

System of Care expansion grant

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) awarded Health Care Authority (HCA) the System of Care (SOC) expansion grant in October of 2022 for the implementation of Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) in Pierce and Spokane counties.

The goals of the project include:

1. Ensuring youth, families, and caregivers have access to a comprehensive array of crisis prevention, intervention, and stabilization services;
2. Preventing movement to more restrictive settings;
3. Increasing community awareness about youth behavioral health needs;
4. Infusing youth and family voice into the crisis system development and implementation; and
5. Developing infrastructure and data collection processes to support statewide MRSS sustainability.

MRSS is a developmentally appropriate, public health approach to crisis care for children, youth, and families. Within this model, family and youth define the crisis, and teams provide outreach to all referrals in a home or community-based setting. The MRSS approach prioritizes engagement, collaboration, safety planning, and engagement with community supports, schools, family members, and other resources to maintain youth safe at home, in school, and connected to those that care about them.

System of Care core values include:

- A family driven and youth guided/directed framework
- Importance of community-based services
- Delivery of services with cultural and linguistic humility to address health equity issues

Program elements

In federal fiscal year 2024, HCA partnered with Spokane County Behavioral Health Organization

(SCRBHO) and with Carelon to pilot the MRSS in Spokane and Pierce Counties.

- Frontier Behavioral Health (FBH), Seneca Family of Agencies, and Catholic Community Services (CCS) are staffing, and developing policies and procedures to provide 72 hours of crisis intervention and up to eight weeks of stabilization services to youth, regardless of insurance type.
- Federal Fiscal Year 2, grantee MRSS teams leveraged SOC dollars to cover services for youth and families that did not have Medicaid coverage for MRSS:
 - In Pierce County, Seneca and CCS provided 18 initial crisis episodes and 68 stabilization episodes with SOC funds.
 - In Spokane County, FBH provided 192 crisis episodes and 189 stabilization episodes with SOC funds.
- To date, grantee MRSS teams in Spokane and Pierce counties delivered a total of 212 crisis episodes and 259 stabilization episodes to 375 individuals

A Common Voice, Parent of Center Excellence (COPE) partners with regional implementation teams to embed System of Care values into all aspects of the MRSS programmatic design.

- COPE has provided policy and training subject matter expertise to guide the implementation of MRSS.
- COPE also planned and implemented a site visit to New Jersey with key system, family, and youth partners to learn about their MRSS and system of care infrastructure.

Washington State Community Connectors (WSCC) works collaboratively with other State partners to develop an MRSS 101 training to educate communities, providers, and systems partners about the MRSS model. WSCC will also partner with HCA to explore qualitative data collection to help inform the development of a comprehensive continuum of care that meets the needs of youth with complex/co-occurring disorders and support needs.

WSCC and COPE collaborate to convene voices of lived experience in multiple settings, including

technical assistance calls with the Quality Learning Collaborative, regional implementation meetings, policy discussions, trainings, and webinars to educate about the unique needs of youth and families in crisis.

In August of 2024, WSCC hosted an event connecting communities in Leavenworth, bringing together community organizations, leaders, and individuals with lived experience to share resources, strategize, and develop networks.

The University of Washington (UW) continues to implement a consultation training program with providers to adapt and develop dialectical behavioral therapy techniques and other evidence-based practices for crisis response and stabilization services.

- This customized training will be used to educate both providers and caregivers about important skills to help young people as they move from crisis into stabilization.
- UW provided consultation and training to three MRSS teams: Catholic Community Services of Thurston-Mason region, Seneca in Pierce County, and Frontier in Spokane County.

HCA continues to partner with Excelsior Wellness to pilot respite services for youth and family with behavioral health needs and will work with HCA partners to inform ongoing efforts to include respite as a Medicaid-billable service among Washington's continuum of care.

- Excelsior has served a total of 121 youth in the first two years of the grant project.

These partnerships are critical to developing a system of care that addresses trauma and the ongoing behavioral health needs of children, youth, and young adults.

Data collection and evaluation

- Data from SOC-funded programs support efforts to equitably improve access to and provision early and preventative community-based crisis care.
- Evaluation results from the grant track outcomes for program participants and cross-systems involvement to better understand

outcomes for youth in foster care or who have juvenile justice involvement.

- The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Research and Data Analysis (RDA) division leads the program monitoring and evaluating according to a three-part plan that includes client-level and aggregate data to assess program effectiveness.
- With carryover funds, RDA will conduct two analytic studies that focus on 1) trends in emergency department visits for youth with behavioral health needs and 2) conducting a follow-up analysis of eating disorder services provided in Washington State 2022-2023.

Key partners

- Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Research and Data Analysis (RDA)
- Washington State Community Connectors
- A Common Voice, Center of Parent Excellence
- Catholic Community Services
- Seneca Agency of Families
- Frontier Behavioral Health
- Excelsior Wellness
- Spokane County Regional Behavioral Health Organization
- Carelon
- University of Connecticut Innovations Institute

Federal fiscal year budget 2025

\$3,000,000.00

Oversight

- Health Care Authority (HCA), Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

More information

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Learn more on the [Prenatal, child, and young adult behavioral health services website](#).