

A YEAR OF PROGRESS – HOW NH IS MOVING FORWARD WITH IMPROVEMENTS IN CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative and its members and stakeholders have designed an ambitious road map for improving the behavioral health of children through a comprehensive [state plan](#) released in March 2013. This plan brought genuine and focused commitment to children and families who have reached out for services and supports in an attempt to address a range of emotional, mental and behavioral health needs. Their commitment together with best practice recommendations are changing the paradigm for how the state and its communities and providers care for children and promote their well-being.

VALUES

The plan also promoted three core values to guide this change namely that efforts to support children be:

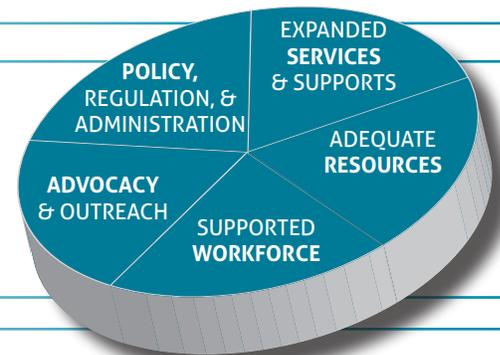
 **FAMILY DRIVEN, YOUTH GUIDED**

 **COMMUNITY-BASED**

 **CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY COMPETENT**

CORE WORK AREAS

The Children's Behavioral Health Plan also sets a course of action within five core strategy areas: Policy, Resources, Services, Workforce, and Advocacy.



YEAR ONE MILESTONES

In the first year of implementation, the Children's Behavioral Health Plan has achieved significant milestones in all of its strategy areas. The Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative sought and secured substantial investments to build the infrastructure for sustainable best practices, workforce development, service delivery, advocacy, and policy enhancements. The Collaborative was also successful in selecting an organizational home for its state-level cross-agency collaboration. Below is a summary of the key milestones for year one, which includes five newly funded projects that will influence progress in several key strategy areas of the Children's Behavioral Health Plan.

ORGANIZATIONAL HOME

New Futures became the organizational home of the NH Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative and hired a full-time director to lead the Collaborative's efforts. New Futures is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy and policy organization with a strong reputation for effective communication, policy change, and grass roots advocacy development. With an administrative home and full-time professional staff, the Collaborative is poised to continue and expand upon its early successes this year.



Partners for Change: The NH Division for Children, Youth and Families in collaboration with the Dartmouth Trauma Interventions Research Center received an investment from the U.S. Administration for Children and Families to improve the mental health of children and families served by the child protection and juvenile justice systems. Partners for Change will implement universal screening for mental health and trauma symptoms; increase access to evidence-based trauma treatment; and improve oversight of psychotropic medication prescribing.



FAST Forward: The NH Division for Children, Youth and Families received an investment from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish a coordinated, individualized approach for children with complex behavioral health needs, to expand family-to-family support, education and leadership programs, to develop youth leadership and peer supports, to increase workforce development, and to ensure outcome measurement.



Safe Schools Healthy Students: The NH Department of Education received an investment from the SAMHSA to pilot and create road maps for schools to improve early childhood social and emotional development (ages 0-5); to reduce bullying, violence, and substance abuse within school-aged children through positive climate and child-centered discipline and supports; to improve outcomes for children with behavioral health conditions and needs; and to support children and families/caregivers through their genuine participation in decision-making and support mechanisms.



Project Launch: The NH Division of Public Health Services and its key partners received an investment from the SAMHSA to improve coordination across early childhood-serving systems in a high-need urban area that will serve as a best practice model for other communities in the state. Project Launch will engage primary care practices in early screening and assessment of behavioral health conditions, risks and needs; provide home-based services for families with young children who have or are at risk for behavioral health disparities; and deliver training that will increase the skills and abilities of families to support their children's well-being and success.



NH Nexus Project: The National Alliance on Mental Illness New Hampshire received an investment from the SAMHSA to reduce suicide incidences through a systemic approach to identify high risk youth under the age of 25. The project will engage regional networks and key statewide acute care facilities in universal and targeted best practice interventions, linkages, systems change and promotion of resources.

Federal investments are advancing the following goals:

	Partners for Change	FAST Forward	Safe Schools Healthy Students	Project Launch	NH Nexus Project
Align child-serving systems toward common goals and outcomes	●	●	●	●	
Implement family-driven, youth-guided, culturally and linguistically competent services and systems	●	●	●	●	●
Improve services and outcomes for children and youth with significant behavioral health needs and their families	●	●	●		●
Realign financing streams to better invest resources for behavioral health services and supports		●			
Create a sustainable infrastructure to provide on-going training in the System of Care approach, effective services, and other workforce development strategies		●			
Identify emotional and behavioral health challenges and needs at earlier ages and at earlier stages	●		●	●	●
Maximize opportunities for integration of mental health and substance use prevention, intervention, and treatment with primary care	●			●	
Measure outcomes of implementing improved services	●	●	●	●	●
Maximize support for improved systems and services		●	●	●	●

For more information about the Collaborative and the on-going implementation of the NH Children's Behavioral Health Plan, please contact Effie Malley at (603) 225-9540 x119 or at emalley@new-futures.org.

