

# Case Study: Implementing the National Standards for Systems of Care for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs

## ▶ Washington's Title V CYSHCN Program: Using the National Standards as a Framework to Sustain Statewide Systems Improvements

### Systems Integration and Policy Influence through Use of the National Standards

The Office of Family and Community Health Improvement in the Prevention and Community Health division of the Department of Health operates Washington's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program. This office is thus responsible for management of the state's Title V MCH block grant activities.<sup>i</sup> Washington's Title V action plan for CYSHCN is designed to address barriers that impede access to necessary health and related services and supports for this population. Washington aligned its CYSHCN action plan with the National Standards for Systems of Care for CYSHCN (the National Standards) and used the National Standards as an information source to aid in developing strategic partnerships and implementing state initiatives. Washington also uses the National Standards to inform its efforts to develop, advance, and/or implement policies that support and sustain statewide systems improvements, community supports, and resources for CYSHCN and their families.

### Influencing Policies to Improve Insurance Coverage for CYSHCN

One of Washington's Title V program objectives is to improve access to adequate public and private health insurance for CYSHCN. To achieve this, Washington develops state-specific activities to blend system principles, guidelines, and measures with the National Standards domains, including Access to Care and Insurance and Financing. The Title V program assesses its progress by tracking its effort to influence key policies that impact insurance adequacy for Washington CYSHCN.

While the Title V program does not often have decision-making authority over many policies that directly impact insurance adequacy for CYSHCN, Title V staff often have relationships with the agencies or entities that do have decision-making authority. The Title V program can impact policy by convening partners; providing technical assistance; educating and informing stakeholders; and assisting decision-makers in reviewing policies, identifying alternate policy solutions, identifying barriers to policy implementation, and facilitating policy enactment. As an example, the Title V CYSHCN program staff promoted the National Standards with multiple system partners and used opportunities with Washington's Health Care Authority to share the Standards and suggest adding supporting language into the

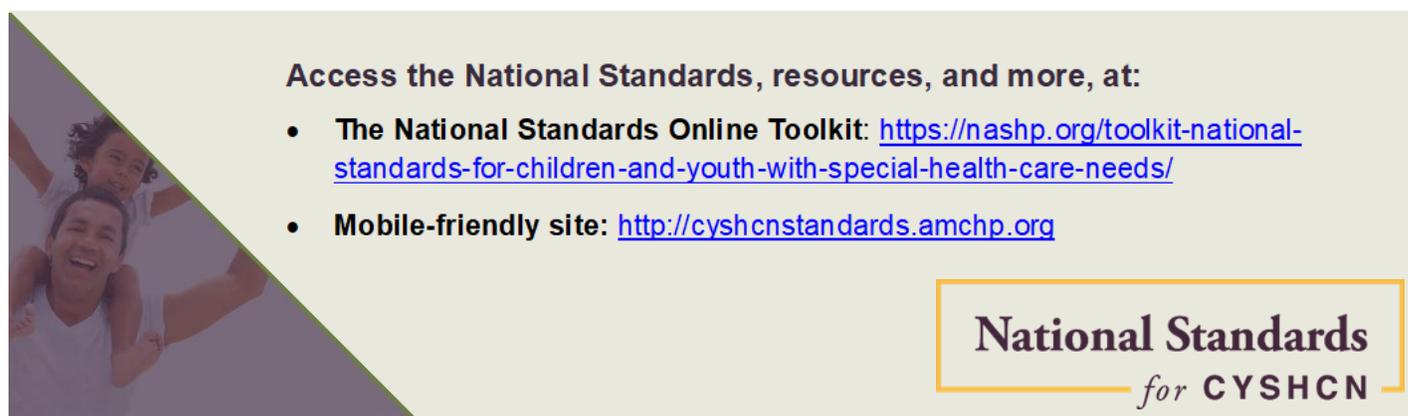


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procurement processes for publicly-funded managed care contracts. Washington also disseminated the National Standards as a core foundation for the development of community programs for CYSHCN, and advocated for policies that ensure all children, including CYSHCN, have access to medically necessary services and that those services are delivered in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways. Other examples of Washington's strategies to impact policies aligned with the National Standards include: leveraging relationships with the Health Care Authority and the Medicaid managed care organizations on simplifying, streamlining, or removing prior authorization from services for CYSHCN (e.g. physical, occupational and speech therapies); and educating partners and other entities to ensure that CYSHCN have access to their medical benefits.

## Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Washington found the National Standards to be a helpful tool to educate partners on what their systems of care should look like and to frame conversations around systems and services for CYSHCN. The National Standards provided accountability to the Title V action plan and assisted in identifying changes in policies and practices to improve systems, community supports, and resources for CYSHCN and their families. All new staff orientation for local area CYSHCN planning includes a review of the National Standards and how this can assist lead agencies in exploring how to implement and plan activities in their local communities. Recipients of this overview have informed the CYSHCN Program that this information was helpful; the state plans to continue to monitor how the National Standards have impacted planning at the local level. Washington's Title V CYSHCN program will continue to use the National Standards as a guide to identify gaps, issues, and opportunities to assist families where current levels of coverage are not meeting the needs of CYSHCN. Strategies to improve policies and practice will include collaborating to improve insurance authorization processes; partnering with family-led organizations to standardize and streamline coverage and access and include funds in contracts with partners to reimburse parents for participation where appropriate; and work with Medicaid to leverage Medicaid resources where appropriate.



**Access the National Standards, resources, and more, at:**

- **The National Standards Online Toolkit:** <https://nashp.org/toolkit-national-standards-for-children-and-youth-with-special-health-care-needs/>
- **Mobile-friendly site:** <http://cyshcnstandards.amchp.org>

**National Standards**  
*for* **CYSHCN**

<sup>i</sup> Washington Department of Health. Maternal and Child Health Services Title V Block Grant, Washington: FY 2019 Application/ FY 2017 Annual Report. Available at: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/8330/140-139-MCH-ServicesTitleVBlockGrantWashington.pdf>