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Rural Health Conference
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Building Cross-Sector Community Partnerships to Support Children in Rural Communities: A Look into the ACCESS Model

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OCCYSHN

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Learning Objectives

1

Describe key components that support successful development of cross-sector programming.

2

Learn about the ACCESS model and its impact on early childhood autism evaluations in rural communities.

3

Discuss strategies for implementing cross-sector partnerships in your own communities.

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Let's get to know the room!

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- Oregon's state public health agency for children and youth with special health care needs (or CYSHCN)
- Our mission: improve the health, development and well-being of Oregon's CYSCHN

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Who Are CYSHCN?

- Children who have or are at risk of various chronic health conditions (physical, developmental, behavioral, and/or emotional)
- **1 in 5 Oregon children are CYSHCN**
- CYSHCN need more health and related services than other children
- **Families are required to navigate multiple systems to get the care they need for their children**

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What is Cross-Sector Collaboration?

- Individuals and organizations from different sectors working together to address a shared issue/goal
- Cross-sector collaboration can happen at the individual level or systems level

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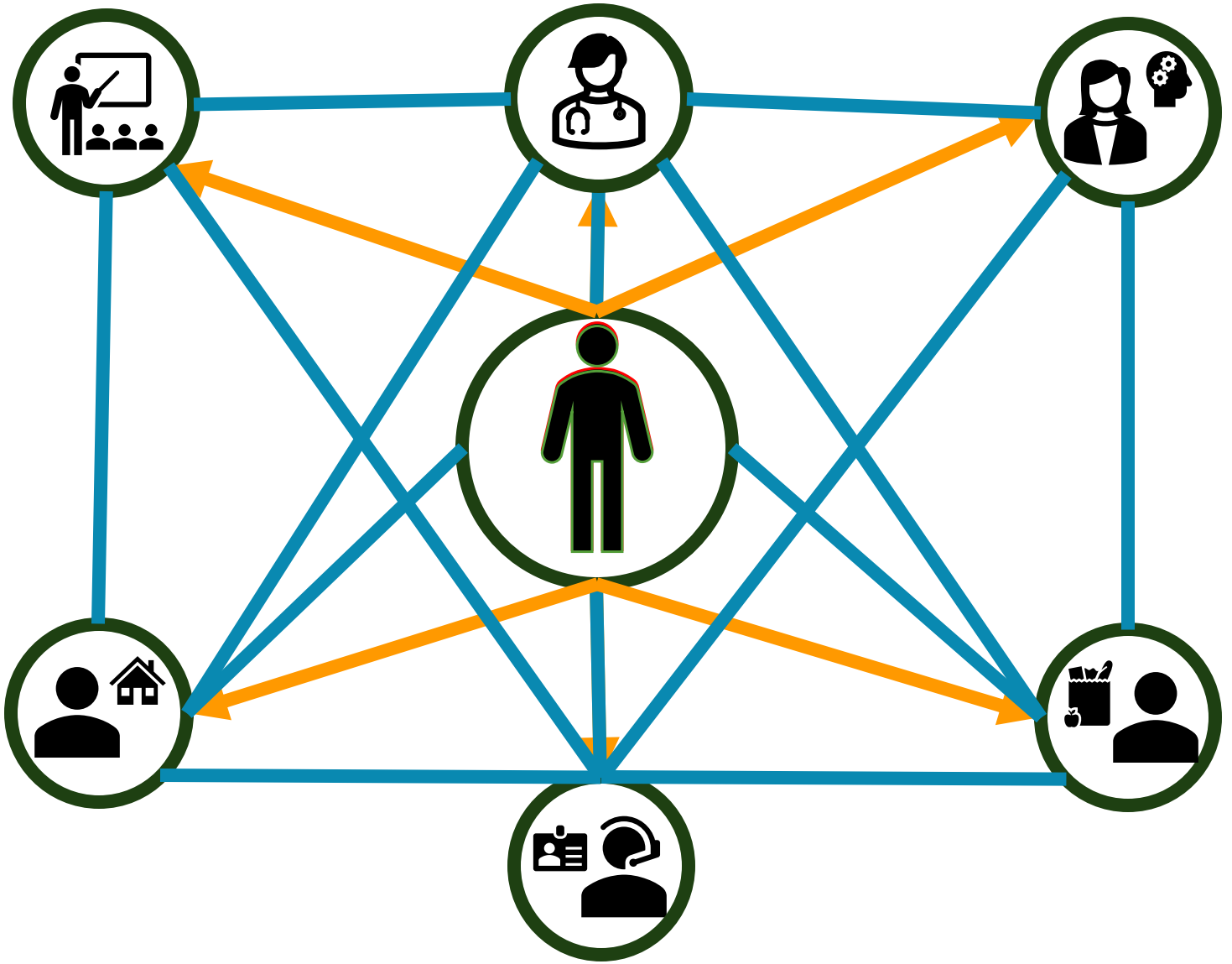
Why Cross-Sector Collaboration?

- Health is shaped by many factors, including social and environmental
- Addresses child's entire well-being, not just medical needs
- CYSCHN live and interact with many systems, creating need for cross-sector coordination



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Benefits

- Sharing info across systems leads to more **comprehensive care**
- Everyone learns **new services and resources**
- Reduces burdens on families (supports **patient/family-centered care**)
- Increases **efficiency** of work and **reduces costs**
- Promotes **health equity** – helps ensure children regardless of their background or location have access to high-quality, coordinated care

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ACCESS Project Overview

Assuring **C**omprehensive **C**are through **E**nhanced **S**ervice **S**ystems for Children with Autism

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Early Autism Evaluation & Health Equity

Autism frequently occurs with other developmental and learning issues

Oregon families experience many challenges accessing early autism evaluations

Early diagnosis enhances long-term developmental outcomes

Delayed diagnosis slows access to interventions, resulting in more needed services

Early Autism Evaluation & Health Equity

Diagnosis requires multiple observations of a child in different environments and many local providers are not trained in diagnostic autism evaluation

Travel to a metro area evaluation site is unfeasible, especially for those from rural areas

A significant portion of rural families referred to tertiary care centers centers are lost to follow-up

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Multiple Evaluations In Two Different Systems Cause Confusion for Families

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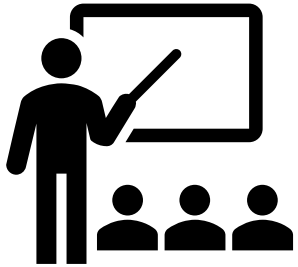
Medical Diagnosis

Medical Treatment and Behavior Therapy



Special Education Eligibility

School-Based Services

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What is the ACCESS Model?

Mission: To support the cross-sector collaboration between medical and educational experts to deliver early autism identification for Oregon families in their home communities.

Process: Establish local teams to help streamline both a medical diagnosis and educational eligibility for autism services for children ages 0-5 in rural communities.

Local ACCESS Teams

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Medical Provider (Pediatrician, Psychologist, NP, PA)

Formal medical diagnosis

+

Educational Staff (Autism Specialist, SLP, School Psychologist, etc.)

Educational eligibility evaluation

+

Parent Partner

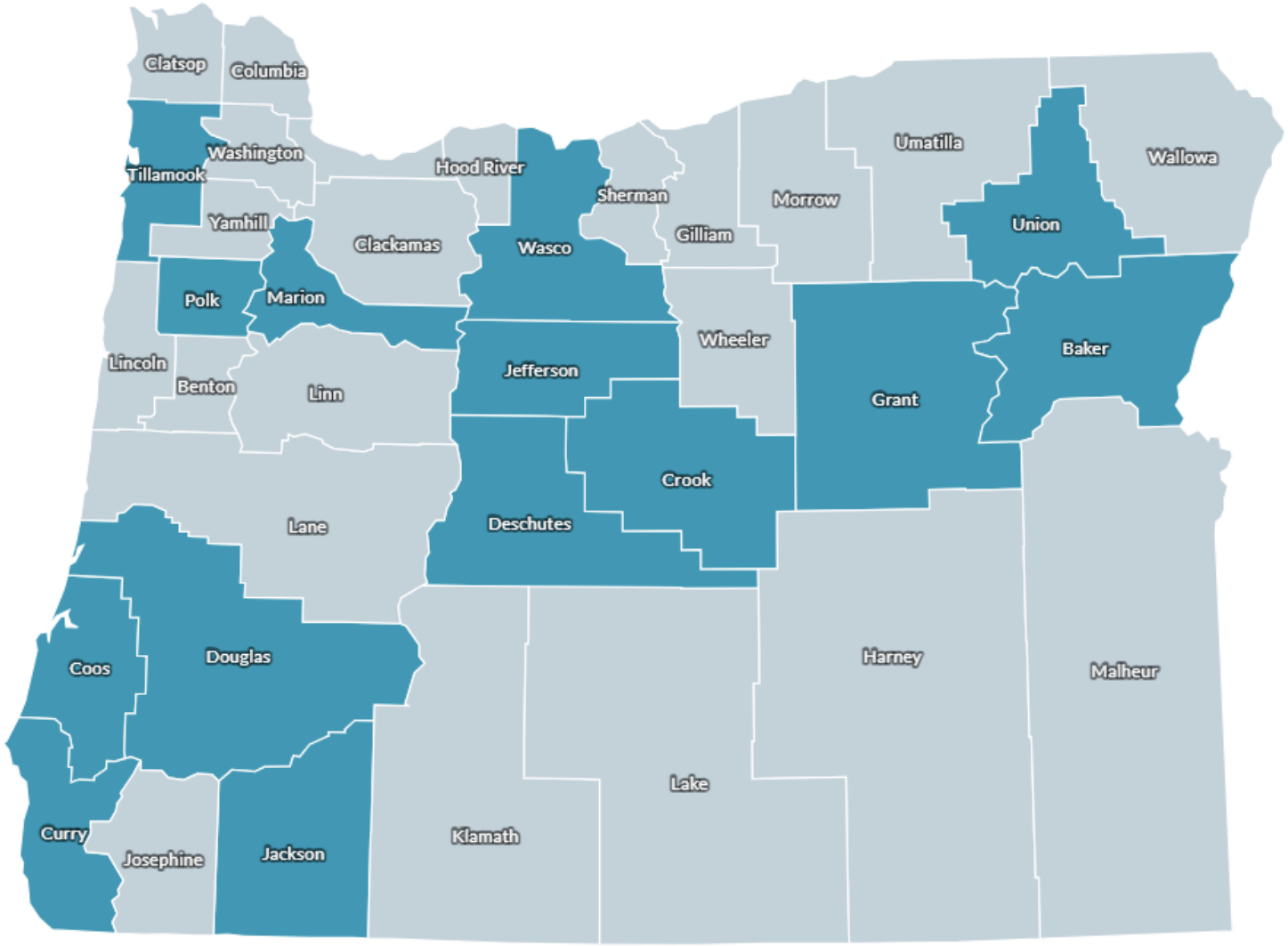
System and resource navigation

Attends team meetings with families

Follow-up with family

OCCYSHN Technical Assistance

- Monthly statewide ECHO
- Quarterly Role-Specific Community of Practice Meetings
- Clinical consultation from experts at OHSU



Local ACCESS Teams

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Benefits of ACCESS

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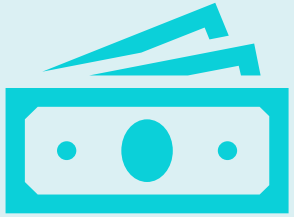
For Families:

Timely evaluations close to home



Less cost and stress

Coordination between school and community providers

For Professionals:

Increases confidence in evaluating autism

Improves access to resources for families

Builds statewide network of autism professionals

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ACCESS 2024-2025 Survey Results

216 kids
evaluated by ACCESS teams statewide in 2024-2025

9 weeks
on average from referral to evaluation

100% of respondents
found ACCESS resources to be useful to share with families

88% of respondents
felt more confident in providing autism evaluations for preschool aged children

Elements of Cross-Sector Collaboration

Listen to Individuals and Families

- Value of lived experience
- Collaborations don't matter if you're not listening to the people you're serving – they should be defining the need and helping shape the solution

ACCESS

- ACCESS founder Dr. Bob Nickel held listening sessions for families at the CDRC at OHSU
- Partnership with Oregon Family to Family Information Center

Photo credit: Microsoft Stock Images

Learn More About the Issue or Population

- Community Health Assessments / Community Health Improvement Plans (CCOs)
- Community Health Needs Assessments (hospitals)
- Local Systems of Care (child welfare, juvenile justice, developmental disability, behavioral health)
- Family groups, Community Advisory Committees
- Other local health collaboratives

ACCESS

- Teamed up with the Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder (OCASD)

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Explore Existing Collaborations

- Are there others working to address a similar issue?
- Who are the partners?
- How are they working together?
- What can you learn from them?

ACCESS

- Met with Autism Diagnosis Education Project (ADEP) in Ohio
- Discussed ADEP program, strategies for partner engagement, challenges/lessons learned, and sustainability strategies
- Ongoing conversations with University of Washington's School and Medical Autism Review Team (SMART)

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Find the Champions

- Who do you need to collaborate with?
- Seek out voices from multiple sources

ACCESS

- Looked to local communities to find providers with autism interest and expertise
  - Oregon Family-to-Family Information Center
  - Medical clinics
  - Education service districts (ESDs)

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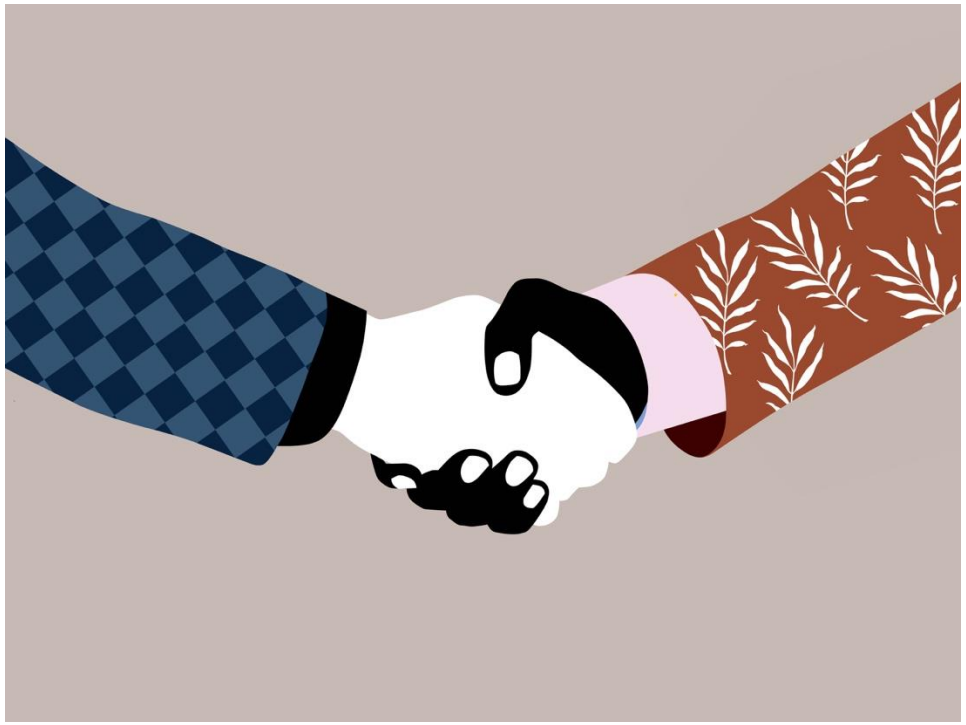
Set the Stage for Partnership

- Information / data sharing
- FTE commitment
- Varying timelines
- Roles (e.g. leadership)
- Other resources (funding, expertise, etc.)
- Is an MOU needed/helpful?



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- Funding/administrative logistics housed in OCCYSHN
- Met with local teams to determine workflow and other logistics

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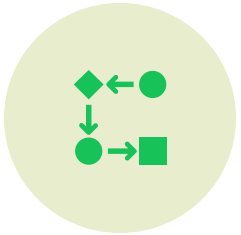
Barriers to Cross-Sector Collaboration

STAFF TURNOVER

LIMITS DUE TO EXISTING POLICIES (OR LACK THEREOF)

COMPLEX SCHEDULING



CONFLICTING WORKFLOWS

ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND FUNDING

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Facilitating Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Continuing education/professional development opportunities
- Regular meetings
- Community engagement
- Evaluation: are we meeting our intended goals?

ACCESS

- Started annual ECHO series in 2019 – case presentation, didactic, and family resources
- Development of quarterly role-specific Community of Practices

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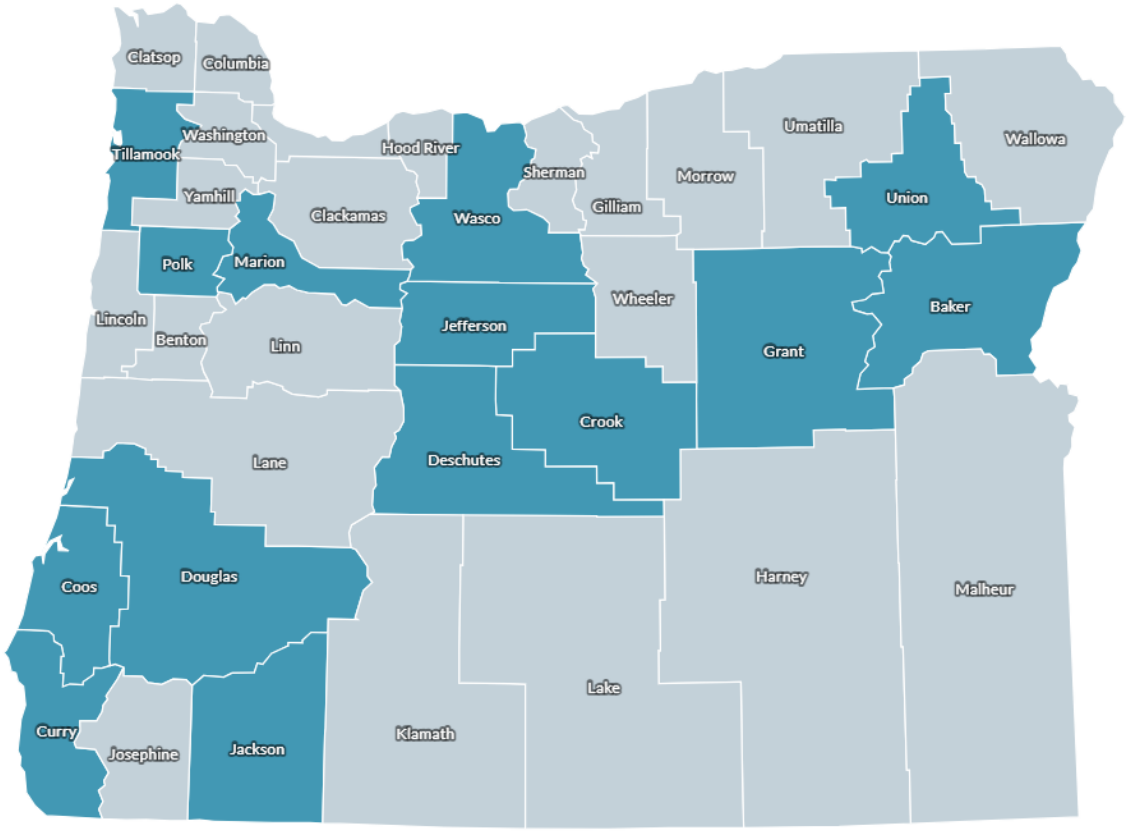
Importance of Community-Responsive Programming



Sustainability: Expanding the Collaboration

Autism Assessment Capacity Project (AACP)

- Diagnostic autism assessment training for local primary care providers
- Alternative Payment Methodology (APM)

ACCESS

- Clinical consultation/mentoring for medical providers
- Systems-level support of ed/med/parent partner collaboration

Autism Alert

- Virtual family navigation services through diagnostic process, connection to services

Opt-In Early

- Virtual parent training for home-based interventions

Other Examples of Cross-Sector Collaboration

- **HERO Kids** – Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC), hospitals, Oregon Portable Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)
- **Shared Care Planning (SCP)** – local public health authorities, school nurses, primary care organizations, family organizations
- **Health Care Transition (HCT)** – Randall Children's Hospital's Every Step Clinic, Oregon Department of Human Services, Legacy Health (adult clinic)
- **Emergency Planning Resources** – Oregon Family-to-Family Information Center, Developmental Disability Services, The Arc Oregon
- **YSCHN Waiver** – Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Medicaid

Brainstorming Time

1. What examples of cross-sector collaboration do you currently see in your programs or community?
    - What successes or challenges are you seeing with these?
2. What challenges do you see that might be better addressed through cross-sector collaboration?
    - What might that look like?
    - What would you need in place to support this effort?

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Q&A

Thanks for coming!

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Oregon Center for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs (OCCYSHN) website: https://www.ohsu.edu/occyshn

ACCESS website: https://www.ohsu.edu/occyshn/local-autism-assessment-teams

Oregon Family to Family Information Center: https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-family-to-family-health-information-center

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