

The Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware

Improving Health Care Transition in Delaware for Children with Special Health Care Needs

Public Health Issue

According to the National Survey on Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN)¹, 13% of all children in the U.S. under the age of 18 have a special health care need. Coordinated services are critical for these children as they prepare to transition to the adult health care system. However, data show that only 41% of Delaware's estimated 34,500 children with special health care needs² receive transition preparation.

Program Overview

In 2007, the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies initiated a partnership with the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children (AIDHC), Christiana Care Health System, Inc., and the Delaware Division of Public Health with the goal of improving health care transition for CSHCN. Activities included:

- Conducting bi-monthly Transition Committee meetings
- Organizing health care transition conferences
- Establishing the Division of Transition of Care (ToC) at AIDHC
- Launching the pilot program, "Transition Care Practice," a model transition practice for young adults in the adult health care system.

Making a Difference

- More than 275 youth, families, and health care and disability professionals attended the bi-annual health care transition conferences.
- Since establishing the Division of Transition of Care in February 2010, AIDHC has prepared more than 150 children and young adults for transition through consultation, medical history summaries and referrals to adult providers.

Shaping Tomorrow

Delaware has an active transition state team establishing a legislative task force to address all aspects of transition, including medical transition. This collaborative effort is a model for other states.

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Bobbie Jo DeHaven from Georgetown, Delaware, is a young adult with spina bifida, paraplegia, a seizure disorder and other complex medical needs. Bobbie Jo's involvement in the Transition Care Practice (TCP) has resulted in a significant reduction in medical hospital days. During the last two years, Bobbie Jo's care required 64 medical hospital days, down from 216 medical hospital days in the two years prior.



Pictured: Cory Nourie, ToC Social Work Coordinator, and Bobbie Jo DeHaven.

^{1 2}-U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs Chartbook 2005–2006.