

DHHR's Bureau for Children and Families Launches Safe at Home



October is a huge month for the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. We implemented our Safe at Home West Virginia demonstration project in 11 counties across the state. This initiative gives youth ages 12-17 and their families the opportunity for safe, successful and healthy lives by providing wraparound services to children, family members, caregivers and foster parents to support them in developing and maintaining a stable and loving environment in their home community.

We have been working diligently over the last few months to prepare for this exciting new program. Our Bureau for Children and Families (BCF) awarded grants to licensed behavioral health agencies to act as local coordinating agencies to hire wraparound facilitators to provide high fidelity wraparound services in the 11 Phase 1 counties. We are so pleased with these agencies and their commitment to working with our staff in the target areas. They already have trained facilitators on board and we are encouraged by their commitment to the project.

August and September were dedicated to finalizing policies and procedures and other important materials like parent handbooks and provider requirements as well as training of BCF staff and wraparound facilitators. I am so proud of the staff in the Bureau for Children and Families for their dedication to training in preparation for our implementation and appreciate all their efforts.

Members of the community have also been involved in Regional Summits and Community Collaboratives, which include the voices of education, community service agencies, behavioral health and other community partners along with BCF. These groups have completed community needs assessments for the core wraparound services. The Collaboratives are using this information to determine what services must be developed within their communities.

I have witnessed coordination, collaboration and communication on so many levels as this entire effort has been a wonderful example of private/public partnerships. Our judiciary has also been involved and BCF teams will continue to meet with them to discuss Safe at Home and what it means to West Virginia's children and families. All of this work has led us to where we are today.

We have reviewed and identified cases in Berkeley, Boone, Cabell, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Morgan, Putnam and Wayne counties for referral for the Safe at Home program, and will continue to do so as we move closer to serving children in the state's 55 counties. I appreciate everyone who has played a role in helping us launch Safe at Home West Virginia and am confident this program will set many on the path to a better quality of life. Whether you are a law maker, BCF team member, community leader or provider, as a supporter of Safe at Home, you are making a difference.

Bureau for Children and Families Participates in National Conference

A group of five representatives from the Bureau for Children and Families (BCF) attended the federal Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project meeting in Washington, DC on September 1-3, 2015, for West Virginia's project, Safe at Home West Virginia. All states with Title IV-E waiver projects were required to attend the meeting, and other states were invited to attend. There were representatives from 30 states at the meeting, in addition to representatives from the project evaluators, federal representatives, and representatives from the new Capacity Building Center for States. West Virginia representatives met for technical assistance with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and Capacity Building Center representatives to discuss the Safe at Home West Virginia implementation.

The ACF representatives were very complimentary of the work being done in West Virginia and were encouraged by the Department's progress. Topics discussed at the meeting included current national data trends; showcases of other states' Title IV-E waiver projects; using evidence-based practices (EBPs); using continuous quality improvement to strengthen implementation fidelity; responding to organizational and workforce challenges; utilizing implementation science; monitoring performance on statewide data indicators; and evaluating staggered rollouts in addition to workshops on fiscal operational issues and waiver reporting.

DHHR Names Local Coordinating Agencies

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) Cabinet Secretary Karen L. Bowling recently announced the selection of licensed behavioral health providers to act as local coordinating agencies for the Bureau for Children and Families' (BCF) Safe at Home West Virginia demonstration project.

The grants will provide funds to support the initial development of wraparound programs and were awarded to Burlington Family Services; Braley and Thompson, Inc.; Children's Home Society; KVC Behavioral Healthcare of WV; National Youth Advocate Program; NECCO; Pressley Ridge; and Pretera.

"We are encouraged by the selected agencies' partnership in our efforts to ensure children have the opportunity for safe, healthy and successful lives in their home communities," said Bowling. "These providers have trained facilitators on board and have demonstrated commitment to working with our staff in the Safe at Home phase one target areas."

The goal of Safe at Home West Virginia, reducing the state's reliance on in-state and out-of-state group care for youth ages 12-17, will be accomplished using the wraparound model, a planning process that helps ensure youth grow up in their homes and communities when safely possible. With help from one or more wraparound facilitators, key players in the child or youth's family work together, coordinate activities, and blend perspectives of the family's situation. DHHR will develop community services specifically targeted at youths' needs, while also addressing comprehensive needs of the family.

The selected local coordinating agencies are tasked with hiring wraparound facilitators responsible for coordinating the individualized services identified for each youth and their family in their homes. Local coordinating agencies are also tasked with providing those services or securing them from other sources.

BCF Commissioner Nancy Exline said, "It has been an absolute pleasure watching these public/private partnerships unfold. I look forward to the exciting days ahead with Safe at Home West Virginia and the opportunity that we have to change the way we work together as communities to support our youth and families in their homes."

Stephen R. Tuck, CEO of the Children's Home Society of West Virginia, agrees: "The Children's Home Society welcomes the opportunity to be a part of this collaborative effort while furthering our own mission to promote the well-being of all children. The Society encourages our community members, our churches, schools, civic groups and businesses to join with us to ensure every child has the opportunity to be "Safe at Home" with their families, in their own communities."

Bureau for Children and Families Staff Excited about Safe at Home



As of October 1, 2015, DHHR's Bureau for Children and Families (BCF) is working to reduce the high number of children placed in residential placements with a demonstration program called Safe at Home West Virginia, which will initially serve 12-17 year olds in 11 counties. The program provides West Virginia youth and their families the opportunity for safe, successful and healthy lives by providing wraparound services to children, family members, caregivers and foster parents to support them in developing and maintaining a stable and loving environment.

Staff across the state are excited about this new initiative and are working to promote the wraparound process that will guide Safe at Home West Virginia. The Kanawha County DHHR office recently developed two bulletin boards featuring the [10 principles of the wraparound process](#), one in the customer lobby and one in the social services hallway.

"We want to emphasize the importance of Safe at Home and the wraparound model with our staff, community partners and customers," said BCF Community Services Manager Amy Lawson Booth. "Thanks to MaryBeth Thaxton for her work in creating these great educational tools which align with the ongoing efforts to spread the word about this demonstration project."

Phase one of Safe at Home West Virginia launched in Berkeley, Boone, Cabell, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Morgan, Putnam and Wayne counties. The long-term goal is to serve all children in the state's 55 counties over the course of the next two years. Visit www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/safe/ to learn more.

