

Children with Special Health Needs (CSHN) Connection March 2025



AHS - VDH CSHN
AHS

Dear Colleagues and Community Partners,

It may be hard to imagine as you read this that the first day of Spring will soon arrive with hints of flower bulbs just emerging, maple sugaring season, and mud- lot's of mud. When the temperatures barely leave the teens, we forget that before long we'll swap out our winter gear for layers and then for t-shirts and sneakers. The point of this is to say that where we are now- is not where we will always be.

Spring is a time of transition.

Snow melts, tree buds become leaves, grass replaces mud. When things feel chaotic or challenging it helps to remember that, just like Nature, we will move through it and beyond. Each natural cycle brings both challenge and beauty. During times of uncertainty or change, try to stay calm in the face of adversity, find meaning in your work, and look for creative ways to embrace the joy of the journey.

Stay connected, stay healthy and happy Spring.

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CSHN Program Spotlight: Pediatric Palliative Care Program (The Pedi Pals)

Program Highlight: Pediatric Palliative Care Program (The Pedi Pals)

Palliative care provides an added layer of support for children and adolescents living with serious illnesses. This Medicaid eligible program is available for children at **any stage** of illness and **can be combined with other treatments** the child is receiving.

The Pedi Pals Program can include:

1. **RN Care Coordination**
2. **Family/Caregiver Training**
3. **Expressive Therapies**- Certified art, music, play, dance/movement therapists or child life specialist to help the child and family members process their emotions
4. **Skilled Respite**- Short term relief for caregiver relatives provided by a nurse based on medical need
5. **Family Grief Support/Bereavement Counseling**

For more information and referral form see our [website](#) or check out the [resource for providers](#).

Please contact Jessica Boyea with any questions at jessica.boyea@vermont.gov 802-865-1312



Child brown hair, brown glasses, laughing, reading book in bed next to stuffed polar bear toy.

If you have a health system issue you would like to report or discuss, please contact AHS.VDHCSHN@vermont.gov.

To learn more about our program and available resources visit our [website](#).

Community Partner Spotlight: Children's Integrated Services

Children's Integrated Services



**Helping families
help their children.**

Maternal parent at health visit; second picture shows instructor working with toddler in classroom setting.

[Children's Integrated Services \(CIS\)](#) offers family support, prevention, and early intervention services to help children develop and grow, and to meet family's needs and goals. This voluntary program supports success for families and clients through four key service areas: [Early Childhood and Family Mental Health](#), [Early Intervention](#), [Specialized Child Care](#), and [Strong Families Vermont Home Visiting](#).

Each year:

1. CIS teams receive more than 5,000 referrals;

2. CIS providers and clients collaboratively develop more than 2,500 One Plans;
3. and more than 90% of CIS clients achieve one or more of their goals by an annual review or exit from CIS.

CIS Supports the Inclusion of All Children

CIS supports early childhood education and afterschool programs as well as family members. CIS teams may provide programmatic consultation and education services for regulated programs serving young children. CIS providers help educators address the areas for growth they have identified through self-assessment and observation. The primary goal for this collaboration is increased program quality through responsive interactions and the meaningful inclusion of all infants, toddlers, and young children.

[Special Accommodation Grants \(SAGs\)](#) are for regulated Specialized Child Care programs throughout Vermont to facilitate a child or children's safe and successful inclusion within a program. A SAG allows for a program to hire inclusion support staff, purchases specialized equipment or materials, and or provide professional development. With these strategies, more children with specialized needs access and attend quality child care programs. Join a [weekly Lunch and Learn Information session](#) to learn more, each week at Thursday from 12:00 to 1:00 via Microsoft Teams (Meeting ID: 248 350 950 435; Passcode: bVMjnu).

To learn more or connect with your regional CIS team, contact [your local CIS Coordinator](#).

CSHN Updates



Sunny day, grey fog over water and pine trees.

CSHN's Webpage Updates: Resources for Families and Providers

Helping Families Moving to Vermont

Our team at Vermont Department of Health, **Children with Special Health Needs (Vermont Department of Health)** is looking to engage with families who have a **child with special health needs (chronic medical condition or developmental disability) and who have moved to Vermont from another state in the last 2 years.** We are seeking to better understand the experience of planning, preparing, and moving to the state within the context of transferring and accessing healthcare for children with complex needs. The work will inform the creation of recommended protocols and practices as well as materials to support families moving to Vermont in the future.

Please share widely to any families with a child with special health needs that is new to Vermont. **Participation is completing a survey that takes about 10 minutes and we will compensate families \$25 for their time .**

If you or someone you know are interested in participating this study or have additional questions, please contact Marinell Newton at Marinell.newton@vermont.gov or 802-578-2667.



Adult sitting with child on sofa. Both wearing striped shirts. Child wearing glasses.

Resources for Families

Family Needs Assessment

The [RAPID Survey Project](#) is an ongoing national survey of households with children under 6 designed to gather essential information on the needs and well-being of children and the important adults in their lives. Since its launch in April 2020, RAPID has proven to be a powerful resource for uplifting the voices of parents/caregivers and early childhood educators. The survey is available in English and Spanish.

The survey can be found here:

March Survey Link: <https://tinyurl.com/rapidec-bbf>

March QR Code:



March 20205 QR
code

RAPID Stanford Center on Early Childhood
BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES

Are you a parent with a child under age 6?

Scan the QR to take a 15 minute survey to share about your experiences, needs, and well-being. Your perspectives are critical to support timely and data-informed decision-making.

Complete the survey and receive a \$5 gift card

<https://tinyurl.com/rapidec-bbf>

QR code link to survey. Text description of survey. Adult showing child a toy, in pre-school learning classroom.

Did you know...?

The Agency of Human Services' **Integrating Family Services** has an **Autism Resource Guide** for families and providers? This guide lists statewide services, programs, and providers for Vermont's autism community. The guide is regularly updated to ensure information is as timely as possible. To view the webpage showing the updated **Autism Resource Guide**, please go here [Autism Resources for Vermont | Integrating Family Services](#). If you bookmark the webpage, you'll always have access to updated versions of the guide!

Please consider sharing these resources with the families you serve and others at your organizations.

Policy Corner



Light blue scrubs pocket containing stethoscope and pen.

Vermont Policy Updates

Welcome to 2025 policy updates! We're intentionally limiting descriptions below for this issue, due to volume of incoming GCR's of interest.

GCR 24-054 High Technology Nursing Program Payment Model is effective January 1, 2025. This is updated for the value-based payment model to provide a payment incentive of \$7.50 per hour for each hour of service delivered over 50% of an individual's authorized hours. More info can be found here: [24-054-F-GCR-High-Tech-Payment-Model-2025.pdf](#) . This is a separate listing than GCR 25-002 below.

GCR 25-001 Hospice Services Rate Changes by the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) has updated reimbursement rates for hospice services. The set rates are

at 103% of the Medicare fee schedule, with reimbursement maintaining a 3% rate increase. See [GCR 25-001](#) for more information.

GCR 25-002 Home Health, High Tech Nursing, & Pediatric Palliative Care Rate Changes This policy is effective Jan 1, 2025, updates the rates from previous Low Utilization Payment Adjustment (LUPA) to include an additional increase of 3%. This link goes into further detail: [Home Health, High Technology Nursing, & Pediatric Palliative Care Rate Changes](#).

GCR 25-003 Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics/Orthotics, and Supplies Fee Schedule Update effective Jan 1, 2025. This is the annual review of the DMEPOS fee schedule. Much more info at link: [DMEPOS Fee Schedule Update](#).

GCR 25-006 Outpatient Prospective Payment System Reimbursement Updates for Outpatient Payment System fee schedule effective January 1, 2025. See [25-006-F-GCR-OPPS-2025.pdf](#) for further information.

GCR 25-007 Resource-Based Relative Value Scale (RBRVS) professional fee schedule effective January 1, 2025. Extensive information about this update can be found at: [25-007-F-GCR-RBRVS-Rates-CY2025.pdf](#)

Want to be added to **email notifications for Global Commitment waivers?** (Recommendation: If don't want to flood your Inbox, perhaps choose one person in your office or team to receive the emails for everyone.) Please email AHS.MedicaidPolicy@vermont.gov.

Community Happenings

Celebrate St. Johnsbury's history as the "Maple Center of the World" on Saturday, April 19, 2025, with the [Kingdom Maple Festival](#)

Spring in Vermont means it's time for the cutest event of the year

Baby Farm Animal Celebration at Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock. This year's celebration takes place in late April.

Green Up Day is one of the most special days in Vermont. It's an opportunity to gather with members of the community to clean up roadsides, rivers, and trails. Vermont's 54th Green Up Day happens on May 3, 2025.

Circus SmirKus Big Top Tour! Every summer, a freshly auditioned company of Smirkus Troupers, ages 10 to 18, take to the road in traditional mud show fashion for a two-month performance tour of New England. To welcome our fans, guests, and spectators, the Big Top is ADA-compliant and our staff is ready to assist those with accessibility concerns to enjoy the show. Tickets go on sale May 1! For more information, visit smirkus.org/about-big-top-tour/.

The Retreat Farm- visit the animals, enjoy the Forest Playground or Storybook Walk.
Farm and Forest — Retreat Farm

Summer camp –[National Summer Transportation Institute \(NSTI\) - Vermont State University](#) This camp is in Randolph (overnight camp) and Williston (day camp), for 9th-12th graders. Students will learn how bridges are designed and created, explore energy and the environment, transportation systems, engage in interactive labs as well as participate in field trips and hear guest speakers.

 **Register Today!**

Vermont Family Network's 2025 Annual Conference ***“Navigating Transition: Empowering Journeys of Change”*** will be held in-person* on **April 8, 2025 at the University of Vermont – Dudley H. Davis Center from 9:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.**

This year's conference will focus on the intersections of education and health for children/youth with disabilities or special health needs. Health and educational professionals will engage in collaborative activities with families and youth as they examine the challenges during critical transitions throughout a child's developmental journey. This conference promises to equip attendees with practical knowledge and essential tools through expert speakers, interactive workshops, and invaluable

networking opportunities. The VFN conference aims to empower families and children/youth with disabilities or special health needs to navigate their individual paths toward a brighter future.



Vermont Family Network
Annual Conference

8 April, 2025 | 8:00 AM-2:45 PM
University of Vermont – Dudley H. Davis Center

 **Keynote Speaker**
Kate Bove

Kate grew up and attended schools in Vermont including Browns River Middle School and Mount Mansfield Union High School. She also attended two post-secondary education programs: the CAPS program in New York, and Think College at the University of Vermont. Kate currently lives locally with her roommate in an apartment. Kate has been working in Dining Services at St. Michael's College for the past four years. She also volunteers at the Family Room in Burlington.

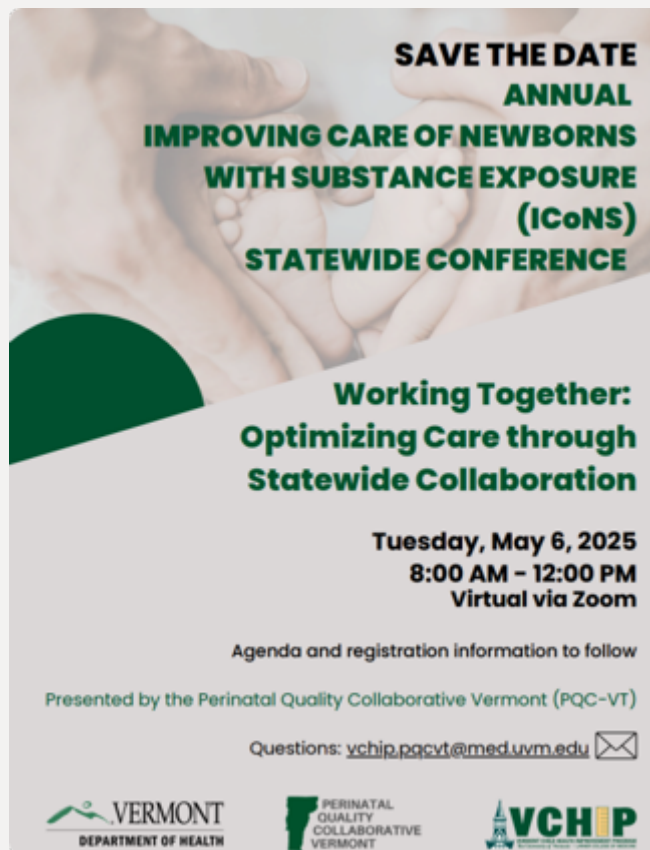
**"Navigating Transition:
Empowering Journeys of
Change"**

www.vermontfamilynetwork.org [@vermontfamilynetwork](https://twitter.com/vermontfamilynetwork)



Save the date for May 6, 2025 for the **Annual Improving Care of Newborns with Substance Exposure's** Statewide conference:

Working Together: Optimizing Care through Statewide Collaboration:



CSHN supports children with complex, chronic health conditions and/or developmental disorders, ages birth to-21, and their families, with flexible, experienced, and proactive services. If you'd like to learn more about CSHN programming and resources, please see the [CSHN Website](#).

Do you have feedback or content for this newsletter? Please [let us know!](#)



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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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