May 23, 2022

LME/MCOs Launch Initiative to Ensure Seamless, Statewide Care for Foster Children

North Carolina's six Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs) have launched the ***NC Child and Family Improvement Initiative*** to collaboratively improve care for children, youth and families served by the child welfare system. Building on a 50-year legacy of established local partnerships and the strengths of North Carolina's public managed care system for mental health, substance use disorder, intellectual/developmental disability (IDD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), the LME/MCOs have joined together to implement a statewide model to ensure seamless access to quality care for these children and families regardless of where they live in NC.

LME/MCOs have long worked together with their counties to effectively serve children in the foster care system. For those children with very complex behavioral health needs, often inclusive of IDD needs, there are often challenges in securing needed treatment. Severe provider capacity issues and workforce shortages across the state have exacerbated these challenges. Following recent decisions by 20 counties that were formerly assigned to Cardinal Innovations to realign with other LME/MCOs, there is ground-breaking work taking place that is improving care for youth with complex needs. North Carolina's LME/MCOs have intensified their efforts to address the challenges facing children, families, and county Department of Social Services (DSS) offices while leveraging North Carolina's existing infrastructure in order to be good stewards of public funds, and to bring rapid change to this critical population

As part of the ***NC Child and Family Improvement Initiative*****,** the LME/MCOs have assembled North Carolina child welfare subject matter experts and thought leaders to create a statewide solution to the current pressing challenges of the service delivery system. Responding to the most significant issues raised by Members of the General Assembly, county Departments of Social Services, the Provider Community and families, the Initiative will create ease of movement for children who relocate throughout the state to continue to receive services without delay or interruption and will alleviate any administrative burden on providers who are involved in those inter-county movements.

As the ***NC Child and Family Improvement Initiative*** workgroups continue their efforts in the coming days and beyond, specific elements and dates for delivery will be shared. The immediate improvements resulting from this partnership will be fully functional before the December 2022 launch of the North Carolina BH IDD Tailored Plans.