

CCSHCN collaborates with DCBS and Home of the Innocents for Open Arms Program

Statewide News Release

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Center will offer comprehensive medical care to foster children

Project is collaboration of state agencies, Home of the Innocents

(Oct. 30, 2013) The Kentucky Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs (CCSHCN) and the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) are pleased to announce a new collaboration with the Home of the Innocents to serve the medical needs of children in foster care.

Open Arms Children's Health, a service of Home of the Innocents, will provide primary care services to children in the Louisville area who are in out-of-home placements. The goal of the center is to meet the needs of children who often miss routine health care in a one-stop setting.

The CCSHCN will provide care coordination to DCBS foster families who receive services at the center. Care coordination ensures that children receive all the services they need, while reducing duplication. It is especially important for children in foster care or with special needs.

CCSHCN and DCBS are agencies of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Both departments share a goal to support the health and well-being of children and youth.

DCBS Commissioner Teresa James said the comprehensive care is needed since greater numbers of children with increasingly complicated and serious physical, mental health and developmental problems are coming into foster care.

"All children in foster care need to receive initial health screenings and comprehensive assessments of their medical developmental status," she said. "Pediatricians have an important role in all aspects of the foster care system. This partnership with the commission and Home of the Innocents ensures that role will be strong."

CCSHCN Executive Director Jackie Richardson said the pairing is a perfect fit.

"CCSHCN has the medical expertise to assist DCBS with its medical services needs," she said. "Providing health care to foster children may take extra care and attention. These nurses and doctors are prepared to ask the right questions and provide necessary care even when little specific medical history is available."

Open Arms provides integrated health care including medical, dental, hearing, vision, radiology and behavioral health services for children with exceptional health care needs.

James and Richardson said their agencies are proud to work with Home of the Innocents.

“Home of the Innocents has long been a significant partner to this cabinet because of its commitment to caring for children,” Richardson said. “By providing comprehensive medical care for foster children, Open Arms Children’s Health is yet another model of its advocacy for child well-being.”

The center will offer services from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, until 8 p.m. at least one night a week and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at least two Saturdays per month.

About 7, 000 children are in out-of-home care in Kentucky.

See the DCBS website for more information about becoming a foster parent, log on to [www.dcbshomecare.com](#) or call (800) 232-5437 -- (800) 232-KIDS.

CCSHCN has 12 regional offices in Kentucky, including Louisville. The CCSHCN serves children and youth with physical disabilities to age 21.

For information about services through the Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs, call 800-232-1160.

For information about Open Arms Children’s Health or to schedule an appointment, call 502-596-1040.

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state’s human services and health care programs, including Medicaid, the Department for Community Based Services and the Department for Public Health. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full and part-time employees throughout the commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.