January 19, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: OCCYSHN Local Public Health Partners

FROM: OCCYSHN SPOC Implementation Team

RE: Definition of Complex for SPOC

Children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) are “those who have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition, and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally” (McPherson et al., 1998).

For the purposes of county SPOC implementation, CYSHCN may be identified as complex if they have (a) medically complex conditions or (b) have a health condition(s) (as described in the definition of CYSHCN above) combined with social complexity(ies).

- CYSHCN with medical complexity “have multiple significant chronic health problems that affect multiple organ systems and result in functional limitations, high health care need or utilization, and often the need for or use of medical technology” (Kuo & Houtrow, 2016, p. e1).
  - Examples
    i. A child with a genetic syndrome with an associated congenital heart defect, difficulty with swallowing, cerebral palsy, and a urologic condition. The child requires the care of a primary care physician, pediatric subspecialists, home nurses, rehabilitative and habilitative therapists, community-based services, pharmaceutical therapies, special nutritional attention, and durable medical equipment.
    ii. Functional limitations are restrictions in the child’s ability to do the things typically developing children of the same age can do in their daily lives. The limitations may be permanent or temporary. Examples include inability to perform tasks like dressing or walking or unable to participate in life events like attending school. More information is available on functional limitations in the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF).

- CYSHCN with social complexity have a physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and they, or their families, have experienced or currently are experiencing one or more of the following:
  1. Adolescent exposure to intimate partner violence
  2. Child abuse/neglect – child welfare system involvement
  3. Child criminal justice involvement
  4. Child mental illness
  5. Child substance abuse
  6. Discontinuous insurance coverage
  7. Foreign born parent
  8. Foster care
  9. Homelessness
  10. Low English proficiency
  11. Low parent educational attainment
  12. Parent criminal justice involvement
  13. Parent death
  14. Parent domestic violence
  15. Parent mental illness
  16. Parent physical disability
  17. Parent substance abuse
  18. Severe poverty (TANF eligible)

Source: Center of Excellence on Quality of Care Measures for Children with Complex Needs, University of Washington & Seattle Children’s Research Institute, 2016