

From the Desk of Janine Chittenden, CSHCS Program Supervisor

With the change of seasons, we are reminded that life is full of change as well. Late spring brought news that Kathy Stiffler, CSHSC Director, was resigning to take another State position. In August, we welcomed Mr. Lonnie Barnett as the new CSHCS Division Director. At this years end, we will say good-bye to our wonderful CSHCS nurse and friend, Maggie Boeck. Though she will never be replaced in our hearts, we will soon be hiring a new nurse to fill her position. Speaking of change, please be sure to read the articles on pages four and five regarding CSHCS policy changes and reminders. We hope these articles help our families to better navigate the CSHCS system. There is a new addition to our newsletter, the 'Parents Corner'. If any of you would like to share a personal story about life with your special needs child, I know other families would love to hear your triumphs. We found wonderful community resources to tell you about—two pages full of safety programs for wanderers, early childhood development information and programs, and wonderful groups providing support for families. Enjoy!

Janine S Chittenden BSN, RN



Saying Good Bye to a Friend

In the near future, CSHCS nurse, Maggie Boeck, is planning her retirement after 25 years with the Ottawa County Health Department, the last 8 years with CSHCS. She is excited, and looking forward to spending time with her family, especially her 8 grandchildren.

We are going to miss her immensely, with her caring ways that nurtured us through life's ups and downs and everything in between. Maggie has a true passion for public health and it will be difficult to find a nurse as competent in nursing skills, knowledgeable in area resources, and with the compassion to listen, hear and act in such a kind manner. My favorite memories are of Maggie working with families whose children have complex medical needs. She would first ask the right questions, truly listen, and then share in the joy or sorrow of the situation. While working in a respectful manner, she'd help prioritize steps to promote a child's health. It has been a true pleasure to work along side her, and the entire CSHCS family will miss her.

Maggie says that what she likes best and will miss the most are the families, spending time with the parents and kids and problem solving. "It's neat when you feel you can go into someone's home and do something for the family. While teaching how the program works, I often hear families say they don't know what they would have done without CSHCS." Maggie agrees with the families that "the program is really great."

Please contact Maggie before mid-December to wish her well and share your favorite memory of time you spent together at: 1-616-393-5733 or mboeck@miottawa.org. CSHCS will be hiring a new nurse as Maggie retires. In the meanwhile, continue to contact Maggie. Once Maggie retires, her voicemail and email will further direct you.

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'Special Kids Corner' newsletter was edited by Amy Fontaine. Please send your comments, announcements, and ideas for future newsletters to: afontaine@miottawa.org

**Your Opinion Matters!
CSHCS WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU**

As we continue to strive for excellence in providing service to our clients and families, we would value your feedback about how well we are doing. Please contact any staff member (see contact list below), or Amy Fontaine, our CSHCS parent liaison and editor at: afontaine@miottawa.org.

Additionally, Children's Special Health Care Services always welcomes your comments, ideas, and suggestions about how we can help our CSHCS families. Do you know of a Community Resource that may benefit other CSHCS families, such as a support groups, grant opportunities, or special events? Please let us know so that we may pass the information along. Likewise, if you have a topic or idea that you would like to see in a future edition of our newsletter, the 'Special Kid's Corner', please contact editor, Amy Fontaine at: afontaine@miottawa.org.

**DO WE HAVE YOUR
CORRECT E-MAIL
ADDRESS?**

CSHCS can now use e-mail to keep our families updated about changes in policy or procedure. Likewise, you can e-mail us at any time to ask questions, discuss issues, or to request information and forms. Imagine... no more phone tag, saving trees, and more money to help our CSHCS families.

**Please update your e-mail address today at:
bkempf@miottawa.org.**

CSHCS Staff Contact List

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Although all staff members can assist you with any question or need, specialty areas are listed here:

Contact Mary for: Annual Renewals; Adding Providers; and Financial Concerns such as billing issues, significant income changes, and travel/lodging requests.

Contact Maggie if you live in Holland, Zeeland, Allendale, or West Olive and have questions or issues regarding: Coverage; Medical Information; Plans of Care; and Adding New Medical Diagnosis.

Contact Laura if you live in areas other than Holland, Zeeland, Allendale, or West Olive and have questions or issues regarding: Coverage; Medical Information; Plans of Care; and Adding New Medical Diagnosis.

Contact Janine for help with problems or questions that have not been able to be answered by other staff members.

Contact Brenda for changes in name, address, phone number, e-mail, or insurance information.

Contact Esther to schedule or change an appointment with your CSHCS nurse.



PARENT'S CORNER

MY 'PLAN OF CARE' STORY

Before my triplets blessed my life, I was in ignorant bliss about the realities of motherhood and the challenges of raising children with special needs. Since my children were born, at only 26 weeks and each weighing less than two pounds, they have taught me valuable lessons about love and strength that I didn't even know I needed to learn.

Today, though our days are filled with mostly happy chaos, I must admit that managing the triplet's healthcare needs, appointments, medical information, insurance, IEP meetings... along with the ordinary worries and responsibilities of being a parent can be overwhelming. As a long-time CSHCS family, I have found that my yearly RN visit and the Plans of Care that she sends me, help me to cope by: 1) helping to manage my children's healthcare; 2) organizing large amounts of information; 3) planning for the future; and 4) reflecting on just how far we've come.

When we enrolled in CSHCS, I didn't know that CSHCS Nurses were an available resource for families. If I did know at one point, it was soon lost in the haze of sleepless nights, 24 bottles a day, and even more diapers. When CSHCS called to set up my first annual nurse visit, I must confess that I felt I had neither the time nor the energy for a meeting. I remembering thinking it was a formality to 'get through' so that we could keep receiving CSHCS services.

However, at that first visit, which was interrupted by a plumber, one child home sick, phone calls from school, kids getting off the bus...(that happy chaos I mentioned), I found my CSHCS nurse to be patient, helpful, and a great listener (I can really talk about my kids!). She made valuable suggestions for finding help with health problems and school related issues. My CSHCS Nurse also told me about valuable Community Supports for families like mine that I didn't even know existed. Together we mapped out a plan that included things that I would do (calls, appointments, etc.) and things she would follow up on for me. When she left, I was pleasantly surprised by the results of our meeting

Following my yearly nurse visit, she sends me a summary of our meeting called a Plan of Care (POC). It has everything about my children's health with their complicated histories, doctors' names and addresses, progress we're seeing, and goals we're hoping to accomplish. The final page of the POC is the "To Do" list for each of us that I mentioned. It is so handy to have all the information in one place!

Some years our Plans of Care have simply been a review, with not much call for action. Other years we have dropped some diagnoses, only to add new ones. Then, there is a new round of action, some on my 'To Do' list, and some on the list of my CSHCS nurse. While recently filing my current Plans of Care in my CSHCS binders, I noticed with some surprise, just how far we've come since the days of oxygen, monitors, special feedings, and all those diapers. So, next time you're due for your annual nurse visit, and like me, you are thinking that you just don't have the time or the energy, know that your CSHCS nurse is there to make sure that your family has all the help it needs.



CSHCS POLICY AND PROCEDURE CHANGES AND REMINDERS

CSHCS ANNUAL RENEWAL

There are three parts to the CSHCS annual renewal process. In order to determine continued program eligibility, the State of Michigan requires a financial assessment, and a review of medical information. Additionally, the local CSHCS office will confirm your personal contact and insurance information by sending you an *Annual Update Notice* for review.

The steps families must complete during each part of the CSHCS annual renewal process are listed below:

Financial Assessment: You must complete and return an *Income Review/Payment Agreement form* to the CSHCS Lansing Office. Please wait until you receive your new payment coupon book to begin making payments. However, if your child is covered by Medicaid (MICHild or Healthy Kids) you are not required to submit financial information.

Medical Eligibility: You will receive a *CSHCS Release of Information form(s)* if a medical update is required. You must sign and forward the release form(s) to your child's specialist(s). CSHCS does not accept medical from your child's pediatrician. Additionally, if your child receives out-of-state medical care, this is a separate part of the renewal process. Please refer to the article below for further information.

When your child has more than one diagnosis, each diagnosis is reviewed individually to determine continued eligibility. If a diagnosis is determined to be no longer eligible, you will receive written notification from the CSHCS Lansing office.

Information Verification: You will receive an *Annual Update Notice* from the local CSHCS office of Ottawa County to verify your insurance and personal contact information, including phone numbers, home, and e-mail addresses. It is your responsibility to notify the local CSHCS office of any changes.

If you have any questions or concerns about CSHCS annual renewal, do not hesitate to contact Mary Cushman, CSHCS representative, 616 844-2366 or by e-mail at mcushman@miottawa.org.



CSHCS Out-of-State Medical Care and Travel Renewal

The process of obtaining prior approval as required by CSHCS for out-of-state medical care and travel is a separate process from CSHCS enrollment or annual renewal.

Due to the challenges many of our families have faced in obtaining this prior approval, CSHCS of Ottawa County is requiring families to meet annually with their CSHCS nurse. We hope that by guiding our families through this often confusing process, we can save them time, and help them avoid frustration!

An important reminder—each time your child visits an out-of-state provider, please bring a

Release of Information form to request medical reports be sent to CSHCS. This will help cut down on delays during the out-of-state portion of annual renewal.

For questions about out-of-state medical care and travel, or to set up an annual meeting with your CSHCS nurse, call them directly. Contact information for your CSHCS nurse is listed on page two of this newsletter.

Important Information About CSHCS and MICHILD

When renewing your CSHCS coverage, you may receive a letter requiring you to apply for MICHild/Healthy Kids if your income falls into the lower tier on the payment schedule (\$120).

Failure to apply will result in CSHCS coverage ending in 90 days.

You must do the following if you receive this request:

1) Complete an online application as soon as possible at: www.healthcare4mi.com.

Applying by regular mail can result in a loss of CSHCS coverage after 90 days by delaying the application process.

Important: Be sure to write down or print your application number and password.

These items appear when you open your application and will disappear shortly afterward.

You won't see them again!

2) After applying, call CSHCS with your online application number as soon as possible.

Contact Mary Cushman (616) 844-2366 or mcushman@miottawa.org.

For questions or help with your online application, contact Mary Cushman (616) 844-2366 or mcushman@miottawa.org. For more information on MICHild/Healthy Kids, call 1 (888) 988-6300.



New Form MSA-1656 to Reduce Equipment Delays

In response to parents and provider frustration, the State is working to revise form MSA-1656. This is the form that is filled out to provide justification for NEW or REPLACEMENT mobility device and seating systems. The goal is to revise the form to reduce the State's need to return the form to the medical provider for additional information. This should reduce equipment delays to clients. The form is presently in the review and comment phase through September 12, 2011. Once issued in final form, MSA will make the new form available to providers electronically.

CSHCS on the Web!

Ottawa County CSHCS has a new website. You'll find complete information on CSHCS, copies of *Special Kid's Corner* Newsletters, and links to many useful resources.

Find us at: www.miottawa.org/health.

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT CSHCS

Do you know other families with children with similar healthcare issues? Do you know families who have children with other special healthcare needs? If so, please tell them about Children's Special Health Care Services. CSHCS covers over 2,600 medical diagnoses. You can help spread the word about CSHCS by telling other families, your child's school district and teachers, your child's doctors and specialists, and everyone else you know. At CSHCS, we want to help as many families as possible!



COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT



OTTAWA COUNTY SAFETY PROGRAMS FOR WANDERERS

The Ottawa County Sheriff's Office is pleased to offer two safety programs for adults or children with special needs who are prone to wandering.

SAFE AND SOUND is a free program designed for adults or children with special needs such as: Autism, Dementia, Mental Health Issues, or Memory Impairments, who may be unable to communicate with others if they get separated from their caregivers. The individual, who must be an Ottawa County resident, is issued a bracelet displaying a 'Request for Help' message, the 24/7 Ottawa County Central Dispatch Authority number which will alert the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office, and an identification number that is used to reunite the adult or child with loved ones. For more information or to register your family member, please contact Lt. Lee Hoeksema at (616) 738-4041 or lhoeksema@miottawa.org.

PROJECT LIFESAVER is a tracking system similar to an auto theft Lo-Jack System. Enrollees wear a small personal transmitter that emits an individual radio frequency. If an adult or child goes missing, the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office uses locator equipment to track the radio signal. Lt. Lee Hoeksema, from the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office states, "We are excited about our partnership with Project Lifesaver. With this equipment, we can expedite the recovery of a missing person who is part of the Project Lifesaver Program. When a

loved one goes missing, especially one with Autism or Alzheimer's the panic increases. Add to this the large amount of water in our community and the potential for extreme weather conditions, and the need to find and bring home those missing requires a quick response and recovery. Project Lifesaver is the right tool for the job."

Anyone who lives in Ottawa County and has a history of wandering is eligible for Project Lifesaver. Caregivers must complete an in-depth profile on their loved one, and be committed to daily battery checks. There is a start-up cost of approximately \$300 to purchase a transmitter, a year's supply of batteries, and a battery checker, along with a small monthly fee.

For a limited time, Project Lifesaver is offering family stipends to 1,800 families to cover the cost of the first year. For more on the Project Lifesaver Family Stipend, contact Scott Nester at: familystipend-snester@projectlifesaver.org or 1-755-546-5502 ext. 112.

Additionally, the Autism Society of West Shore is offering scholarships for families with an individual on the Autism Spectrum who have a history of wandering.

To enroll your loved one, to apply for a family scholarship, or to purchase transmitters or supplies independently, you need to contact the host agency for Ottawa County, the Autism Society of West Shore at: 1-800-224-4208 or by e-mail: asws_contact@yahoo.com.

To learn more about Project Lifesaver visit their website at <http://www.projectlifesaver.org>.

AUTISM SOCIETY OF WEST SHORE



The Autism Society of West Shore (ASWS) provides support to West Michigan families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder through a host of special activities, a network of resources and information referrals,

and community awareness and education. The goal of ASWS is to support families in helping persons with autism spectrum disorders to reach their fullest potential.

Services provided by ASWS include: The 'HOPE' bi-monthly newsletter; Monthly informal social groups for those who love a person with autism; Regular meetings featuring guest

speakers and workshops; Family activities; Scholarships for education, treatment, and Project Lifesaver; and Referral information and networking.

For more information, including a calendar of meetings and events, contact the ASWS by phone at: 616 395-3222 or by e-mail: asws_contact@yahoo.com.

Early On Michigan

Isn't it amazing how quickly children grow, learn, and develop during the first three years of life? Have you ever wondered if your child is growing or developing like they should be? Do you suspect your child has a developmental delay or related disability? If you have any concerns, help is available.

Early On is right here in West Michigan to help!

An Early On coordinator will provide a **free** evaluation of your child's development. They will be able to help you find services to meet the needs of your child. Many of these services may be free or low-cost if your child qualifies.

The coordinator will provide ideas on how to help your child grow, learn, and develop. They will help you develop a plan to meet the developmental needs of your baby as well as the needs of your family in helping your child. After a plan is developed, your Early On coordinator will help coordinate the services outlined in your babies plan.

Early On Michigan services can include:

Speech pathology, audiology, occupational therapy, psychological services, service coordination, diagnostic medical services, early identification, screening, assessment services, health services, nursing services, social work services, vision services, special equipment, nutritional counseling, transportation, counseling (family, group, individual), family skills training, home visits, and special instruction.

Call 1-800-Early On or 616-748-6048

For more information about your child's development, you can fill out an online developmental screener called, the "Ages and Stages Questionnaire" at the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District website: www.aisd.org.

Whole Family Connection

On the Web at: wholefamilyottawa.com

Whole Family Connection serving Ottawa County is an interactive web-based program that helps you identify what you need for your family, and then links you to available services. Whole Family Connection is free, easy, and completely private.

Whole Family Connection gives families access to:

Health care	Special Needs Programs	Safety Programs
Pre-natal Care	Child Care/Preschool	Substance Abuse
Youth Activities	School Preparation	Parent Education
Insurance	Faith-Based Programs	And More!

Whole family connection is brought to you by a collaboration of many local agencies. It is being headed up by the Great Start Collaborative of Ottawa County and Pathways MI.

Children's Museum Hosts Conner's Friends

The Grand Rapids Children's Museum will be holding it's annual Conner's Friends: a FREE special event for children and families affected by autism on Wednesday, November 16th from 6-8 p.m.

Modifications are made throughout the museum to reduce noise and visual stimulation. Special sensory activities will be added to the museum's current exhibits, a music therapist will perform calming music and interact with the children, and themed activity tents will be set up for children who wish to engage in individual play.

An RSVP is required to attend the event, and admission is free. Valet parking will also be free again this year to ensure a smooth transition into the museum. If you are interested in attending this event or would like to volunteer, please contact Megan at 616-235-4726 ext. 212 or email her at: msierz@grcm.org or for more information.

Play 'n Learn Playgroups

Designed for families with children birth through age five. Each session is FREE and will be based on a children's book and include a story, finger plays, crafts and activities, and a snack. All centered around the story.

Each family will receive a children's book to take home. Information on child development and reading readiness will be available for parents.

Playgroups meet at different times and places throughout Ottawa County. **To find future dates, times, and exact locations or for any questions call: 1-877-702-8600 ext. 4019 or ext. 4106. For Bilingual Playgroups call ext. 4033.**

Play 'n Learn Playgroups are brought to you by: Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, Early On Michigan, Great Start, and Parents as Teachers.

November 2011 Dates and Towns:

Wed. Nov. 9	Spring Lake
Fri. Nov. 11	Allendale
Mon. Nov. 14	Zeeland
Tues. Nov. 15	Grand Haven
Tues. Nov. 15 *Infants	Holland
Wed. Nov 16 *Infants	Spring Lake
Thur. Nov. 17*Bilingual	Holland
Fri. Nov. 18	Holland
Mon. Nov. 21	Hudsonville
Wed. Nov 23	Hamilton
Mon. Nov. 28	Coopersville