



Transforming Health Outcomes for Children in Foster Care



Coordinated Care of Washington, Inc.

Presented by:



Deborah Rodriguez, MD, FAAP
Program Director, Foster Care Center of Excellence
Northwest Pediatric Center



Maureen Sorenson, LICSW
Senior Director, Foster Care Operations
Coordinated Care

Statement of Gratitude

We offer this statement of gratitude for the Indigenous lands that hold important teachings, where language and culture are interwoven to create strength and resiliency for American Indian and Alaska Native youth in care.

As we gather today, we invite in these teachings that will help us better serve our youth:

- **Land is sacred**
- **People and environment are all connected**
- **Time is measured in seasons**
- **Comfort is in the quality of our relationships**



Meet CJ

- 37 weeks old, born to 28yo no PNC
 - THC, methamphetamine, fentanyl (mother and newborn)
 - 2 other children in kinship care (Grandmother)
 - NICU x 5 days to manage NAS and feeding
 - Emergency placement with foster family
- Reunified with mother, 9 months
- Return to foster care, 13 months



Apple Health Core Connections

Apple Health Core Connections

- AHCC is Washington's statewide Medicaid managed care plan for children and youth in foster care
- Administered by Coordinated Care in partnership with DCYF and the Health Care Authority
- Serves 20,000+ children, youth, and young adults connected to foster care.
- Designed for continuity, coordination, and healing, not episodic care.



AHCC Program Objectives

- Whole-person health across our System of Care (SOC)
 - Integrated physical and behavioral coordination
- Trauma-Informed, recovery-focused
- Establish a PCP and medical home
- Increase access: right care, right time
 - WISe, behavioral, preventive and specialist
 - Best practices and Evidence Based Practices
- Address Social Drivers of Health

Apple Health Core Connections (AHCC) Covers

20,000+ members statewide

- Children/youth in out-of-home placement
- Adoption Support
- Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)
- Extended foster care (18-21)
- Alumni of foster care (18-26)
- Children/youth reunited with their parents, one year post dependency*
- Youth enrolled in Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program (through age 21)**



*Parents must meet income and resource requirements.

** Youth enrolled in the URM program remain eligible through age 26 if they meet qualified alien status at age 21.

***Tribes have their own separate child welfare programs and can choose to opt their children/youth in. Forms for Tribes to opt in can be found on the HCA Website at <https://www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-medical-dental-or-vision-care/foster-care>

Barriers to Efficient Quality Care

- Incomplete Medical/Family Histories
- Stringent System of Care Requirements
- Delays in Getting Information to Caregivers
- Lack of Continuity of Care
- Provider Shortages
- Burdened Families (general life stressors)
- Lack of Transportation or Ability to Coordinate Schedules



Special Healthcare Needs Of Children In Foster Care

- Higher prevalence of physical health issues
- Higher rates of behavioral health issues
- Frequent placement changes and inconsistent access
- Fragmented systems



Working with Families Experiencing Stress & Trauma

- Acknowledge stress response
- Use reflective listening, empathetic acknowledgment, and clear supportive language
- Create safe clinic spaces: predictable routines, private conversations, welcoming visuals
- Outreach: connect families with parenting programs, mental health, early intervention



Care Coordination

Our Care Management Team can help...

- Find a provider accepting new patients (e.g. specialists, therapists, etc.)
- Coordinate or manage care for a child with multiple needs, services and providers
- Members and caregivers understand and deal with chronic diseases
- Access Durable Medical Equipment and medical supplies
- Access SUD treatment and varying levels of behavioral health services
- Make connections to community resources and supports
- Suicide prevention and safety planning

Health Care Coordination

- Our staff will
 - Partner with caseworkers and caregivers to identify goals and
 - Determine how to achieve those goals together
- Health Care Coordination can be
 - A one-time request
 - Ongoing until issues are resolved
 - Reopened at any time

Foster Care Centers of Excellence (FCCOE)

A FCCOE serves as an integrated and trauma informed hub. The FCCOE can provide services to members on a one-time basis or serve as a Primary Care Provider. They can provide specialized services for AHCC members including:

- **An EPSDT/Well Child exam ideally within 5 days but no later than within 30 days of entering care** (Or, if needed, an Initial Health Screening within 5 days.)
- Behavioral health services
- Referrals to specialists
- Help getting Durable Medical Equipment
- Referrals to vision and dental services
- Prescriptions
- Lab tests and x-rays



**Foster Care
Center of Excellence**
designated by **Coordinated Care**

CoordinatedCareHealth.com/fccoe

What is a Foster Care Center of Excellence (FCCOE)?

A designation for medical homes that meet 50+ specialized criteria including:

- Trauma informed and healing centered care
- Expertise in child welfare timelines and legal requirements
- Integrated behavioral health and care coordination
- Consistent documentation that supports court and case needs



AHCC Foster Care Center of Excellence:

Partnership Strategy

- Child Welfare
- Managed Care (AHCC)
- Provider Clinics
- Community Organizations

Core Principles:

- Comprehensive Care
- Coordinated Care
- Committed Providers
- Collaboration from referral to service delivery

Why a Healing Centered Approach Matters

Children and youth involved in dependency experience:

- High rates of complex trauma and disrupted attachment
- Frequent placement changes → fragmented care
- Missed well-child visits, delayed immunizations and untreated behavioral health needs
- Disproportionate emergency department and crisis system use

*** Courts and legal systems see the downstream effects – not the missed preventative care



Why a Specialized Model is Necessary

Traditional primary care settings are often not equipped to:

- Understand dependency timelines
- Complete required exams on court driven deadlines
- Coordinate medical information across placements
- Support youth with high ACE scores and behavioral health needs

FCCOEs fill this gap intentionally



Foster Care Centers of Excellence: Part of the Foster Care Ecosystem

FCCOEs work with, not parallel to:

- DCYF Caseworkers and supervisors
- DCYF CHET Teams
- GALs and Child Advocates
- Behavioral Health Providers

This is a **cross-system collaboration**, not siloed care.



Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered Care (In Practice)

FCCOEs operationalize trauma-informed care by:

- Minimizing re-traumatization during exams
- Creating predictable calm clinical environments
- Using strengths-based child centered language
- Partnering with caregivers, caseworkers, and Coordinated Care
- Treating the whole child mind and body



The Model at a Glance:

FCCOE Model Includes:

- Initial Health Screen
- Comprehensive EPSDT within 30 days
- Integrated behavioral health supports
- Referrals to a developmental specialty and therapeutic services
- Connection to AHCC Care Managers and Health Liaisons



Foster Care Medical Home

- Centralized, coordinated healthcare model
- Continuous primary care provider
- Integrated behavioral health
- Care coordination across systems
- Trauma-informed approach



The NWPC Model: Whole Child, Whole Family

- Interdisciplinary team:
 - Pediatric providers trained in trauma
 - Behavioral health clinicians
 - Social workers
 - Registered dietitians
 - Substance use expertise



The NWPC Model – Whole Child, Whole Family

- Whole Child Care
 - Physical health
 - Mental health
 - Developmental needs
 - Nutrition
 - Trauma history
- Whole Family Care
 - Supports parents and caregivers
 - Education and coaching
 - Behavioral Support
 - Care Coordination navigation



Clinical Pathway

Office
Contact

- Behavioral Health Team
- Caseworker
- Social Worker

Clinic Visit

- AHCC Case Management
- Dietician
- Community Resources

Outcomes

NWPC OUTCOMES

- **Every** child and family has immediate access to behavioral health services, a dietician, and social work services
- 60% of patients follow through with referral services

NATIONAL OUTCOMES

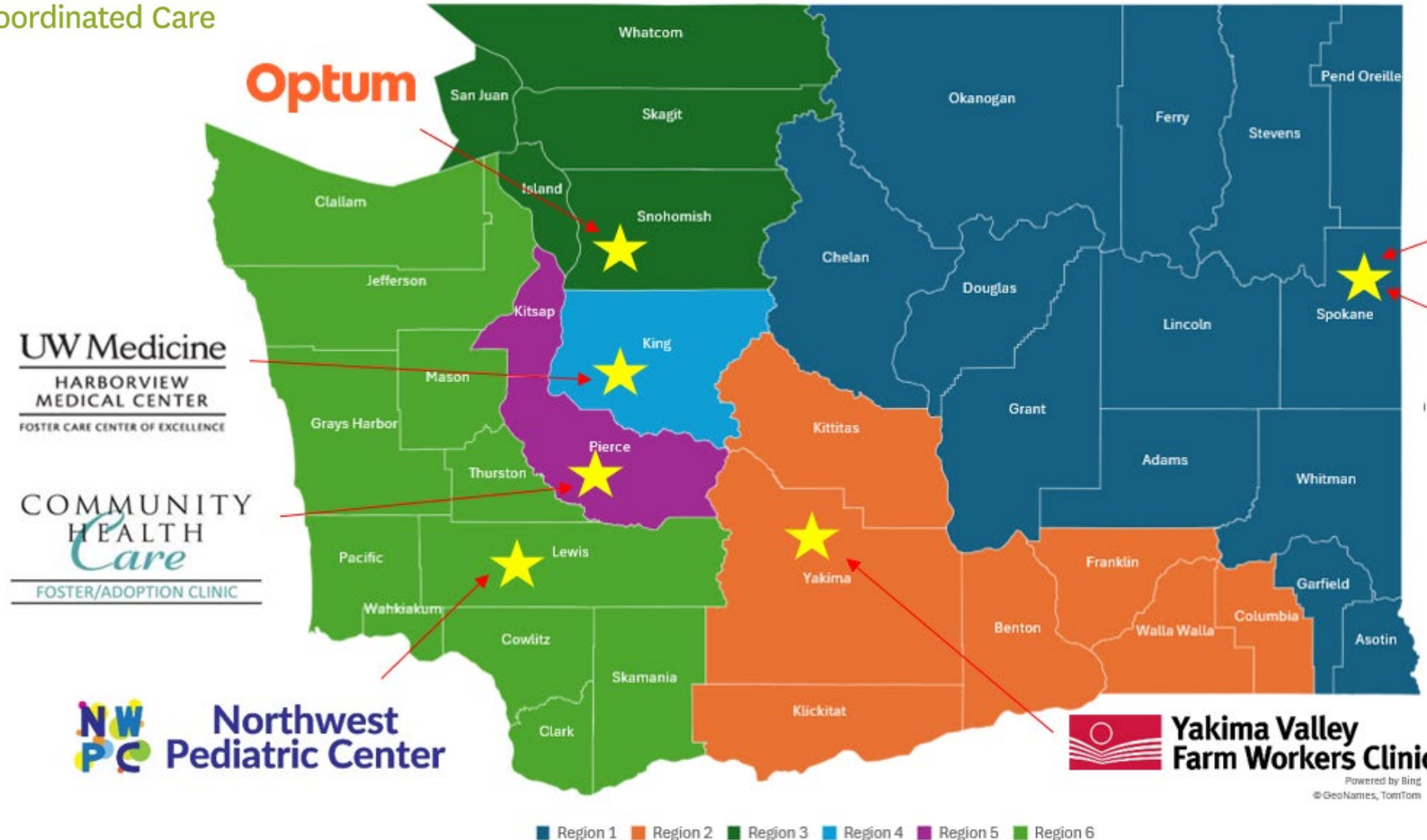
- National data – less than 100%



Foster Care Center of Excellence

designated by **Coordinated Care**

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Regional State Map



UW Medicine
HARBORVIEW
MEDICAL CENTER
FOSTER CARE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

COMMUNITY HEALTH
Care
FOSTER/ADOPTION CLINIC

NW PC Northwest Pediatric Center

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic

EXCELSIOR
FAMILY MEDICINE

MT. SPOKANE
pediatrics

Statewide Impact: The Evidence

Compared to non-FCCOE clinics, Foster Care Centers of Excellence demonstrate:

- 25.4% higher rates of well child visits
- 14% higher immunization rates
- More referrals to AHCC Care Coordination

These are system level improvements – not isolating the clinic successes.



Why This Matters for Legal Permanency

Reliable medical home support:

- More complete court reports
- Clear documentation for evaluation and services
- Earlier identification of developmental and behavioral health needs
- Stability during placement transitions

Health stability supports permanency outcomes



A Caregiver Voice

“I felt listened to I felt heard I walked away with clear next steps for support.”

- A FCCOE Caregiver

Equity and access considerations:

- Experts at working with both parents and caregivers
- Culturally Appropriate Care
- Trauma informed care for LGBTQIA+ youth
- Support for placement instability
- Reduced reliance on emergency services



Contact Us



Deborah Rodriguez, MD, FAAP
Program Director, Foster Care Center of Excellence
Northwest Pediatric Center
drodriguez@nwpeds.com | (360) 736-6778



Maureen Sorenson, LICSW
Senior Director, Foster Care Operations
Coordinated Care
Maureen.Sorenson@coordinatedcarehealth.com





coordinated care[™]
Apple Health Core Connections[™]

Thank You.