



Strengthening Families to Advance Equitable Outcomes: Aligning health and social care through Community-Centered Approaches to Address Social Determinants of Health

Overview

Lutheran Services in America is embarking on a multi-year initiative to reshape and foster alignment between health and social care systems to strengthen families. Our focus aims to improve outcomes for children, youth and families enrolled in Medicaid, building on [our long-standing work and results](#). Specifically, through the [Results Innovation Lab](#) and [Family Stabilization Initiative](#), we seek to better leverage the capacity and leadership of the Lutheran Services in America member network.

Lutheran Services in America is one of the nation's largest networks of health and human service providers with a mission to cultivate caring communities that advance health and opportunity for all. Together, we are 300 nonprofit organizations across 1,400 U.S. communities with more than \$26 billion in combined annual services.

Lutheran social service organizations have been working in, with and for their communities for decades — and in some instances, for more than a century. As faith-based, trusted and community-centered leaders our aim is to develop partnerships, including with Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to improve individual and community outcomes. We are pleased to partner with [United Healthcare](#) as we seek to expand engagement with other MCOs along with philanthropic partners.

As part of this effort, we will:

- ❖ Disseminate case studies and a series of briefs based in-part on Lutheran Services in America member efforts to understand new and innovative approaches, as well as literature review and environmental scan of on-going efforts to align health and social care.
- ❖ Convene national networks and leaders from health/behavioral health systems and providers, social service organizations, payers, community-based nonprofits, policymakers, people with lived expertise, along with community and other key stakeholders.
- ❖ Work through our respective local member organizations in Pennsylvania and Virginia to pilot efforts that seek to center and engage community voice and individuals with lived experience; and
- ❖ Disseminate a “blueprint” to identify and define the changes necessary to improve practice, policy and systems to catalyze and foster coordination, connection and alignment that advance health and equity so all families can thrive.

Goals of the Initiative

Through this initiative, our shared aim is to align data-informed, community-centered approaches that have sustainable reimbursement and financing mechanisms to better address social determinants of health (SDOH) and that improve equitable outcomes for children and families. Specifically, our work is guided through the following areas of focus:

- Spurring a **shift** from segmented services provided to individual family members **to a family-centered approach**, including adopting measures and metrics related to family-based and community outcomes.
- Improving **cross-system collaboration to ensure alignment** to better address social drivers of family stability and well-being by meeting holistic health and mental health-related social needs, including:
 - Access to food, housing, employment, childcare, among other services.
 - Support to address substance use disorder and mental health challenges within families (across all life stages), including parents, caregivers and children.
- **Building capacity and enhancing the capability** of providers, community-based organizations (CBOs), and payers to ensure resources, including adequate reimbursement, and coordination are in place to better address the holistic needs of families.
- Applying a **multicultural equity lens** that considers family structure and traditions, while elevating the voices and lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC).

Guiding Principles

The following principles and objectives will guide the overall effort:

- Articulate a clear **value proposition** to deepen and expand coordination and alignment of care with appropriate services and payment to better address the holistic needs of families.
- Identify **equitable practice, policy and systems changes** needed to catalyze more efficient and effective approaches to improve health outcomes so families can thrive.
- Identify the most effective ways to **engage community and family voice** so efforts reflect and address the highest priority needs for people and places.
- Explore the **workforce, data and technology considerations** necessary to support and better align the delivery of quality and equitable care and services and identify the appropriate and needed supporting resources including payment.
- Identify the **critical success factors for high-performing partnerships** and collaboration to advance policy and systems change, especially the ways in which CBOs and Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) coordinate and align for improved outcomes.
- Highlight the **federal, state and local policy changes** necessary to broadly advance the conditions for families to have their needs met in a sustainable way.

Join Us!

For more information about this initiative, please contact Susan Newton, Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, at snewton@lutheranservices.org.