Dear CSHCS Families,

You may have heard of potential budget cuts to the public health budget which could affect programs and services in Ottawa County. At this time, budget discussions are ongoing, and a final budget has not been approved. However, if the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners moves ahead with the cuts as proposed, the health department will be forced to make significant reductions to programs and services. Your (or your child’s) enrollment in the Children’s Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) program will continue despite these potential budget cuts, as the CSHCS program is provided through mandates at both the state and federal levels. As we know more, we’ll be sure to communicate it to you.

We have some exciting news to share! On October 1, 2023, the CSHCS program will be expanding eligibility up to the age of 26 for all covered diagnoses. Learn more about this important and welcome expansion on page three.

We want to send our best wishes to our friend and colleague, CSHCS nurse Robin Twiest, who will be retiring on September 20th. Thereafter, if Robin is your program nurse, you may contact any CSHCS team member for assistance (see page two for our contact information). If you’d like to send Robin a farewell message, please email her before the 20th at: rtwiest@miottawa.org.

The CSHCS team is here when you need us—our contact information can be found on page two. In addition, the Family Phone Line: 1-800-359-3722 is a great way to find information about the CSHCS program and to get help locating resources and support for your family.

In health and hope,
Contact Information for Ottawa County CSHCS

Brenda Kempf, Program Representative
616-393-4445
bkempf@miottawa.org

Contact Brenda for:
- Enrollment & renewal
- Billing & insurance
- Adding providers
- Adding diagnoses
- Travel and lodging pre-approvals
- Changes in income
- Financial concerns
- Changes in insurance, name, address, phone, or email address

Contact your* CSHCS nurse for:
- Plans of Care & Case management
- Medical questions
- Questions about CSHCS coverage
- Adding a new diagnosis or specialist

*A Nurse for CSHCS families in:
- Zeeland
- Holland zip codes 49422 & 49423

Contact Aimee Dekker BSN, RN
616-393-4440
adekker@miottawa.org

Contact Samantha Leffman BSN, RN
616-393-4442
sleffman@miottawa.org

Contact Robin Twiest BSN, RN
616-393-4416
rtwiest@miottawa.org

Note: After Robin’s retirement on September 20, 2023, please contact Any other team member for assistance

Contact Irene for:
- Annual CSHCS Information Update via secure email
- Changes in name, insurance, phone, home or email address

Contact Amy for:
- Empowered Parents webinars
- Special Families’ Corner FB group
- Special Kids’ Corner Newsletters and help finding resources and support

Contact Leslie for:
- Extra assistance for complex needs
- Questions other team members have been unable to answer

Irene Atwood, Program Clerk
616-393-4439
iatwood@miottawa.org

Amy Fontaine, Parent Consultant
616-402-2275
afontaine@miottawa.org

Leslie Ver Duin BSN, RN
CSHCS Coordinator
616-393-4444
lverduin@miottawa.org

Sandra Lake BSN, RN, MPH
OCDPH Community Health Manager
616-393-5753
slake@miottawa.org

CSHCS Program Fax: 616-393-4435

Links for CSHCS Websites: Ottawa County  State of MI  Payments
Children’s Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) program eligibility has been expanded to individuals up to age 26!

The expansion becomes effective October 1, 2023. It may take up to six months for computer system updates to be completed. Enrollment will be backdated to October 1st whenever possible for those who were eligible as of that date.

The age expansion applies to all 2,700 plus CSHCS covered conditions, however clients with Hemophilia, Sickle Cell Disease, or Cystic Fibrosis are currently eligible regardless of age.

To stay enrolled in the CSHCS program if you are approaching the (former eligibility) age of 21*:

1. Fill out and return the required renewal documents.
2. Ensure a current medical report from your subspecialist is on file. If you aren’t sure, contact your CSHCS team to find out.

*Note: If you have passed your date for financial review just before turning 21, or if your medical report is not current, you will not automatically be re-enrolled in CSHCS.

To re-enroll in the CSHCS program if you had previously aged out of eligibility and are currently under the age of 26:

1. Ask your subspecialist’s office to send a current medical report to CSHCS in Lansing on your behalf. You’ll need to provide them with a CSHCS Release of Information form found here.
2. Once you’re found eligible, you’ll receive an invitation to join the CSHCS program. Fill out and return your enrollment application—including the financial form—to CSHSC in Lansing.

Other eligibility requirements still apply, such as citizenship and residency, as well as those related to CSHCS covered condition(s), such as meeting severity and chronicity guidelines and the need to visit a medical subspecialist at least yearly. Program benefits and financial obligations also remain the same.

Letters were sent by MDHHS/CSHCS on September 1st notifying families of the eligibility expansion. Additional letters will be sent, notifying families of what will be required to enroll/extend coverage based on current eligibility status.

See this Frequently Asked Questions Guide to CSHCS Age 26 expansion for more information: A26 FAQ.pdf (govdelivery.com)

If you have additional questions regarding the CSHCS eligibility expansion to age 26, contact your local CSHCS office (see page two for Ottawa County CSHCS contact information).

You may also contact The Family Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs by calling the CSHCS Family Phone Line: 1-800-359-3722, or by emailing: cshcsfc@michigan.gov.
Avoid Identity Theft! Children’s Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) will never ask you for your bank account information, checking account or routing numbers.

If you’re ever asked for banking information by someone saying they represent CSHCS, do not share your information and notify CSHCS or your local health department right away.

The Safe Homes Campaign from the Ottawa County Department of Public Health provides free locking bags for the safe storage of medication, cannabis, and other substances that need to be kept away from children.

Find a list of pick up locations, community resources, safe medication disposal locations, and tips for a safe home here.

MDHHS Behavioral Health 1915(c) HCBS Waivers Renewal Feedback Sessions

MDHHS is hosting several listening sessions to receive your input on how Michigan’s Behavioral Health 1915(c) Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers—which are up for renewal—should be improved.

These waivers are the Habilitation Supports Waiver (HSW), the Children’s Waiver (CWP), and the Serious Emotional Disturbance Waiver (SEDW). Learn more about them here.

Register for an upcoming listening session here.

Check Medicaid Renewals off Your To-Do List

- Update your address, phone number, and email address, and report any changes to your household or income.
- Check your mail for a renewal form. Return your paperwork, even if you think you’re no longer eligible, the children in your household might still be.

NOTE: If you no longer qualify for Medicaid, you’ll receive information about other affordable health coverage options, including HealthCare.gov, where eligible applicants can purchase plans for as low as $10 per month. Read more in this MDHHS press release.

For more information, visit: MI Bridges (michigan.gov).
Family Center Conference Scholarships

Diagnosis-related conferences can help families learn more about a condition, care, and treatments, discover the latest research and resources, become empowered to advocate/self-advocate, and gain a network of support from fellow youth, parents, and professionals.

Who is eligible? A parent of a child up to age 26 with a physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional diagnosis, and a young adult ages 14 to 26. Recipients must reside in Michigan at the time of application and conference attendance. Individual eligibility is limited to every two years. There is a limit of three scholarships awarded for a particular conference.

What is covered? Registration for attending a diagnosis-specific conference in the U.S. for a parent/youth (age 14 up to 26). Travel expenses, lodging, meals, child-care, and special accommodations that are necessary to attend the conference may also be covered depending on the conference location and individual circumstances.

Find details and an application here. If you have more questions, call the Family Phone Line: 1-800-359-3722.

CSN Fund Grants

The Children with Special Needs (CSN) Fund provides financial assistance to families for the purchase equipment or services for their child when no other funding source is available.

The child must by under the age of 21 and be enrolled in CSHCS OR be eligible to enroll in the CSHCS program.

Types of equipment that may be covered by a CSN Fund grant are listed at the link below, including information on limited ceiling and stair lift grants that are sometimes available depending on funding.

For help with a grant application, contact your local CSHCS office, or the Family Phone Line: 1-800-359-3722.

Learn more about the CSN Fund and find an application here.

Lori’s Voice provides financial assistance for families who are unable to afford adaptive equipment, travel, therapy, and items that are not fully covered by insurance or other organizations.

To be eligible for financial assistance for Lori’s Voice, a child must be under the age of 21 with mobility issues due to a neuro-muscular or degenerative disease with a financial need.

Lori’s Voice Accessible Van Giveaway—Summer/Fall 2023

You could win a brand new accessible van from Lori’s Voice if your child is under the age of 21, lives in Michigan, and has a neurological, muscular or degenerative disorder.

Sign up by November 10, 2023—extended deadline!

Here’s the link: Lorisvoice.org/vangiveaway

Family Matters

Family Assistance Program Grant for Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD)

Feeding Matters will award four families $2,500 to combat the financial strain of Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD). Families with a child under age 18 with a diagnosed PDF or documented feeding difficulties may apply.

The deadline to apply is Friday, September 29, 2023 at 11:59pm.

See the Family Matters website for complete details and an application.
The Family Center can help with:

- CSHCS Enrollment & Program Assistance
- Camp & Conference Scholarships (see p.11)
- Individual Support from a Trained Parent Mentor
- Resources for Your Family & Your Child’s Diagnosis
- Transition Support for Youth & Families

Special Families’ Corner Facebook Group

Our CSHCS Facebook group for parents & caregivers of children or young adults with disabilities or special needs. We also welcome adults with chronic health conditions or disabilities themselves.

Discover events, grants & community resources
Learn about news & issues affecting families
Find support from fellow parents & caregivers
Become a part of our growing community!

Just search Facebook for Special Families’ Corner & request to join.
Answer the membership questions too. Only group members can view posts in this closed group. CSHCS enrollment is not required to join.

Special Families’ Corner is made possible by a grant from The Family Center.

The Family Center for Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs (The Family Center)
The parent-directed section of CSHCS

Serving all children and youth who have—or are at an increased risk for—physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions, regardless of CSHCS enrollment

The Family Center’s September Parent Connect Call

“Nurturing Yourself & Cultivating Community”

Wednesday September 13th from 4:00 to 5:00pm on Microsoft Teams

In the fast pace of everyday life, are you making yourself a priority? Are you nurturing yourself to live a more fulfilling and meaningful life?

Join this Parent Connect Call as Kristen Reese from the Family to Family Health Information Center (F2FHIC) presents insight on connecting with and nurturing yourself and cultivating a community of support.

Register here on Eventbrite

Family Center Parent Mentor Training

For parents with a child who has Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)
Saturday September 30, 2023 — 9:00am to 3:30pm (on Microsoft Teams)

Held in honor of SCD awareness month, attendees of this special parent mentor training may choose to become a part of the Parent-to-Parent Support Network, a state-wide group of trained, volunteer parents who support other parents, share resources, and help navigate various systems.

Register for this special parent mentor training here.

For future parent mentor trainings and other events, follow the Family Center on Eventbrite or call the Family Phone Line at: 1-800-359-3722.
Hearing & Vision Concerns:
An undiagnosed hearing or vision problem may impact your child’s development and ability to learn.

Our Ottawa County Department of Public Health’s (OCDPH) hearing & vision technicians have many techniques and specialized instruments to provide hearing and vision screenings for your child. Even infants can be screened!

Your child may be having hearing problems if he/she:
- has a history of ear infections or drainage
- wants music, video games or TV loud
- misunderstands or often asks to have things repeated

Your child may be having vision problems if he/she:
- squints or tilts the head to see
- has an eye that crosses or wanders when the child is ill or tired
- holds objects close to the eyes

If your child is experiencing any of the above symptoms or you have any concerns, call 616-396-5266 to schedule a FREE screening today. The earlier a problem is identified, the sooner it may be corrected and permanent damage may be prevented.

Kindergarten Entrance Screening Clinics:
Children who will be entering Kindergarten are required by Michigan Public Health Code to have had both hearing and vision screenings at least once between the ages of 3 and 5. Schedule your child’s FREE hearing and vision screening appointment at the OCDPH clinic location of your choice (Grand Haven, Holland, or Hudsonville) by calling: 616-396-5266.

School Hearing & Vision Screenings:
Did you know that the OCDPH Hearing and Vision Team provides hearing and vision screenings at your child’s school?
- Hearing is screened during Kindergarten, 2nd grade, and 4th grade.
- Vision is screened in 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th grades.

Notice for parents with children who have a Programmable Shunt or Implanted Medical Device that could be affected by strong magnets (under School Screenings)

If a child is home schooled, Hearing and Vision screenings are FREE and available by appointment. Call us at: 616-396-5266.
"Parents are a very important part of our education system, feel free to reach out to your Special Education Director with any questions that you have."

~ Katie Flynn OAISD Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning
The community schools strategy—where community partners, school staff, families, and students work together collaboratively to meet the needs of students—is employed by many Ottawa County schools to coordinate in-school and out-of-school resources, supports, and opportunities in order to support student wellness, engagement and success.

Essential components of a community school are:

- Powerful student and family engagement
- Collaborative leadership and shared power and voice
- Expanded and enriched learning opportunities
- Rigorous, community-connected classroom instruction
- Culture of belonging, safety, and care
- Integrated systems of support

The primary goal of Ottawa Community Schools Network is to ensure that all students are physically, emotionally, and socially well, with strong family supports to help ensure each student develops to their own potential.

A Community School Coordinator’s key responsibilities:

- Increase parent engagement
- Increase resources & support for students, families, and staff
- Develop and maintain partnerships with local community partners and service providers
- Connect students to needed services both in-school and out-of-school
- Lead comprehensive needs assessments and school priority setting
- Lead efforts to coordinate and integrate systems and services in order to create conditions in which all students have opportunities and access to grow and learn
- And more!

The role of Community School Coordinators, as a part a Community School team, is to help provide resources and assistance for our families & students in the areas of:

- Mental Health (information and referrals)
- Basic Needs (food, clothing, housing, etc.)
- Dental, Vision, and Medical Services
- Pregnancy
- Attendance Barriers
- Employment
- Parenting Needs
- And MORE! Just ask!

The following schools districts utilize the community schools strategy to meet student needs:

- Allendale Public Schools
- Coopersville Area Public Schools
- Hamilton Community Schools
- Holland Public Schools
- Hudsonville Public Schools
- Jenison Public Schools
- Ottawa Area ISD Programs
- Zeeland Public Schools

Reach out to your school and connect with their Community School Coordinator to receive support if:

- your student is in need of supportive in-school or out-of-school services
- you aren’t sure how to access resources to support your student
- you have barriers to accessing support that you could use help with

For more information about the Ottawa Community Schools Network, contact OCSN Director, Angela Dershem: adershem@oaisd.org.
What fun! The whole CSHCS team offers a huge, heartfelt thank you to the Kaletka family—Cheryl, David, Ashleigh, and Alyssa—who welcomed our families to their beautiful Fellinlove Farm with open arms and created a magical time for all! The amazing pics below show just a small glimpse of the fun.

Be sure to plan a fall outing to this accessible, peaceful, magical farm! See Fellinlove Farm’s fall event schedule here (and on page 11 here too). Learn more about their mission to enrich the lives of individuals with special needs and anyone who visits the farm on the Fellinlove Farm website.

Thank you also to the Rocky’s Rocks team! Everyone had a so much fun painting beautiful rocks with you! Profits from all Rocky’s Rocks’ events help them gift adaptive bikes to special needs programs at local schools.

And thank you to Stephanie Smith from Shoreline-Music; water color drum painting was a blast! Removing the tape from the canvass, revealed Fellinlove Farm spelled out amidst all the splashes of color! Stephanie offers private and small group music classes at her home studio and is experienced with students who have special needs.

Finally, thank you so much to these organizations for braving the raindrops to provide information to families, and fun and games for the kids: Arc of Ottawa County, Benjamin’s Hope, Hard of Hearing Services, IKUS Life Enrichment Services, Kenzie’s Be Café, Maggie’s Be Café, MOKA, Ottawa Co. Collaboration to Strengthen Youth & Families, One Day Niche, & Sensational Steps Therapy.
Renew Mobility
Pediatric Equipment Pop Up
Thursday  September 21st  —  9am to Noon
Hillside Learning Behavioral Center
212 Grove St. Allegan, MI 49010

To receive FREE mobility equipment for your children.
Renew Mobility offers:
- Crutches
- Bath Aides
- Reverse Walkers
- Power Wheelchairs
- Manual Wheelchairs
- Hoyer Lifts
- Pediatric Standers
- Car Seats
- Pediatric Strollers
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services invites you to join them to a celebration to recognize Deaf community, culture, and the importance of accessibility. There will be resource tables, games, and food. Come to socialize and celebrate with the deaf and hard of hearing community.

ASL interpreters will be provided for announcements. If you need additional accommodations, such as DeafBlind interpreters, specific seating arrangements, or other accessibility needs, please email Erica Chapin: community@deafhhs.org

Recommended donation is $5 per attendee. Donate at the door, or when getting your FREE tickets on Eventbrite:

Deaf Awareness Celebration Tickets, Thu, Sep 28, 2023 at 5:00 PM | Eventbrite
EVENTS (continued)

Navigating Healthcare Training for Parents of Children with Epilepsy
Saturday, September 30th, 2023
9:00 am - 3:30 pm on Zoom

This interactive medical advocacy training was created to provide parents with information, tools, and resources to better navigate the healthcare system for their child with epilepsy (seizure disorder).

- Navigating a new diagnosis
- Where to find reliable information and resources
- How to prepare for a successful healthcare visit
- Improving communication and building partnerships with healthcare providers
- Becoming a good advocate
- Helping your child be active in their own care
- Self-care and peer support

Free to attend, registration required. To register, please call Kristen Reese at (517) 324-7396.

Brought to you by the Pediatric Epilepsy Project in partnership with Michigan Family to Family Health Information Center and the Family Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs.

The Shoreline Center presents
Kate Swenson
Author of Forever Boy
Thursday November 2, 2023 at 7pm
The Trillium Event Center
17246 Van Wagoner Rd. Spring Lake, MI 49456
Purchase tickets at the Shoreline Center

Kate Swenson, author of Forever Boy, will share her story, followed by a book signing and meet and greet. Learn about Kate and her family on her Finding Cooper’s Voice Facebook page.

Disclaimer: Special Kids’ Corner Newsletters contain information and resources (with internet links) that may be useful to families with special needs. The content is for your consideration only and not endorsed by Children’s Special Health Care Services of Ottawa County.