

WHAT IS THE SYSTEM OF CARE?

System of Care is a framework for designing mental health services and supports for children and youth who have a serious emotional disturbance, and their families, through a collaboration across and involving public and private agencies, families and youth. In Nebraska, it is a new way of doing business that brings together committed partnerships under one umbrella.

A System of Care connects and coordinates the work of State child-serving agencies, nonprofit and local governments, behavioral health care providers, families and patient advocates. It helps children, youth, and families function better at home, in school, in the community, and in life.

Does Nebraska have a System of Care?

In 2013-2014, over 1,000 families, youth, service providers and other stakeholders were involved in the development of a System of Care Strategic Plan. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Behavioral Health received a grant in 2016 to expand and sustain the System of Care. Partners from across the state are working to implement the elements which were identified through the System of Care strategic plan.

Why are states implementing Systems of Care?

Systems of Care have transformed children's mental health services and improved the lives of children, youth and their families. The approach has gained wide acceptance due to the recognition that children with serious and complex mental health needs are frequently involved with multiple child-serving agencies.

Positive outcomes for children and youth have been achieved through the increased use of home and community-based services and supports. States are coordinating the planning and delivery of services within a system of care infrastructure that addresses the unique strengths and needs of each child and family.

What do we want to achieve with a System of Care in Nebraska?

A statewide readiness assessment was conducted in 2013 among families, youth, service providers and other stakeholders. It identified priority areas including ensuring access to an array of services and supports, coordinating and integrating service and support programs across child-serving agencies, leveraging and maximizing use of all funding sources and monitoring quality and outcomes through a cross-agency approach. To ensure these goals are met and families are being better served, a baseline data analysis was completed as a starting point.

The baseline data for the System of Care, inclusive of data from the Divisions of Medicaid, Behavioral Health, and Children and Family Services/Nebraska Families Collaborative and the Office of Probation, represents 37,996 unique youth involved with any of these agencies for any period of time during FY15.

Nebraska's goals include:

- ▶ Lowering the average age (in years) of first system contact (currently 9.38 years for Nebraska.)
- ▶ Reducing the percentage of youth placed out of home (currently 17.7 percent for Nebraska.)
- ▶ Decreasing the average annual cost per youth (currently \$4,392.90 in Nebraska.)
- ▶ Improve school attendance rate (currently 95.2 percent in Nebraska, according to the Department of Education.)

What are the next steps/timeline for System of Care in Nebraska?

A System of Care in Nebraska will be fully operational in three to five years. Through 2017, the following will be accomplished:

- ▶ Operationalizing the strategies for system coordination across state, regional and local leadership teams and workgroups.
- ▶ Implementing a phased work plan.
- ▶ Developing and implementing a communication plan to educate partners, families and stakeholders.