CareConnect360 helps Michigan focus health and human services efforts on people, not programs.

What began as a tool to integrate physical and behavioral health data has evolved into something broader — and Michigan foster care children are among those who will benefit.

"It was like a light had been turned on after operating in the dark for years," one Michigan foster care staffer proclaimed.

Another added, "CareConnect360 has been extremely helpful in allowing us to track down the dates exams were completed, and to see who the physician was that completed them. Prior to CareConnect360, we were often unable to verify completed dental exams, and CareConnect360 has broken that barrier."

These professionals were extolling the benefits of Michigan's CareConnect360 (CC360), a statewide Web portal and care management tool developed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to integrate physical and behavioral health-related information — along with other human services data — to provide a comprehensive view of an individual's care needs.

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in Michigan, CC360 was initially rolled out to the state's health plans that serve Medicaid beneficiaries as a way to close a significant gap in the care continuum — prior to the implementation of CC360, health plans offering behavioral health services (Pre-paid Inpatient Health Plans or PIHPs) did not have access to a member's physical health information; and Medicaid Health Plans (MHPs), which provide physical health services, had no insight into a patient's mental illness or developmental disabilities. CC360 integrated the physical and behavioral data, enabling health plans to integrate care.

And now, Michigan has gone one step further by using CC360 to improve the health and safety of Michigan's nearly 13,000 children in foster care. MDHHS has granted CC360 access to authorized MDHHS foster care professionals to obtain physical and behavioral health information about the children they serve, more than 95 percent of whom are covered by Medicaid. The next release of the CC360 software will connect another 1,800 private agency foster care professionals in the field to the tool, which will enable them to access a child's medical history, information they can review before a home visit.

With the noted access, case workers will be able to understand, analyze, and monitor the medical care received by foster children, as well as offering insight into their medical histories, including:

- Whether and how they are being treated for chronic medical conditions
- Number of and reasons for emergency department visits (repeated visits could indicate signs of abuse or untreated medical conditions)
- Number and types of filled medications that health professionals have prescribed for both physical and behavioral issues
- Whether children have received dental treatment
- Whether children have made well-child visits and are under the care of a physician

Authorized child welfare professionals can also use the CC360 tool to identify gaps in care and to inform new foster parents of a child's medical background when the child is placed. MDHHS follows strict privacy and security policies that govern access to residents' personal information and is committed to respecting and protecting their privacy. While foster care professionals previously could access medical records of the children they served, they now have more immediate access to physical and behavioral health care information.

The state's goal is to provide coordinated care to children in foster care by addressing their behavioral, developmental and physical health needs in a comprehensive, cost-effective way. MDHHS has acknowledged that state employees, technology partners, health plans, and community advocacy groups have collaborated on and embraced this important public-private initiative.

Breaking down silos

By providing foster care professionals with access to children's health information, MDHHS is helping to advance the state's overall vision of focusing on "people not programs," in the state's efforts to help all Michiganders lead healthier lives. MDHHS's long-stated goal has been to break down the silos between "health" and "human services" programs, pointing out that citizens' health is influenced by a large number of factors not often categorized as traditional health issues.

The health care needs of children in foster care are often extensive and compounded by their circumstances. Foster children face numerous challenges that have an impact on their health and well-being, including emotional, behavioral and educational difficulties, placement instability issues, and juvenile justice involvement. With CC360, Michigan's foster care professionals now have a window into the care and treatment of these children, which will enable them to make better and faster decisions and improve overall health outcomes for this vulnerable population. In turn, MDHHS is able to provide a strong data-supported foundation upon which to measure and monitor programs.

The data-sharing and analytical capabilities offered by CC360 offers the promise of enhanced and improved benefits for Michigan's children in foster care.

CC360 also integrates dental, pharmacy, demographic, and other human services data to improve wellness among foster children.

A holistic view for each person

Beyond its foster care capabilities, CC360 offers benefits across the Medicaid age and demographic spectrum. By providing plans with a holistic view of Medicaid beneficiaries, the state has taken a huge step in its ability to assess the quality of care and treat the whole person, whether child or adult.

For example, medical professionals have frequently pointed out that those individuals with behavioral illnesses also have a higher incidence of life-shortening physical illnesses than the general population, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and stroke. With comprehensive information on a person's physical health, PIHPs can develop a much more effective overall care plan. Similarly, MHPs can also benefit by access to behavioral health data, particularly by having knowledge of medications that are being prescribed for behavioral illnesses.

CC360's capabilities assist plans as they develop care/case management plans for individuals. The system stratifies those who are considered "high needs," which includes individuals with three or more chronic conditions (such as, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, COPD) within the previous 18 months. "High utilizers" of emergency department visit are identified as those with 12 ED-related claims or encounters within the previous six months. And those "trending toward high utilization" are flagged when they have six emergency department-related claims or encounters in the previous three months.

These capabilities enable health plans to reach out to specific individuals and their physicians to implement preventive measures, or encourage wellness visits and adherence to medication regimens. For instance, most health experts agree that a significant percentage of emergency room visits for persons with asthma can be prevented by patients using their inhalers as prescribed and adhering to other medication protocols.
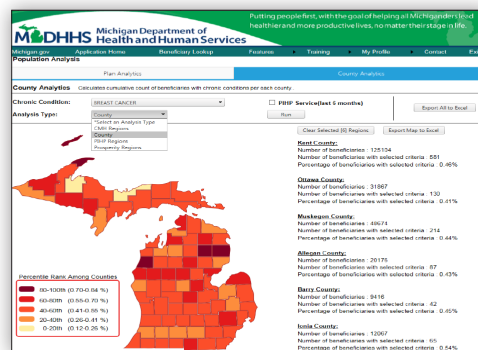
And, because data is drawn from the state's enterprise data warehouse — which includes vital records information — CC360 provides health plans with a list of people who have died within the last three months, thereby assisting in efforts to curb potential fraud or abuse.

Health trends as heat maps

In addition to offering deeper insights into an individual's care, CC360 also offers MDHHS and health plans the ability to identify and analyze aggregate health trends in the Medicaid population. Health plans can compare the health of their members with Michigan's statewide population by looking at the percentage of patients with major chronic issues such as asthma, diabetes, hypertension, lung issues, and bipolar and depression issues.

The tool also provides the state and health plans with "geographic visuals," so health care professionals can see dramatic graphic representations of people with chronic conditions in each county — again, identifying locations where outreach and more aggressive case management can take place.

The entire CC360 initiative — including making health care data available to foster care professionals — was developed as part of a collaborative effort among MDHHS, the behavioral and physical health plans, and Optum, one of the Department's health services and technology partners, which also works with the state to support the powerful enterprise data warehouse that provides data-sharing and analytic capabilities across Michigan state government, including serving as the analytical backbone for CC360. Representatives from each entity meet regularly as part of a workgroup that determines the types of reports, data functionality and analyses that would be most helpful in assessing the needs of Medicaid beneficiaries.
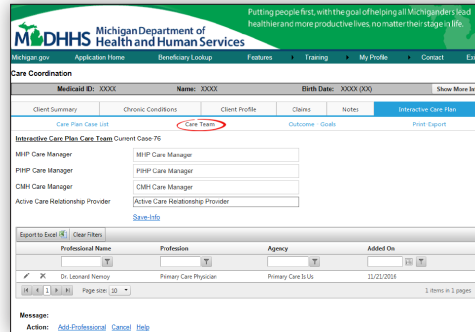
More responsive state services

CC360 has been heralded inside and outside of Michigan for its breakthrough data-sharing and analytics. A few examples:

- The state presented the solution at the 2016 Medicaid Enterprise Services Conference, prompting a representative from the Office of the National Coordinator's office to declare that the CC360's data-sharing capabilities were more advanced than he's seen anywhere else and offered exciting opportunities for improving outcomes and controlling costs.

- A report by the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards lauded CC360 for offering plans to identify "high- " or "super-utilizers" — those people with very high (and expensive) healthcare use patterns. Health professionals can reach out to these individuals and develop case management plans that may improve outcomes and improve costs.

- After Michigan presented CC360 at the IT Services Management Conference in the fall of 2016, Government Technology magazine reported: "The architecture of CareConnect360 has been designed to not only improve state services, but also to turbo-charge them in a way the state has never seen before…the platform…boasts an impressive ability to give foster care, medical care, and social services staff a comprehensive view of residents across multiple programs."

The magazine added: "What that means in simple terms is that foster care workers can now place children faster and attend to them more responsively. Information-gathering tasks that might have taken a week for a single case can now be accomplished in a matter of key strokes. Populations on specific health-plans and their conditions can be compared to state averages and other plans in a matter of minutes, and social workers can prioritize high-need and high-risk cases for outreach and services."

Michigan officials see CC360 access and capabilities broadening in the future to further MDHHS's goals of focusing on the whole person rather than the silos of individual programs. The state looks to provide expanded access to child welfare and juvenile justice professionals, add data on immunizations and long-term care and build in quality measures to determine the progress it is making on individual and population health. And eventually, Michigan expects to link additional "non-health" data — such as food assistance, cash assistance, and other social services — in an attempt to further provide insight into the overall well-being of children and adults. As each new capability is added to CC360, MDHHS professionals proceed with the state's vision to focus on the person.

Bolstered by a powerful enterprise data warehouse, high-quality data, strong data-governance protocols, and a robust, state-of-the-art CC360 portal acting as a "turbo-charger," Michigan's nationally renowned technology infrastructure is in place to make the state's health and human services policy goal a reality — it's all about people, not programs.

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> — *Government Technology Magazine*

Contact us to learn more.

Email: innovate@optum.com
Phone: 1-800-765-6092