Washington Prenatal-to-Three Lunch & Learn Series

Plan of Safe Care: Transforming Perinatal Substance Use Response Through Community Collaboration







Friday, April 24, 2026
12:00 - 1:00 PM PT

PN3 Washington Prenatal-to-Three Coalition

Welcome!

Please introduce yourself in the chat: name, org/role etc. Share one word that describes how you are showing up to the space today.

Washington Prenatal-to-Three (PN3) Coalition

Alissa Copeland

Purpose:

Convened by WithinReach, the WA PN3 Coalition collaborates to ensure all pregnant people and families with young children have the services and supports they need to thrive across four areas of focus and three subcommittees (Policy & Advocacy, Data & Analysis, and Family Voice).

1. Increase Access to Basic Needs
2. Increase Access to Pediatric and Perinatal Medical Care
3. Increase Family Stability Through Targeted Pathways
4. Improve Child Development

Group Agreements

Webinar attendees agree to:

- Be as present as you can
- Be patient with yourself and others
- Put relationships first
- Respect confidentiality
- Recognize no one knows everything; together we know a lot
- Recognize we can't find the right words all the time
- Appreciate the diversity of cultures within the Washington state region
- Embrace curiosity



Before We Begin…

- **Questions/Comments for the presenters?** There will be time for Q&A following the end of the presentation. Throughout the presentation please put your questions in the Q&A box.



- **Questions about Zoom/tech? (i.e., I can't hear, I can't see slides, etc.)?** Send a direct chat message to Ajia McAferty for support.

- **Today's meeting is being recorded** and along with slides will be sent out to all registrants Friday May 1st.

Help Me Grow:
So All Children Can Shine



Help Me Grow National Center

WA PN3 Lunch and Learn Series

Plan of Safe Care: Transforming Perinatal Substance Use Response Through Community Collaboration

April 24, 2026

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Part of Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health
www.helpmegrownational.org

Today’s Agenda

- Introductions
- Learning objective
- What is an early childhood system? What is Help Me Grow?
- Plans of Safe Care community-based referral pathway
- Q&A

Learning Objective

Participants will be able to describe key strategies used in developing Washington State's perinatal SUD pathway for the Plan of Safe Care, including the role of Help Me Grow WA, and articulate lessons learned that can inform practice in their own states and teams.

What is Help Me Grow and why does it matter?



HMG is not a program



HMG is a framework



Organizes + connects existing services

So families can easily navigate the community's resources

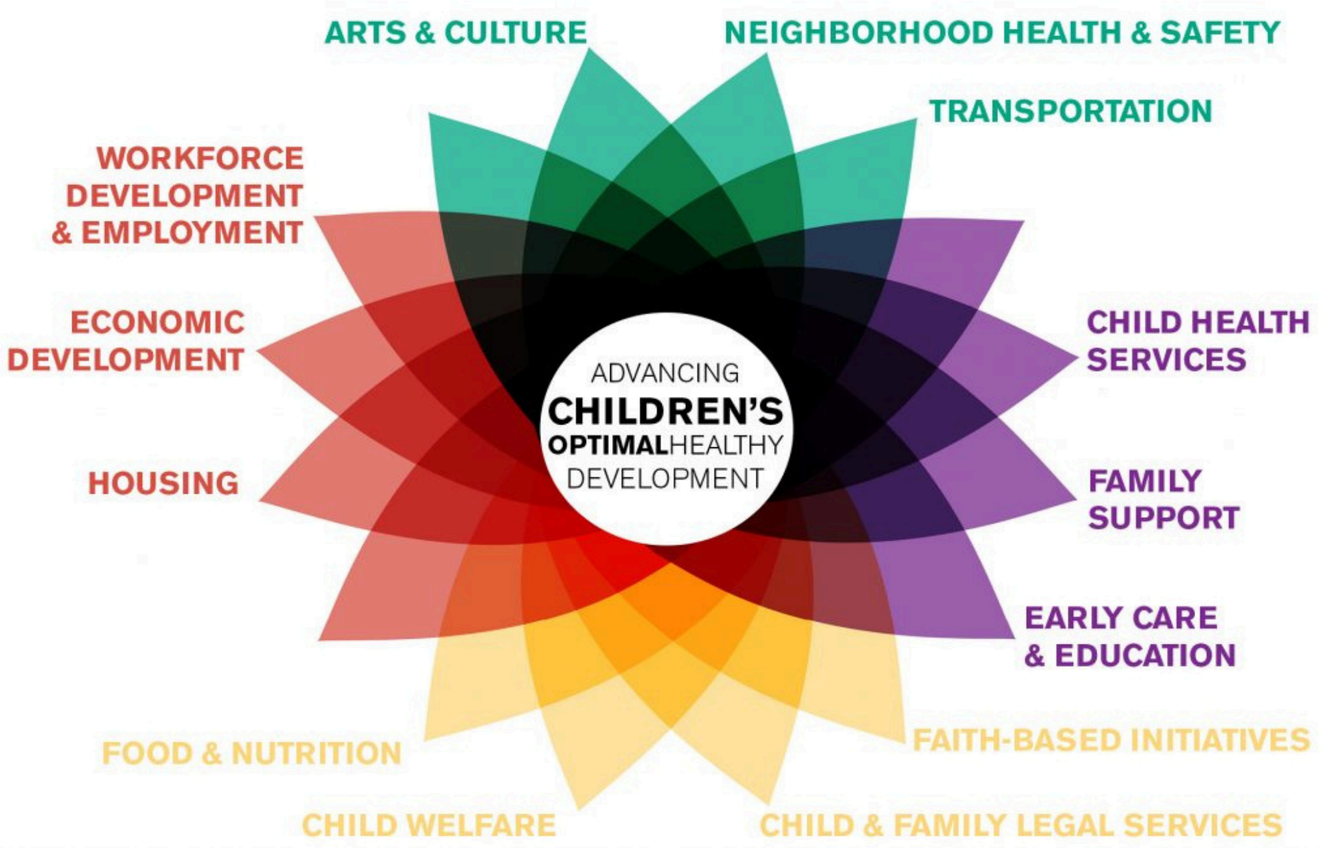
Help Me Grow = A Stronger Resource Grid



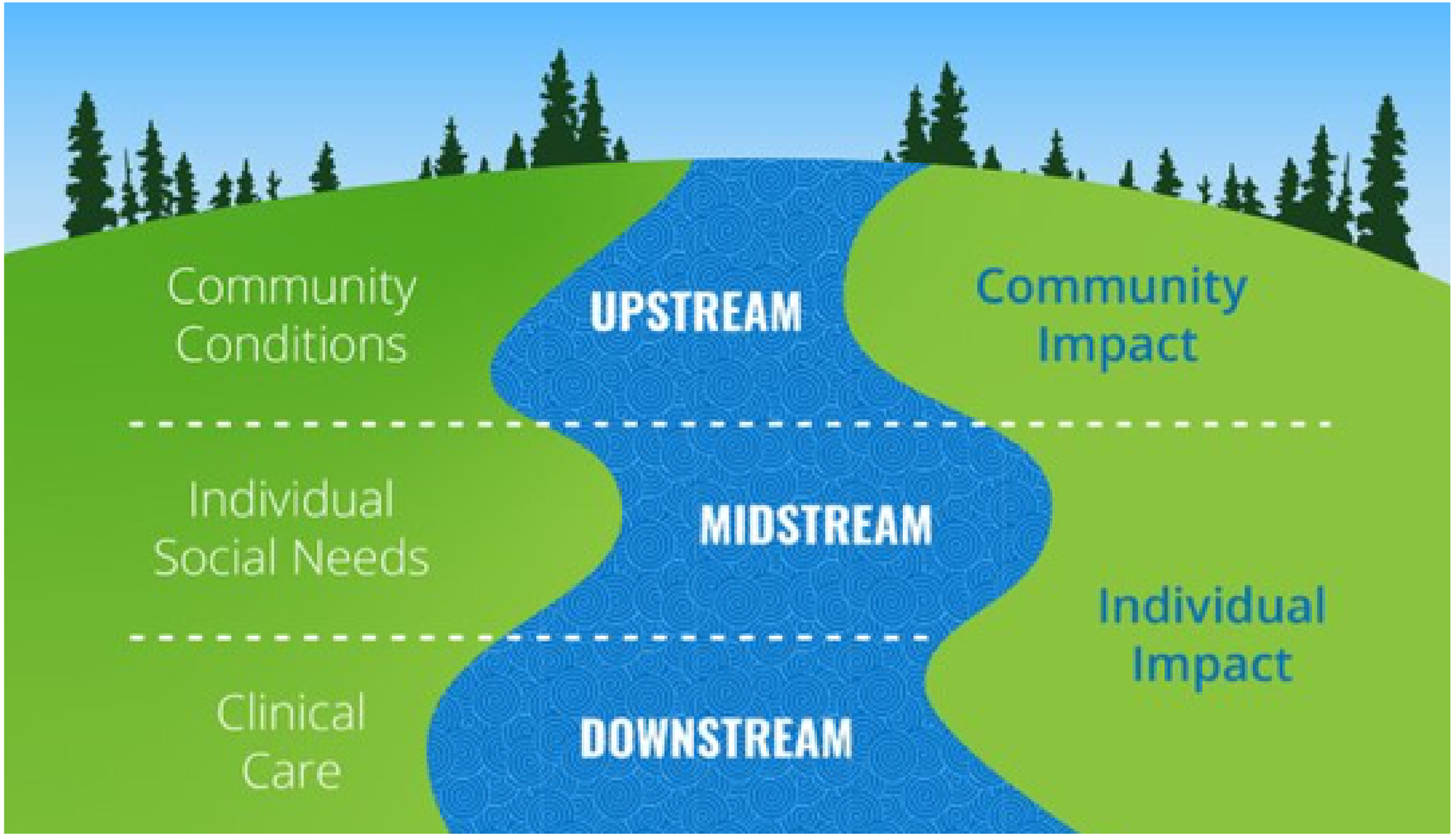
Help Me Grow strengthens the resource grid by maintaining a comprehensive service directory and connecting providers into a cohesive, coordinated network—so families can plug in from anywhere and quickly receive the support they need.

What is an Early Childhood System?

- Interdependent policies, programs, services, and infrastructure
- Inclusive of all child- and family-serving systems
- The system is a sum of its parts



Working “Upstream”



How Help Me Grow Works

What We Know

- Many **initiatives exist** to provide services to young children, their families
- All **families with very young children have questions** about the way their child is growing, learning, behaving, and developing
- **Gaps exists between sectors** that touch the lives of families with young children
- Children with developmental/behavioral concerns are **eluding early detection**
- All children and their families would benefit from a **coordinated, region-wide system** of early detection, intervention, support, and care

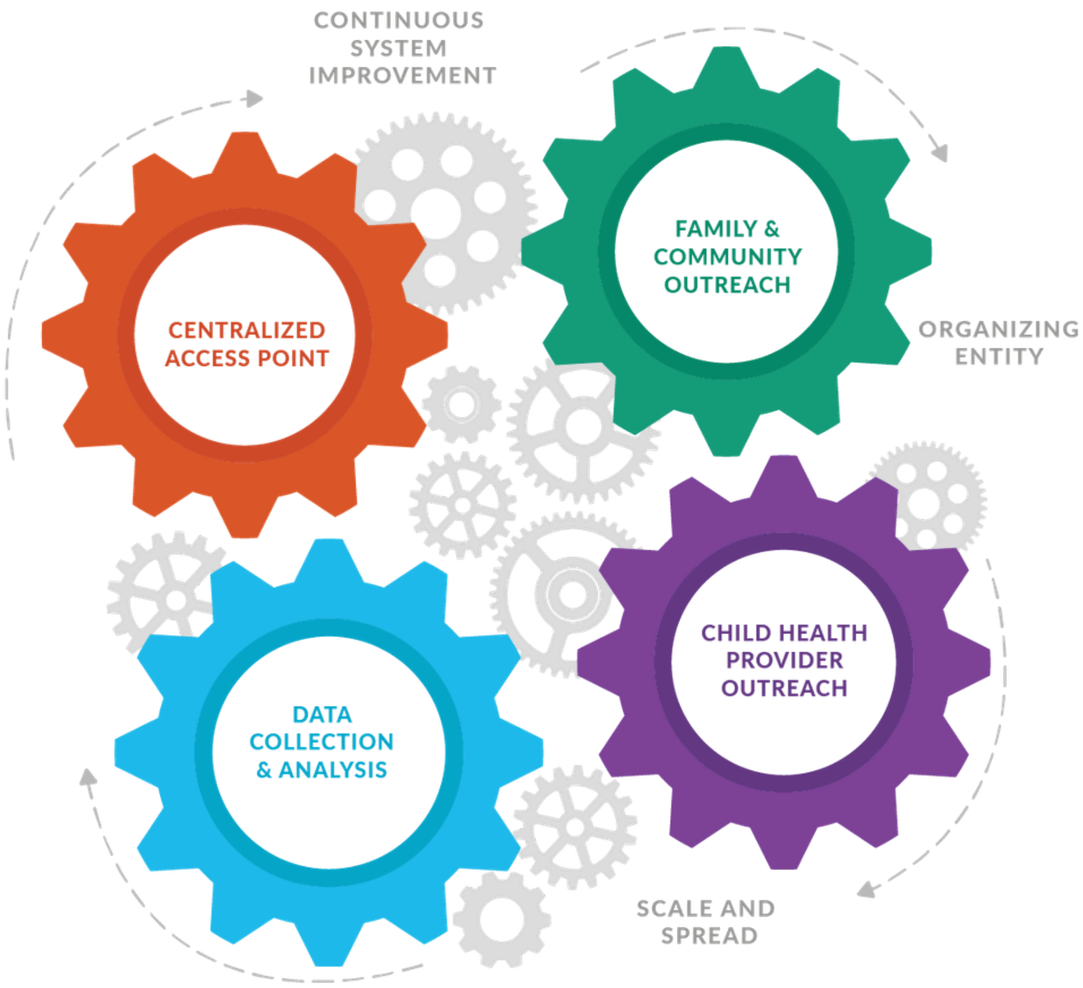


Help Me Grow: System Infrastructure

WE BELIEVE THAT ALL CHILDREN SHOULD BE ABLE TO GROW, DEVELOP, AND THRIVE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

Help Me Grow is a model that works to promote collaboration across child-serving sectors in order to build a more efficient and effective system that promotes the optimal healthy development of young children. When all of the organizations working on behalf of young children work together, we can:

- **Better prevent or reduce the impact that stress or adversity may have on children and families and**
- **Increase protective factors that can maximize the well being of children and families.**



Help Me Grow Systems

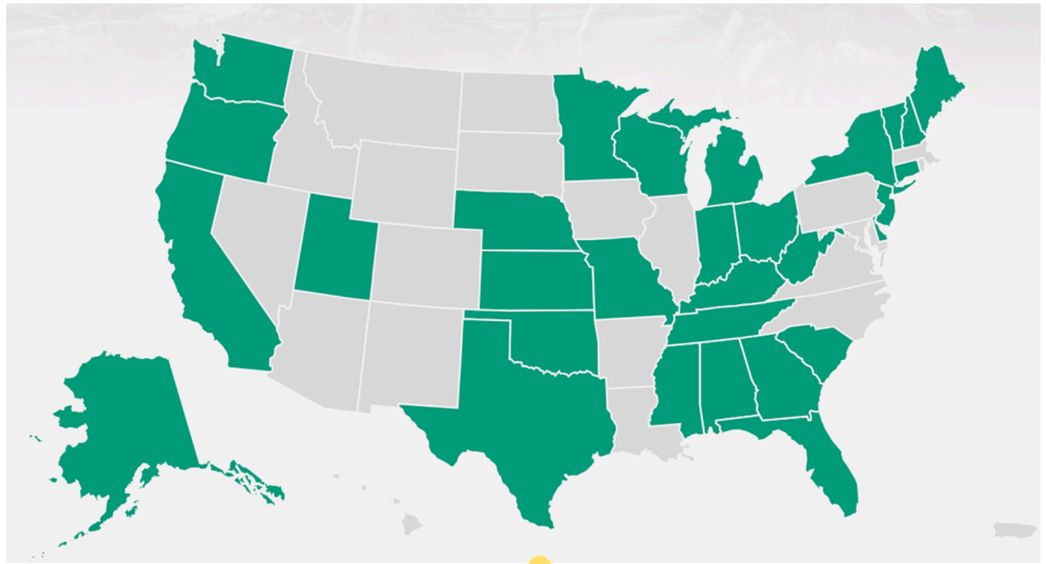


- In accordance with the priorities of the families they intend to serve
- Provide universal care coordination, system navigation, and ongoing follow-up support
- Connect families to appropriate services
- Partner with families as informed stewards of their child's early development
- Support and partner with child health providers
- Collect and use data at the child-, family-, system-, and state-levels to guide community improvement

What Does Implementation Look Like?

There are 140+ Examples!

- Statewide/level versus local
- Variety of “organizing entities”
- Leverage/align local efforts, build out towards local needs



Help Me Grow®
National Center

“When you’ve seen one Help Me Grow, you’ve seen ONE Help Me Grow!”

What is a Plan of Safe Care?

- The **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan of Safe Care (POSC)** is designed to improve the:
  1. Safety and well-being of infants affected by prenatal substance exposure, and
  2. Recovery outcomes for their caregivers.
- A collaborative plan developed by pregnant or parenting individuals, their families, and care providers to address immediate safety, treatment, and health needs
- There is no uniform template for POSC





Help Me Grow
WASHINGTON

Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Bridging Child Welfare and Early Childhood through Help Me Grow Washington

Plan of Safe Care Referral **Pathways**

- **Federal legislation changes starting in 2016**
  - Updated laws regarding infants who were exposed to substances in utero
- **WA two-pathway approach**
  - WA identified two pathways for offering services through POSC
    - Child welfare (DCYF)
    - Community pathway
- **Two pilot sites launched in summer of 2021**
- **Help Me Grow WA identified as the community pathway in 2021**
  - Expertise in statewide resource navigation and specialized supports
  - Developed online portal in late 2021
- **Partnership with Birthing Hospitals**
  - Collaboration
  - Learnings and listening sessions
  - Jan. 1, 2025 policy alignment



The Birthing Hospital identifies an infant as substance exposed. Via the online referral portal, the provider provides de-identified data related to every instance of prenatal substance exposure.





If the **community-based pathway** is appropriate, the online portal's algorithm will then direct the provider to complete a referral to Help Me Grow to complete the POSC.



If a **report to DCYF** is needed, the online referral portal's algorithm will then direct the provider to call DCYF Intake. If the family screens in for CPS intervention, DCYF will complete the POSC as a component of the case..



Help Me Grow will reach out to the family and refer them to services and other wrap-around supports.



If DCYF intake screens the family out after determining that CPS intervention is not necessary, they confirm verbal consent for a HMG referral with provider and place a HMG referral on behalf of the family.

Who is the Community-Based Pathway for?



Prenatal exposure to:

- **Methadone or buprenorphine as prescribed** + no safety concerns
- **Opioids as prescribed** + no safety concerns
- **Medication or combination of medication with abuse potential as prescribed** + no safety concerns
- **Cannabis** + no safety concerns

Community-Based Pathway in Action



- Consent-based
- Specialized team serving statewide
  - Two local sites
- Virtual services
- Flexible and robust outreach and follow-up
- Wraparound resource navigation
- Essential Services
- Warm handoffs
- Referrals steadily increasing

Ingredients for Success

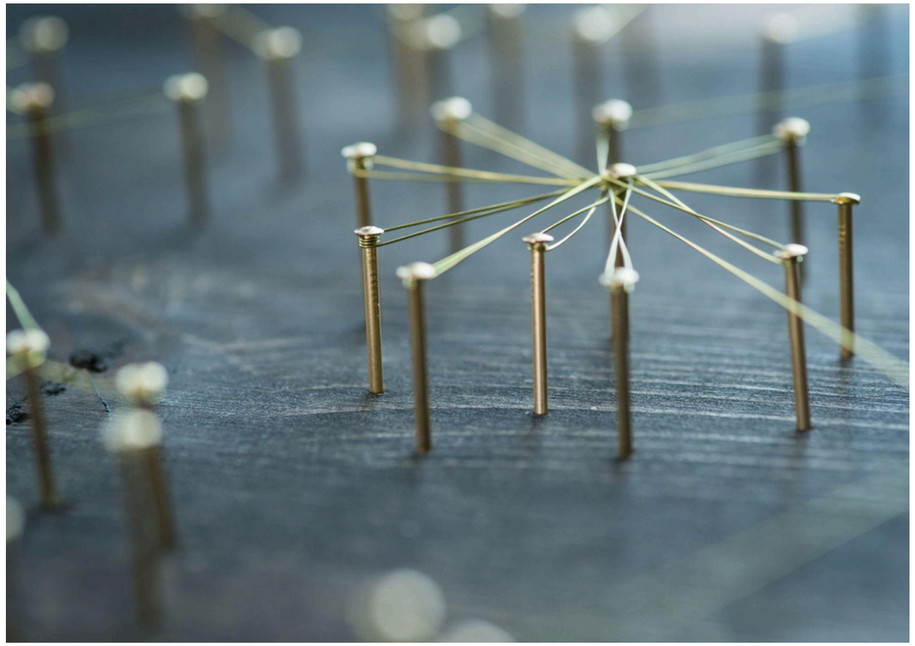
Braided Funding

- Braided funding safeguards against funding volatility and invites private and public funders to invest in areas that align with their missions

- Currently, braiding together:
  - CAPTA
  - State dollars
  - Private philanthropy
  - Exploration:
    - One Washington – Opiate Settlements
    - Maternal and Child Health Block grant (MCHBG)
    - FFPSA



A Public/Private Partnership: *Department of Children, Youth & Families + Help Me Grow Washington*



- Moving beyond a contractual relationship to a collaborative partnership
- Guided by a shared vision
- A cross-sector project implementation team designed and drove the work together (shared ownership)
- Government liaison role to work between state systems and alongside/within the HMG WA Network

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Key Partners

- **State Hospital Association**
  - Hospital outreach and engagement, including pathway promotion and training
  - Hospitals are supported to implement aligned efforts
- **State Department of Health and the Health Care Authority**
  - Aligned initiatives addressing perinatal SUD
- **Regional Child Welfare Offices**
  - Opportunities to strengthen collaboration in the field with birthing hospitals
  - Opportunities to engage regional child welfare staff in implementation efforts in their communities
- **Examples of partners within our referral network**
  - Urban Indian Organizations
  - A medical-legal partnership model, which includes parent ally mentors
  - Home visitation models like Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) and Nurse-Family Partnership
  - 211 system

Community Context

- Celebrating communities' existing strengths
  - Bringing together existing community collaborations
  - Identifying aligned work in each community
  - Providing tailored support
  - Collaborating with families on materials and outreach



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Challenges, Considerations & Next Steps

System Successes & Challenges

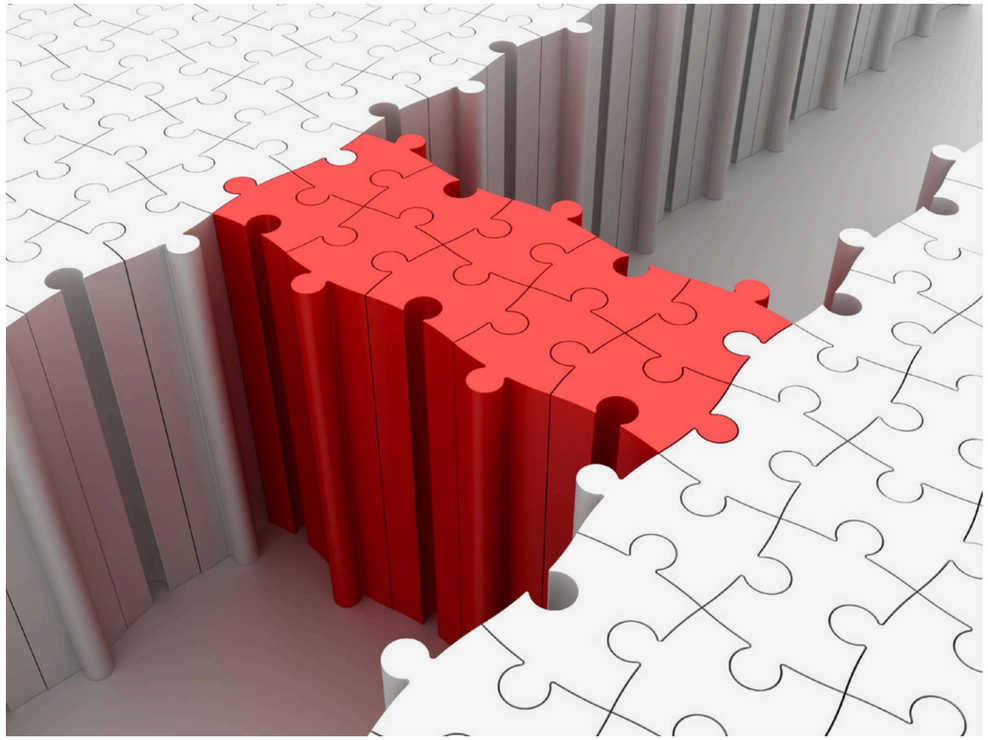
- **Challenge:** This work involves a shift in the way that we all think about mandatory reporting
- **Success:** POSC Community of Practice provides a space for shared learning and has led to invitations to new spaces, new community partner relationships, supporting that shift in thinking

- **Challenge:** Consistent practice following POSC (by birthing hospitals and by DCYF staff)
- **Success:** Strong collaboration among program leads, across teams in DCYF to identify ways to support the field and birthing hospitals

Lessons Learned

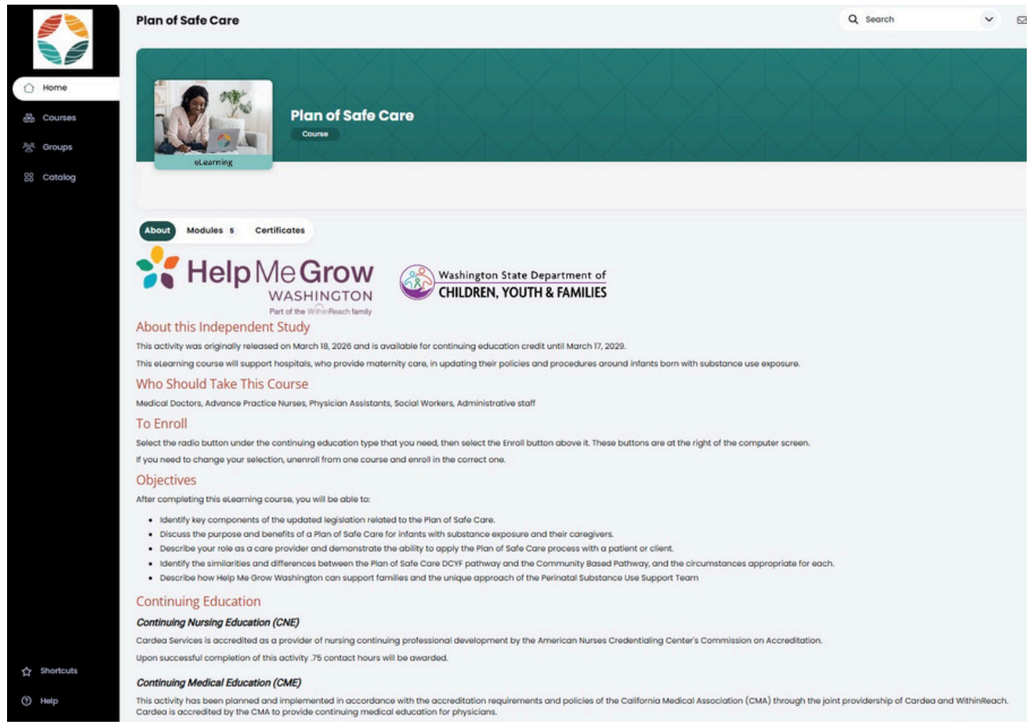
- Families more readily trust community partners than they trust DCYF
- Strong, trusting relationships with community partners allow opportunities to share knowledge and can result in families receiving support further upstream
- Important to maintain and strengthen existing relationships beyond initial implementation
- Connect with trusted messengers in the community that can be incorporated into your approach to supporting families
    - Including whole-family approach

Bridging Gaps and Building Trust



- Virtual engagement (vs in person) requires strong engagement techniques to establish trust and rapport
- As concrete goods and supports are vital to this population, we are working towards identifying sustainable funding for a flexible fund that can assist with housing, utilities, etc.
- Families referred through these community pathways may be distrusting of HMG as they could see it as being an arm of Child Welfare. It's important to be transparent about the relationship and any data being shared.

Scaling Up and Simplifying Training



- We are excited to announce our brand-new **Plan of Safe Care E-course!**
- Designed with and tested by key collaborators.
- This one hour course consists of five modules and is available through Cardea learning platform.
- Participants can earn continuing education credits (CNEs or CMEs).

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Navigator Considerations

- Engagement must be trauma-informed, with motivational interviewing concepts at the core.
- Intentionality to connecting a family to longer-term supports (such as home visiting) or place-based supports (such as a family resource center).
- Peer navigators are best practice which requires organizational readiness and infrastructure to support.

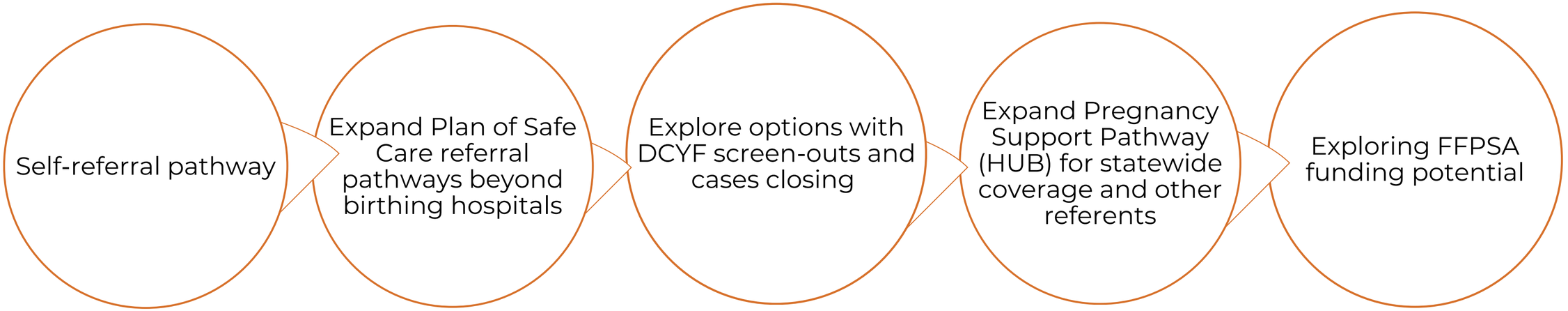
Tribal Considerations

As sovereign nations Tribes are not required to adopt POSC legislation.

Tribes can examine the state's POSC system and decide whether and how to work alongside state efforts to develop POSC pathways for their tribal communities.

Recognizing the shared challenge of perinatal substance use across all communities, the POSC pathway offers another opportunity to explore partnership with tribes.

Next Steps


Self-referral pathway
Expand Plan of Safe Care referral pathways beyond birthing hospitals
Explore options with DCYF screen-outs and cases closing
Expand Pregnancy Support Pathway (HUB) for statewide coverage and other referents
Exploring FFPSA funding potential

Q&A

Learn More

Washington Partners - Plan of Safe Care Community of Practice

- Email HMGWA@withinreach.org for invite

Plan of Safe Care E-Course

- Access trainings and more
- Register for the e-course

Reminder: Webinar recording, presentation slides, and more resources will be sent out Friday May 1.



Stay Connected

Register for our next webinars:

- May 21: Using Cost Modeling in Help Me Grow Washington System Building
- June 5: Improving Access to Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) for All Families

Join the Washington Prenatal-to-Three Coalition

- Subscribe to the newsletter
- Register for next coalition meeting
- Email for more information

Keep in Touch with Help Me Grow

- Subscribe to HMG WA's newsletter
- Contact and subscribe to Help Me Grow National's communications







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Thank You!

PN3@withinreachwa.org

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