

# THE CONNECTIONS WEEKLY

March 21 - 28, 2008



## SPRING



### *Updated Guide: Closing Adoption Cases...*

An updated version of the Guide, dated 3/18/08, is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet. The Guide defines the steps that are necessary to close an adoption case both in the CONNECTIONS system as well as in WMS. This Guide was created because a need was expressed, from the caseworker community, regarding how these two systems intersect relative to the closing process. We have several members of the Implementation team, namely Janet Parry and Kim Bowler-Ciezkowski, who worked in collaboration with staff from the Information Technology, Policy and Adoption Divisions, to finalize this Guide. Thank you to all for recognizing a need and being able to provide definition and direction!

### *NEW - Job Aid: CONNECTIONS System Build 18.9.6 Job Aid - Functionality for All Users of CONNECTIONS...*

This job aid is the third job aid in support of the implementation of the new Build 18.9.6 functionality, and provides the caseworker with a detailed overview of the CONNECTIONS system and the enhancements that were introduced in the Build. The job aid contains information about modifications in the following areas:

- Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD)
- Out of State SCR Check Window
- Family Assessment and Service Plans (FAPSs) - including the Service Plan Review
- Life Skills Assessment Comments Window
- Health Services
- Permanency
- Progress Notes
- Security

For your reference, the job aid, along with the other two job aids that support the new functionality, is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet site on the Step-by-Step/Job Aids/Tips page.

*A NEW GIS Message - GIS #08 - 004; Bridges to Health Waivers (B2H) for Children in Foster Care...*

*The following information pertains to Local Districts only.*

**Please note that the effective date of this message is: January 1, 2008**

This GIS message was communicated to Directors of Services, Medicaid Supervisors, Foster Care Supervisors on March 18, 2008. The purpose of this message was to inform Local Social Service Districts (LDSS) that the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) are authorized by the federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services to implement a new Medicaid program, "Bridges to Health" (B2H) for children in foster care up to 21 years of age, beginning January 1, 2008.

B2H will provide community based services to children who are in the care and custody of a LDSS or OCFS and who have significant mental health care needs, developmental disabilities or medical fragility and who require an institutional level of care.

Administered as three separate targeted 1915(c) Medicaid waivers, the program will be phased in over a three year period, with a total 3,305 participant slots distributed between the three waivers by the year 2010: 2,688 serious emotional disturbance (B2H/SED); 541 developmentally disabled (B2H/DD); 76 slots medically fragile (B2H/MedF).

The services listed below will be available to participants in each waiver. Detailed descriptions can be found in the B2H Program Manual that is available on the OCFS website at <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/b2h>.

- Health Care Integration
- Skill building
- Family care giver supports and services
- Day habilitation
- Prevocational services
- Supported employment
- Planned respite
- Special needs community advocacy and support
- Crisis avoidance management and training
- Immediate crisis response services
- Intensive in-home supports
- Crisis respite
- Accessibility modifications
- Adaptive and assistive equipment

Initially, children must be in foster care and categorically eligible for Medicaid to be considered for enrollment in the B2H waivers. B2H participants who are discharged from foster care may remain in the B2H waiver if they meet the waiver and Medicaid eligibility criteria. If after foster care discharge the child is in receipt of Temporary Assistance or Medicaid in a family case, Medicaid coverage should be maintained through that family case. If there is no Temporary Assistance or Medicaid family case, or if the family case closes, a B2H participant who has been discharged from foster care will have her/his Medicaid eligibility determined based on a household of one, and her/his own income and resources will be compared to the Medically Needy level. If a child's income and/or

resources exceed the Medically Needy level, s/he may spend down. Either ADC-related budgeting or SSI-related budgeting may be used, whichever is most beneficial to the child. However, if SSI-related budgeting is used, a disability review must be completed. Medicaid and waiver eligibility must be renewed annually.

The LDSS will approve children for a B2H waiver based on their qualifying diagnosis. Each B2H waiver will be identified by separate restriction/exception (R/E) codes: • SED - R/E code 72; • DD - R/E code 73; • MedF - R/E code 74. Districts must enter the appropriate R/E code for each B2H participant as Medicaid claim payments will be made only for those with appropriately assigned codes. Training for specific claim procedures will be scheduled upon provider request.

The three year phase-in plan is designed to permit steady development of the needed administrative and service infrastructure for the waiver program, including the Health Care Integration Agencies (HCIA) and Waiver Service Provider (WSP) networks. The HCIA's are voluntary child care agencies responsible for the operational and administrative functions of the B2H waivers. The WSP networks will operate throughout the State to ensure the delivery of comparable B2H services—regardless of the location of a child's residence. Details regarding the phase-in plan, and other information regarding the program, are posted on the OCFS website at the above mentioned address.

The existing OCFS regions form the basis for the B2H regional designations. The B2H and OCFS regional designations are identical, with one exception: OCFS Region V is divided into the Lower Hudson Valley and Long Island B2H regions. Please refer to the website above for specific information regarding the OCFS and B2H regions.

OCFS will notify LDSS staff of upcoming training on administering the B2H program through the Statewide Training Automated Registration System (STARS). Topics will include B2H eligibility determination, data system entry and program monitoring. In addition, detailed information regarding the B2H program, including the phase-in plan, B2H eligibility determination rules and billing instructions, can be found in the B2H Program Manual posted on the OCFS website at the above mentioned address.

#### Contact Persons:

- Department of Health: Priscilla Smith (518) 486-6562
- Office of Children and Family Services: Mimi Weber (518) 408-4064

GIS messages are available in Public Folders at the following path:  
*All Public Folders/dfa.state.ny.us/OCFS/TSU/ \*\*\*Services systems Reference Documents/ GIS (system change notices)*

#### ***UPDATED Info About AFCARS and CCRS - How Do They Intersect???***

***AFCARS Information - Health Report: 'Children in Care With No Clinical Diagnosis'...***

***This piece was in the Weekly dated March 14, 2008***

***Please note: The information in the two pieces below applies to only a few individuals at the local district who perform this function. In order to access the report you need a designated password that has been assigned by OCFS.***

Please be aware that the information used to report AFCARS (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System) elements to the Federal government is taken from multiple systems. The original population is determined by children who have an open

track in CCRS (Child Care Review Services) and a program choice of *Placement*. Children listed on the Health Report titled 'Children In Care With No Clinical Diagnosis' are from this population. If after you review this report ('Children In Care With No Clinical Diagnosis'), and you believe that a child is listed incorrectly, you should check the status of the child in CCRS and make certain that the child's program choice is updated in CONNECTIONS to reflect their current situation. Program Choices are: *A (Preventive Non-mandated)*, *B (Preventive Mandated)*, *C (Placement)* and *D (Protective)*.

***More Info About the AFCARS Report: 'Children In Care With No Clinical Diagnosis'...***

For your reference, a ***new*** version of the AFCARS report, 'Children In Care With No Clinical Diagnosis' (dated 3/13/08), has recently been posted to the Share Drive. ***Please note that this report can only be accessed by a few individuals at the local district who perform this function. In order to access the report you need a designated password that has been assigned by OCFS.***

The new version of the report, like the last, is based upon the AFCARS population as extracted from CCRS. This time, however, we define "in care" as those children in care on the last day of the period or, whose discharge was entered anytime during the period. This will differ slightly from the last version, where we defined "in care" as those children in care on the first day of the period or, whose admission was entered anytime during the period.

Another change in this version is that we now include those children in care *less than 30 days*. We include them now because by the end of the period they will have been in care at least 30 days.

You will notice that there are a small number of children with little or no CONNECTIONS information. This happens for two reasons:

1. About 30 children in the AFCARS population as extracted from CCRS have a CIN that does not exist in CONNECTIONS.
2. A few hundred children in the AFCARS population as extracted from CCRS have a CIN in CONNECTIONS, but that child has never been tracked in a CONNECTIONS Family Services Stage.

***"Question of the Week..."***

**Question?** A caseworker asks... "Do I still have to complete the AFCARS forms after an adoption is finalized?"

**Answer:** The forms in question date from about 1997 or so, when we (OCFS formerly known as DSS) asked local districts to record AFCARS elements off-line. As you are aware, now, all AFCARS elements are in CONNECTIONS and reported from that system so the forms do not have to be used any longer.

### *New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...*

The following document(s) were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:

- *CONNECTIONS System Build 18.9.6 Job Aid - Functionality for All Users of CONNECTIONS*
- *The CONNECTIONS Weekly for the week of March 21, 2008*

### *Weekly System Maintenance...*

Due to regularly scheduled system maintenance, the CONNECTIONS application will not be available on...

- Friday, 3/21/08 from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM
- Wednesday, 3/26/08 from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM
- Friday, 3/28/08 from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM