



Family to Family Health Information Centers

What are F2F HICs?

Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2FHICs) are non-profit, family-staffed organizations that help families of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) and the professionals who serve them. Because the health care needs of CYSHCN are chronic and complex, parents and caregivers are often challenged with finding the resources to provide and finance health care for their children. F2FHICs are uniquely able to help families because they are by parents and family members of CYSHCN themselves who have first-hand experience navigating the maze of services and programs for CYSHCN. Staffs at F2FHICs understand the issues that families face, provide advice, offer a multitude of resources, and tap into a network of other families and professionals for support and information. Family Voices, through the National Center for Family / Professional Partnerships, provides technical assistance, training, and connections to other F2FHICs and partnering organizations.

How do F2FHICs help?

F2FHICs were established in all States and the District of Columbia by the Family Opportunity/Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. The Affordable Care Act of 2010 extended the F2FHIC program through fiscal year 2012. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB) funds the F2FHICs through a competitive grant process. Prior to the passage of FOA, funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and MCHB supported F2F HICs in many states, while a few other family organizations obtained state funding to conduct F2FHIC activities.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB) provides the primary funding support for F2FHICs, as authorized by the Family Opportunity Act (FOA), legislation signed into law in 2006 (as a part of the Deficit Reduction Act). Through this funding, HRSA's MCHB currently supports F2FHICs in all states and the District of Columbia. Prior to the passage of FOA, funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and MCHB supported F2FHICs in many states, while a few other family organizations obtained state funding to conduct F2FHIC activities.

F2FHICs provide assistance in a variety of ways, including support and referral through direct telephone, e-mail or in-person contact, training through workshops, advocating for and connecting families with resources, running Listserves and websites, and developing newsletters and family-friendly publications.

As the National Technical Assistance organization, Family Voices collects data from the F2FHICs in order to demonstrate the need for and value of the assistance they provide and to help F2FHICs meet accountability requirements. Family Voices aggregates this data on an annual basis, summarizing data about families and professionals served, type of information and assistance provided, reported health care financing issues, and the extent of outreach activities to families and professionals.

What do F2FHICs Help With?

F2FHICs provide assistance on many issues related to caring for CYSHCN. Some typical questions asked of staff at F2FHICs include:

- Is there a health insurance program that will pay for my child's medical needs as well as the rest of my family?
- What are the eligibility requirements for Medicaid? How do I apply?
- What is Title V and what programs do they have for children?
- Medicaid has denied payment of some of my child's services. What do I do now?
- Is there a way to keep my child's longtime pediatrician when my job requires that we switch insurance plans?
- Can you help me write a health care plan to help my son's teachers and therapists care for him at school?
- Who can help me find a way to pay for my child's expensive medications?
- Where can I find a support group for families of children with my child's disability?

Family to Family Health Information Network

The Family to Family Health Information Network is a partnership between Family Voices at the RI Parent Information Network and the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities. Our goal is to connect families with children who have disabilities to foster and enhance relationships and provide information and resources where needed.

Visit our website at www.rifamilytofamily.net