

## Autism Services - Intensive Responsive Team



Since Medicaid began coverage of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) services in January of 2015, there has been a growing awareness of the need to address the increase of Emergency Department (ED) admissions and Inpatient psychiatric (IP) hospitalizations for children and young adult Medicaid members on the autism spectrum. Additionally, these members often struggle with their transition back to their community, sometimes resulting in a readmission to the hospital following discharge. The demand for service outpaces the number of Connecticut Medical Assistance Program (CMAP) ASD enrolled providers and ASD providers with the knowledge, resources, and support to properly treat this unique group of members. The CT Behavioral Health Partnership (CT BHP) has been focused on enhancing the system of care for members and families impacted by autism spectrum, intellectual disability (ID) or development disorders (DD).

In April, the CT BHP, in collaboration with the Department of Social Services (DSS) implemented an ASD Intensive Response Team (IRT) to address the needs of this population. The function of the IRT is to deliver Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) services within the Emergency Departments of Yale Hospital and Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC).

These two hospitals were selected for the program due to volume, location, and their prior collaboration through the Autism Advisory Council and Developmental Disabilities Workgroup. The IRT includes one Licensed Intensive Care Manager (ICM) with specific training and expertise in ASD, ID, and DD and two ASD Care Coordinators. The overarching goals of the program aim to:

- Decrease ED, inpatient psychiatric and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) utilization and length of stay;
- Increase referral and connection to effective and appropriate levels of care, support and services within the community;

The IRT provides direct, face-to-face Intensive Care Coordination Services to youth/young adults and their families in ED and IP settings using the Wraparound Practice model. The Wraparound Practice model is a whole family approach to treatment, providing assistance to the family in developing their vision for who their child can be. At any given time, the IRT's ASD Care Coordinators have the capacity to serve up to 50 individuals/families with complex behavioral health needs. As of July 8th there have been a total of 19 referrals to the ASD IRT program. There will be one ASD Care Coordinator assigned to each of the two hospitals.

Referral criteria for the IRT program is as follows:

- Children/young adults (up to 26 years of age) that have been diagnosed with ASD, ID or DD
- Those at risk of overstay in the ED or delayed discharge from an inpatient setting,
- All youth/young adults meeting the criteria regardless of insurance coverage/status
- Those who have utilized multiple services that are unable to meet their needs; and
- Individuals who present to either Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC), Yale Children's Hospital or Yale New Haven Hospital emergency departments.

Additionally, the CT BHP is always looking to expand the current ASD provider network to service high needs members. In September, the CT BHP ASD Team will be hosting a training series that is free to participants. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be provided. The series will be sponsored by the Behavior Regulation Intervention and Stabilization in the Community Project (BRISC), of the Center for Children with Special Needs (CCSN). These trainings will address topics that include: expanding the readiness of and support for providers to meet the needs of families of individuals with autism; establishing teams of providers who successfully assess and treat individuals with extremely complex challenges and improving access to services for individuals with autism to promote optimal, long-term health outcomes. For more information please contact Jennifer Krom at [Jennifer.Krom@beaconhealthoptions.com](mailto:Jennifer.Krom@beaconhealthoptions.com)