Wisconsin Connections Initiative on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other Developmental Disabilities (DD)

The Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program within the Department of Health Services has been awarded a three year federal grant, as part of the Combating Autism Act Initiative, to strengthen the state’s infrastructure to improve services for children with ASD and other developmental disabilities. The CYSHCN Program was awarded this grant based on the fact that its mission is to promote family-centered, community-based, culturally-competent, coordinated care for all children and youth with special needs. The University of Wisconsin-Madison Waisman Center’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, is a key collaborator with project staff and has an integrated management team which links several Waisman and CYSHCN Program early identification initiatives.

What is being done Regionally?
Regional Resource Mapping
Utilizing the established five Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN), each Regional Center brings together a Regional Core Team representing a diversity of perspectives and experiences. The Core Team conducts Regional Resource Mapping which enhances connections between partners involved with ASD/DD and identifies and catalogues regional assets and gaps.

Regional Trainings
Each Regional Center will facilitate two training strands over the next three years: One on early identification, screening and referral within primary care; and one on ASD to community providers and families.

What is being done Statewide?

Community of Practice on ASD and other developmental disabilities (CoP on ASD/DD)
A statewide CoP on ASD/DD will bring together a wide variety of partners including families, physicians, support groups and organizations. The CoP is an opportunity to learn about research of national significance on ASD; a place to collaborate and strengthen connections; a time to break into Practice Groups around a common interest to share work.

Outreach
Wisconsin will implement the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Act Early outreach campaign to increase awareness, support, evidence-based diagnosis and referral of ASD to impact communities, parents and professionals.

Electronic Repository
We will use the work of the regional teams and the CoP ASD/DD to bring together national, statewide and local resources and help families, communities and medical professionals find the information they need.

What will be the results?
Connections builds on and strengthens the foundation for long-term collaboration among families, organizations, communities and professionals resulting in the following outcomes: 1) the implementation of medical home quality improvements to increase appropriate developmental screening, identification and referrals; 2) the resource mapping process to strengthen the First Step data base and modify resource information for target groups; and 3) the infrastructure building of the Regional Centers for CYSHCN to enhance their ability to provide information, referrals, technical assistance and training in each region.

How can you get involved?
Learn more about Connections by contacting Tim Markle at Timothy.Markle@dhs.wisconsin.gov or call him at 1-608-261-6879.