

Medical Home for Children With Special Health Care Needs Resulted in Fewer Hospitalizations & Missed School Days

Parents of children with special health care needs reported that their children had fewer hospitalizations and missed fewer school days while in a three-year family-centered medical home pilot. Parents reported less worry about their children's health, and more likely to have a written health care plan when their children's care was coordinated through a medical home.

These are findings of a report entitled "Improvement in the Family-Centered Medical Home Enhances Outcomes for Children and Youth With Special Healthcare Needs" by Jeanne McAllister, BSN, MS, MHA; Kathleen Sherrieb, MS, Dr.PH; and W. Carl Cooley, M.D. The researchers sought to evaluate the effectiveness of using medical homes as a coordination point for pediatric health care. The researchers are affiliated with the Center for Medical Home Improvement (CMHI), a center of excellence within the Crotched Mountain Foundation. The work described in the study is supported by the U.S. Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Children with Special Health Care Needs. CMHI recruited 10 primary care practices from rural, suburban, and urban areas in New Hampshire and Vermont to participate in the implementation of a series of medical home improvements. Parents and caregivers were encouraged to be involved as equal and key partners with the core teams of physicians and care coordinators. The teams met regularly to improve health care delivery. More than 300 families from the 10 practices were asked to complete a survey about the process each year.

In 2007, CMHI received the third successive state contract from the New Hampshire Health and Human Services Division / Special Medical Services (SMS). Using New Hampshire's Title V block grant funding, SMS supports CMHI under a project to create medical homes for New Hampshire children and youth with special health care needs. CMHI is collaborating with SMS on medical home planning, development of a pediatric Medical Home network and registry, creation of state policy regarding medical home supports, and provision of technical assistance to pediatric and family medicine practices working to improve care for children/youth with special health care needs.

The full text of "Improvement in the Family-Centered Medical Home Enhances Outcomes for Children and Youth With Special Healthcare Needs" was published in July 2009 by the *Journal of Ambulatory Care Management* (32(3)188-196). The full text must be purchased, but an abstract may be accessed on-line at

<http://journals.lww.com/ambulatorycaremanagement/Abstract/2009/07000> (accessed August 17, 2009).

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