, and exploring strategies to reduce barriers to timely evaluation, diagnosis, and service connection, particularly for underserved and rural communities.

Policy: The Policy Workgroup is focused on identifying and addressing systems-level barriers affecting individuals with autism and their families. Areas of exploration include waiver access and transitions, provider network adequacy, reimbursement structures, workforce limitations, and broader systems navigation challenges. The group will also explore opportunities to strengthen family awareness of available services and supports, including Medicaid pathways, early intervention programs, and community-based resources, while incorporating family and stakeholder feedback into future policy and systems improvement discussions.

Workforce: The Workforce Workgroup is focused on strengthening the workforce serving individuals with autism across the lifespan by addressing provider shortages and workforce capacity challenges, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the state. Activities will include exploring strategies to support workforce recruitment and retention, increasing access to training and professional development opportunities, promoting culturally responsive and neurodiversity-affirming practices, and strengthening cross-sector collaboration among providers and systems serving individuals with autism and their families.

While these workgroups have distinct areas of focus, the coalition recognizes that meaningful systems improvement requires coordinated, cross-cutting efforts across all areas of work. Collectively, these initiatives aim to strengthen the statewide landscape of services, supports, and systems for individuals with autism and their families.

KDHE and KDADS will continue supporting coalition activities through meeting facilitation, cross-workgroup coordination, and identification of opportunities to align coalition priorities with existing state initiatives and resources. FFY27 efforts will focus on maintaining stakeholder engagement, advancing identified priorities, and supporting implementation of actionable strategies that promote sustainable systems improvement.

The Child Safety Learning Collaborative (CSLC), Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention
Kansas Title V will continue participating in the Child Safety Learning Collaborative (CSLC) Cohort 2 within the Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention workgroup. The CSLC provides a structured framework for technical assistance, peer learning, and cross-state collaboration to advance evidence-informed child safety strategies.

During FFY27, Kansas will continue building on work initiated in Cohort 2, with a focused emphasis on Child Safety Indicator (CI) 9: the development and implementation of standardized guidelines for suicide risk assessment and referral processes for children and adolescents across care settings. This work aligns with findings from the Kansas Title V Needs Assessment, which identified youth suicide as a significant statewide concern, particularly among adolescents and youth with special health care needs.

Planned FFY27 activities include:

- Finalizing a standardized workflow to guide providers and programs in responding to positive suicide risk screenings, including recommended referral pathways and follow-up considerations;

- Collaborating with internal partners, including Injury and Violence Prevention staff and epidemiologists, to ensure workflows align with current data, best practices, and existing statewide prevention efforts;
- Preparing to disseminate and introduce the workflow to Title V-funded partners, including Aid-to-Local (ATL) MCH grantees, to support more consistent implementation across settings; and
- Exploring opportunities to align suicide prevention workflows with broader care coordination and support systems, including the KS-SHCN Program, where appropriate.

Kansas Title V leadership, including the Title V CYSHCN Director, will continue co-leading this initiative in partnership with Injury and Violence Prevention leadership and epidemiology staff. As CSLC Cohort 2 progresses toward completion, FFY27 efforts will focus on translating collaborative learning into sustainable tools, processes, and implementation strategies that strengthen suicide prevention practices across programs serving children and adolescents.

Pediatric Palliative Care ECHO Series Exploration

During FFY27, the Title V CYSHCN Director will explore opportunities to strengthen pediatric palliative care capacity across Kansas by supporting a pediatric palliative care Project ECHO initiative. Interest in this effort has emerged through participation in the Palliative Care Quality of Life Council. It reflects growing recognition of the need for greater provider education and support for pediatric palliative care services for children and youth with special health care needs.

Project ECHO is a nationally recognized model that uses virtual, case-based learning and mentoring to connect subject-matter experts with community-based providers to expand access to specialized knowledge and strengthen local capacity for care delivery.

During FFY27, the Title V CYSHCN Director will gather additional information on the proposed ECHO initiative, including the project's scope, intended target audiences, anticipated outcomes, and alignment with Title V priorities and CYSHCN needs. Exploration activities will also include consideration of potential funding strategies, partnership opportunities, implementation feasibility, sustainability considerations, and anticipated resource needs.

These efforts will help inform future decisions regarding possible Title V support for pediatric palliative care workforce development initiatives and opportunities to strengthen provider capacity to deliver high-quality, family-centered palliative care services across Kansas.