

RIPIN's Parent Consultant Program Expands

RIPIN and the RI Department of Health are pleased to announce the addition of a new pilot project to help youth and adult patients find extra supports and navigate systems when they visit their primary or specialty care doctor. It's called **PAHI - Peer Assisted Health Initiative**.

According to RIPIN Associate Director **Lisa Schaffran**, "We've had such tremendous success with our Pediatric Practice Enhancement model - reaching out to families of children with special health care needs - that we now will add a similar program for youth and adults. We know this peer support style program can truly make a difference in the adult world."

PAHI certified medical practices will have a RIPIN trained Consultant (called a Peer Navigator) on hand to offer support and guidance to patients and assist practices to provide a patient-centered medical home. (A "medical home" is comprehensive, coordinated health care). Peer Navigators will provide information about state resources, the employment system, social services, support groups, or other information about particular issues pertaining to the patients with dis-

abilities, special healthcare needs or chronic conditions. Utilizing the empowerment model that RIPIN is known for, a PAHI focus will be on the transition from pediatric to primary, an area of need that individuals and families have identified as a huge challenge.

"The Department of Health's research has shown there is a definite need for continuity of care as children with special health care needs grow up, and the Office of Special Health Care Needs is addressing this through the PAHI program," says **Lisa Schaffran**. "In addition, PAHI support will be available to all patients in the practice especially those with chronic care issues including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer."

Currently, a PAHI advisory committee is in the works and applications are being accepted from general medical practices across Rhode Island.

Any practice interested in this program should contact **Deb Garneau**, Chief, Office of Special Health Care Needs, RI Department of Health at 401.222.5929 or visit RIPIN's website at www.ripin.org.



Contact RIPIN

for information about education, parent involvement and support for your family.

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