

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

September 2, 2014

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Help for Children with Chronic or Disabling Conditions

Coldwater, MI. Do you have a child that is living with a chronic health condition? Are you overwhelmed by the paperwork associated with seeking medical care? Do you need assistance in finding resources that can help? The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is offering you assistance.

Through the Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS), the health department offers care coordination and case management services to eligible children – children with qualifying diagnoses, ages newborn on up and who are seeing a specialist for their chronic health or disabling condition. According to Val Newton, CSHCS Coordinator for Branch and Hillsdale Counties, "CSHCS program is a unique health program in that there are no income guidelines to qualify. Any child up to age 21 who has been identified with one or more of the 2,600 diagnoses may be eligible for program services." Diagnoses range from apnea to cancer. In fact, some adults may even qualify for the program if they have cystic fibrosis or some types of bleeding disorders and are being treated by a specialist.

"Obtaining a chronic illness diagnosis is frightening and many people do not know where to start looking for assistance. We have the ability to point you in the right direction for help," says Madonna Hilarides, CSHCS Program Coordinator for St. Joseph County. "We are right here - next to you - advocating for you and your child along the way." Currently, there are over 700 children who are enrolled in the program who live within the tri-county area. Families of these children receive ongoing help from a registered nurse and program representative who provide tangible supports, including:

- Assistance in finding specialty services
- Help with paying for specialty medical bills for eligible diagnoses
- Additional financial assistance for co-pays and deductibles from private insurance for eligible diagnoses
- Support through service coordination
- Transportation arrangements for medical care for children with fee-for-service Medicaid or other commercial insurance coverage
- Assistance in locating community resources
- Translation services
- Transition planning for children moving into adult health care.

If your child is enrolled in Medicaid and has a qualifying diagnosis, you may automatically be referred to the CSCHS program. If, however, you carry private insurance for your family, you may not know that this program exists or that your child qualifies for these services. These services can make caring for your chronically ill child more manageable and give you hope.

To find out if your child is eligible, contact your local health department office. For further information about the program and to see a full listing of the services that are offered through the Children's Special Health Care Program, please visit the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency's web site at: www.bhsj.org and click on the Clinic Services Button located at the top of the page.

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