

Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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News & Media

Community Based Care agencies offer their own HMO for children in care

In response to 2011 Medicaid reform that moves all Medicaid beneficiaries into managed health plans, Florida's consortium of Community Based Care agencies have joined together to operate an HMO exclusively for foster children.

Sunshine Health, a national healthcare enterprise that operates Medicaid health programs throughout Florida, and the national managed behavioral healthcare provider Cenpatico Behavioral Health are also partners in the HMO, called the Child Welfare Specialty Plan.

The plan combines physical, dental and behavioral healthcare into a single, statewide integrated health solution for children involved in Florida's child welfare system. Services will be delivered in a coordinated manner that aligns child-welfare goals of safety and permanency with medical healthcare and mental-health treatment needs.

Devereux CBC, and its 18 sister Community Based Care agencies, will be responsible for employing nurse and behavioral health coordinators. Those coordinators will ensure that check-ups are done on children entering the system and help coordinate services for children with complex medical and mental-health needs.

One of the most exciting features of the plan is access to a 24-hour, on-call nurse, said Cheri Sheffer, Chief Operating Officer for Devereux CBC.

"Being able to talk to someone when your child is sick is an important resource for our families and caregivers, especially when that person is familiar with the nuances of child welfare and special needs of abused and neglected children," Sheffer said.

Foster Parent Bethany McLaughlin agrees.

"Just having someone to call on the weekends or off hours to answer questions or reassure parents that they are doing the right thing," McLaughlin said. "Many first-time foster parents aren't sure if they should take the child to the emergency room for a fever on a Friday night or give him Tylenol and wait it out."

The plan is already rolling out in other parts of the state. Devereux CBC will come on line effective August 1.

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