



Research Week 2023

“Supporting families – navigating care and services for children with special health needs (CYSHN),” a course for community health workers

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Abstract

One in five Oregon children under age 18 has a special health need, and half do not receive needed care coordination (National Survey of Children’s Health, 2020). Workforce shortages contribute to the lack of access to care coordination. Community Health Workers (CHWs) play an important role in the workforce by helping families achieve equitable access to care and resources. However, there is a dearth of training on cross-sector care coordination specific to Oregon child-serving systems.

The Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs (OCCYSHN) developed a course for CHWs and others in navigation roles. It provides an overview of Oregon’s child-servicing systems, including strategies for supporting families in accessing services and resources for their children.

In a course pilot survey, 78% of participants reported that the course was relevant to their work. Participants reported that the course was useful in building their confidence in working with children and families in five areas.

CHWs with the knowledge and strategies to help families navigate services and resources can improve care coordination for children. The course is an important resource for building CYSHN-specific capacity among a broader workforce.