

Advancing Systems of Services Network Café Notes
**COVID-19 and Returning to Care Through the
Lens of Health Equity**

October 16, 2020

Key Discussion Questions

1. What are some barriers around returning to care, particularly for families of color and other underserved populations?
2. Are you noticing any disparities in returning to care? What are you doing to address these disparities?
3. How are Title V agencies supporting families whose children have special health care needs in returning to care (e.g., partnership with AAP chapters, medical home providers, communication strategies, enrollment support, benefits counseling)?

Check In: Well-bring and Supporting Title V Staff

- Participants discussed successes in taking time to check in with staff and encouraging use of support services, such as Employee Assistance Programs

Alaska Title V CYSHCN Efforts

- Pre COVID-19, travel and accessing specialty care for CYSHCN and their families were challenging
- Tribal system has a successful telehealth system for native Alaskans to access care
- Out of state specialists are not able to see patients due to restrictions
 - Anyone coming into Alaska must quarantine for 2 weeks
- COVID-19 cases in rural Alaska are on the rise and present challenges in accessing care:
 - Availability of hospital beds
 - Receiving care in other states
 - Potential stigma of getting treatment and returning to care from other citizens in small rural areas
- Implemented first metabolic clinic via telehealth in October- a huge success; no-show rates disappeared. They were able to target those who had been on wait lists for 2-3 years.
 - Provided several services for CYSHCN during one session
 - If there were no-shows, providers were able to see patients who had been on clinic wait list instead
- Alaska will revert to in-person clinics when possible, but will continue to implement telehealth as necessary as a meaningful use of clinic time

New Mexico Title V CYSHCN Efforts

- Returning to care challenges

- Backlog of family appointment that were cancelled due to COVID-19, particularly challenging for primary care, immunizations, dental, vision
- In-person outreach clinics in rural communities are fluctuating with reopening as COVID-19 rates are increasing and telehealth is becoming more accessible
- Sovereign nations completely shut down in March; no one can go in or out of communities without permission
 - Families need permission to leave for specialty clinics
- Medically complex families are fearful due to risk of accepting home health or attending in-person clinics

Other Strategies for Return to Care

- Observe the child in the home via telehealth; this can provide clinicians with needed information to make a diagnosis
- Adapt clinic/practice to meet needs of families:
 - Shift staff to ensure appropriate coverage
 - Hire outside providers when census of clinic providers is low
 - Increase number of available appointments, including “off hours” to be more available for families
 - Prioritize in-person visits for younger children and telehealth for older children.
- Explore opportunities to partner with diverse stakeholders
 - State American Academy of Pediatrics chapter to advocate for continuation of telemedicine services
 - Tribal child health workers for culturally appropriate responses
 - Other public health officials who set and approve protocols so CYSHCN can access in-person care safely
- Look more closely at utilization data by race and ethnicity.
- Leverage unused resources and innovative opportunities to deliver the flu vaccine, such as sport stadiums and long lines for voting
- Responding to local health agency needs, such as developing program guidance for safe in-home visits
- UPCOMING: AMCHP will have limited funding to support translation of COVID-19 educational materials

Resources Shared

- Return to care report: https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2020/oct/impact-covid-19-pandemic-outpatient-care-visits-return-prepandemic-levels?utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Delivery%20System%20Reform
- Contact Person at Family Voices Leadership in Family and Professional Partnerships. Diana.autin@spanadvocacy.org
- [AAP Guidance on Providing Pediatric Well-Care During COVID-19](#)
- A CDC Flu guide for parents: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/flu-guide-for-parents-2018.pdf>
- Flu vaccine article from healthychildren.org: [Which Flu Vaccine Should My Children Get This Year?](#)
- Guidance on Necessary Use of Telehealth During the COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical->