

Snapshots of VCHIP Projects

The Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP) is a trusted partner helping health care professionals improve the care they provide to children and families. We undertake measurement-based **assessments** of current care delivery, offer **evaluation** support to identify specific and achievable improvements in systems of care, actively **collaborate** with public and private entities seeking to spread improvement partnerships, and **inform policy** across larger health care systems. Started in 1999 and focused initially on preventive services, VCHIP's projects now include extensive work across perinatal, early childhood, adolescent and chronic care initiatives. Several current projects are profiled below.

PERINATAL

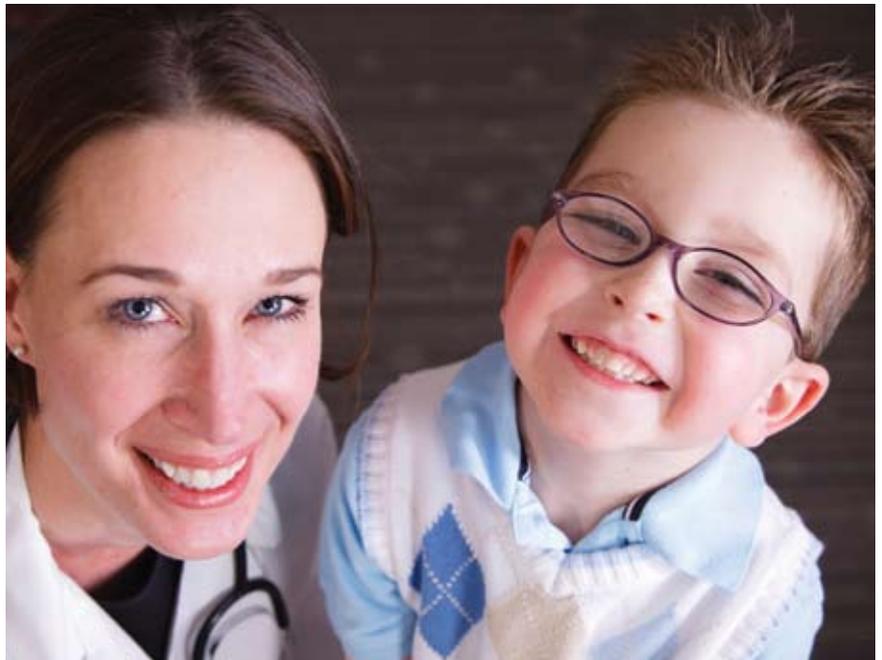
VCHIP, the Vermont Department of Health, Fletcher Allen Health Care, community hospitals and multi-disciplinary teams of health care professionals work together on several projects to facilitate timely, effective and patient-centered perinatal health. The Vermont Regional Perinatal Health Project (VRPHP) is a high-quality academic health care resource for education, outreach, skills competencies and quality improvement.

The Improving Care for Opioid-exposed Newborns (ICON) project provides training and promotes care coordination between obstetricians, pediatricians, substance abuse providers, social services and other professionals caring for opiate-dependant pregnant women and opioid-exposed newborns. Data is provided to both of these projects via OBNet, a repository for data from six community hospitals.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

VCHIP projects support a health care delivery system in which primary care and preventive services are provided in medical homes with appropriate and effective linkages to systems of specialty care. The VCHIP Developmental Screening Project encourages providers to perform guideline-based developmental and autism screening and connects children and families to evaluation and intervention services.

The CHAMP project is building a network of practices that engage in collaborative improvement and content-specific



learning activities over multiple years. This project aims to increase the efficiency, economy, and quality of care provided to Medicaid-eligible children and families.

SCHOOL AGE AND ADOLESCENCE

For nearly 10 years, VCHIP has been supporting improvements in health care for youth ages 8 to 18 years among more than 60 Vermont pediatric and family medicine practices and public and private insurers. The Vermont Youth Health Initiative team has assisted practices to improve their delivery of preventive services, specifically their assessments of risk behaviors and developmental tasks. Practices receive training on quality

“VCHIP has been an integral part of the changes we are making at the Agency of Human Services to integrate all of the mental health, behavioral and developmental services, and supports we provide to the children, youth and families of Vermont.”

MELISSA BAILEY, MA, LCMHC, Integrated Family Services Director, Vermont Agency of Human Services

improvement, health care topics specific to adolescence, the use of risk behavior and strength-based screening tools, and strategies to improve their office interventions and referral processes. Practice quality improvements have focused on improving rates of adolescent immunizations, and screenings for Chlamydia, substance abuse, and mental health, among others.

Current evaluation activities in this area include the statewide Vermont Youth Suicide Prevention Project. Suicide prevention gatekeepers at Vermont schools and agencies are trained to recognize signs of suicidality, respond appropriately, and connect young people with needed services. Another evaluation project comprehensively examines how the Vermont mental health care system supports youth in transition. This project aims to develop and implement an improved system of care for young people ages 16 to 22 years who have been diagnosed with a severe emotional disability. Both projects use a wide array of tools and data sources to identify aspects of the system that are not performing as expected and support ways to implement positive change.

PREVENTION AND CHRONIC ILLNESS

One quarter (26%) of Vermont students in grades 8-12 are above a healthy weight, and overweight among our youngest Vermonters has more than doubled in the past 20 years.¹ A VCHIP survey of more than 100 primary care practices resulted in the development of the *Promoting Healthier Weight in Pediatrics* toolkit, which incorporates a strength-based approach for engaging families in healthy weight discussions and offers tips for encouraging lifestyle and dietary changes. Subsequently, VCHIP worked with 17 practices over 4 years to support evidence-based interventions to address pediatric overweight and obesity.

VCHIP also collaborates with schools and subspecialists to help identify and serve populations with specific chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and cystic fibrosis. At the Fletcher Allen Health Care's Pediatric Diabetes Clinic, VCHIP coached Certified Diabetes Educators in developing a clinic-specific pediatric Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) curriculum, which resulted in national recognition by the American Diabetes Association. Another chronic illness project engaged school nurses and families to help develop asthma action plans based on current best practice guidelines.

1. Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009.

RESOURCES AND TOOLKITS

VCHIP and our partners have developed a variety of resources that support health care improvements. These resources are practical, hands-on tools intended to inform and support evidence-based care in a variety of settings. Please visit www.vchip.org for copies of these as well as additional free resources.

- Improving Prenatal Care in Vermont State Guide and Toolkit
- Vermont Guidelines: Opioid Dependence in Pregnancy
- Establishing a Child Health Improvement Partnership: A How-to Guide
- Promoting Healthier Weight in Pediatrics Toolkit

Highlights in the Evolution of VCHIP

- 2011** Child Health Advances Measured in Practice (CHAMP)*
- 2010** CHIPRA Demonstration Project*
- 2009** Developmental and Autism Screening*
Late Preterm Infant Quality Improvement*
National Improvement Partnership Network (NIPN)*
- 2008** Bright Futures
Medicaid Policy Consultation and Evaluation*
- 2005-07** Chronic Illness*
Blueprint Evaluation*
Promoting Healthier Weight in Pediatrics
- 2004** Care of the Opiate-Exposed Newborn*
- 2003** Child Mental Health*
Improvement Partnerships
Improving Prenatal Care in Vermont
- 2002** Vermont Hospital Preventive Services Initiative
Youth in Foster Care
- 2001** Youth Health Improvement Initiative*
- 2000** Vermont Preventive Services Initiative
- 1999** Core funding obtained and VCHIP Executive Director hired
- 1994-98** On-going collaboration among VDH, UVM, AAP-VT and VAFP

* Active projects (as of 2011)