



CMH NEWS **Winter 2025-26**

Information for Parents of Children with Complex Medical Needs

CMH MISSION:

To ensure, through the development and support of high quality, coordinated systems, that children, youth and young adults with special health care needs and their families obtain comprehensive care and services that are family-centered, community-based and culturally sensitive.

Warm winter wishes and welcome to the Complex Medical Help (CMH) newsletter!

This publication is for parents of children and youth in the CMH program. We hope the information here will be helpful for families in navigating our services. We also want to inform you about other great resources available in Ohio, inspire you with stories about people connected with CMH, and encourage you to become more involved.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Get to Know Your Public Health Nurse

Did you know that all CMH families have access to a Public Health Nurse (PHN)? Local health departments employ nurses to work with CMH families. They are knowledgeable about the CMH program and local resources and support that can help families. Your PHN can help you with applications or cost share paperwork when it's time to renew your CMH eligibility. If you move or have other changes that need to be made in your contact information, let your PHN know, and they can update your CMH record. If your child receives a new diagnosis or starts to see a new specialist, make sure you contact your PHN to see if

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CONTACT US

Monday-Friday – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Phone: (614) 466-1700 –
General Resource Line, including Help Me Grow

Parents/Enrollees Only: (800) 755-4769

Fax: (614) 728-3616

Email: BCMh@odh.ohio.gov

Website: <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/complex-medical-help/>



**Department of
Health**

Complex Medical Help

Get to Know Your Public Health Nurse continued

additional services can be added to your letter of approval. They can also provide you with information and resources about a new diagnosis and any daily care related to it. Need to find a CMH provider for services, equipment, or medical supplies? Your PHN can help. They can also connect you with programs like Help Me Grow, the Special Supplemental Nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Job & Family Services, and local support groups. Maintain regular contact through home visits, phone calls, texts, or emails, and your PHN can be a valuable member of your child's network of support.

Here's a success story about a team effort with collaborating partnerships such as with a CMH Field Nurse Case Manager (NCM) and Family Support Specialists. One of our PHN's was working with a CMH family – a very young child and a single mom. The child has extremely complex medical needs. In working on a plan of care with the mom, the NCM felt that additional support was needed. She reached out to a Family Support Specialist (FSS) with [Ohio Family 2 Family](#). Together, they supported the mom to apply for an Ohio Homecare Waiver (OHCW). Her initial application was denied, but the FSS reached out to contacts at the Ohio Department of Medicaid. They were able to share information about a change in the Ohio Revised Code rules pertaining to the level of care requirements for the OHCW. This information led to a successful appeal with Carestar and the child now has the additional support of the OHCW.

If you are having a problem getting the services and support your child needs, reach out to your CMH PHN and see if they have resources to suggest or a referral to a partner organization that can help. If you are unsure who your PHN is, call your local health department and ask to speak with the CMH public health nurse. You can also email ODH at bcmh@odh.ohio.gov and we will send your PHN contact information to you directly.

“As special needs parents, we don't have the power to make life 'fair,' but we do have the power to make life joyful.” – Unknown

Family Spotlight

Annah is a mom whose son, Isodoro, is on the CMH program. We chatted about her family and their story. Here are the highlights:

Isodoro was a full-term baby, but there were complications at the end of the pregnancy, and he was born via emergency C-section. He then began having seizures. They did a cooling treatment with him that was like an induced coma, and it saved his life. People see a child who doesn't walk and assume that's the greatest challenge, but the seizures and communication barriers are actually

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Family Spotlight continued

the hardest part of living with his CP, according to Annah. Isodoro is 9 years old and has been on the CMH program his whole life. He has Cerebral Palsy (CP) and uses a wheelchair and an assistive communication device. He attends the local school.

Having never had friends with visible disabilities, Annah was unaware of the disability community or what it was like to live with a disability. She says, “it catapulted me into that world and made me an advocate.” She is on committees such as the local Disabilities Commission and the Adaptive Sports Committee in her town, where she can advocate for access and education about disabilities.

Isodoro attends the local public school where the playground was not accessible. So, Annah and another mom started a campaign to build an accessible playground. It’s been a three-year project, and they are still trying to cross the finish line with the last phase. They spent a year talking about it and forming a committee and deciding that the school PTO would be the non-profit to organize the effort. During that time, Annah did a lot of research into equipment and grants. Once the committee was formed, they launched in 2023 with a website and printed brochures to promote the fundraising campaign.

Being Isodoro’s mom has given Annah the knowledge, insight, and drive to make a difference locally that she hopes will have a broader impact. She is committed to paving the way for her son to have a normal life, to find his place in the community, and to help that community see his humanity and the contributions he can make.

Sometimes, as parents, we find it hard to get beyond that trauma perspective, especially when many around us are focused on the deficiency – all the things our child cannot do.

Annah is grateful for all that she has learned from adults with disabilities through her advocacy work. She commented that disability is universal, crossing all segments of society, and that most people do care and are willing to help – especially if you can tell them your story. And... there is a lot of work to be done!

To learn more about the playground project, visit AlexanderInclusivePlayground.org.



TELL YOUR STORY! We like to feature CMH family stories in our newsletters. If you’d like to share your journey for the benefit of other families, please send us your story and a few pictures. If you aren’t up for sharing the details but still have some cute photos of your child doing what they love, please send us those. Your child could be featured in our next brochure or web page story. Send them to Lynne.Fogel@odh.ohio.gov.

“Be strong enough to stand alone, smart enough to know when you need help, and brave enough to ask for it.” ~ Ziad K. Abdelnour

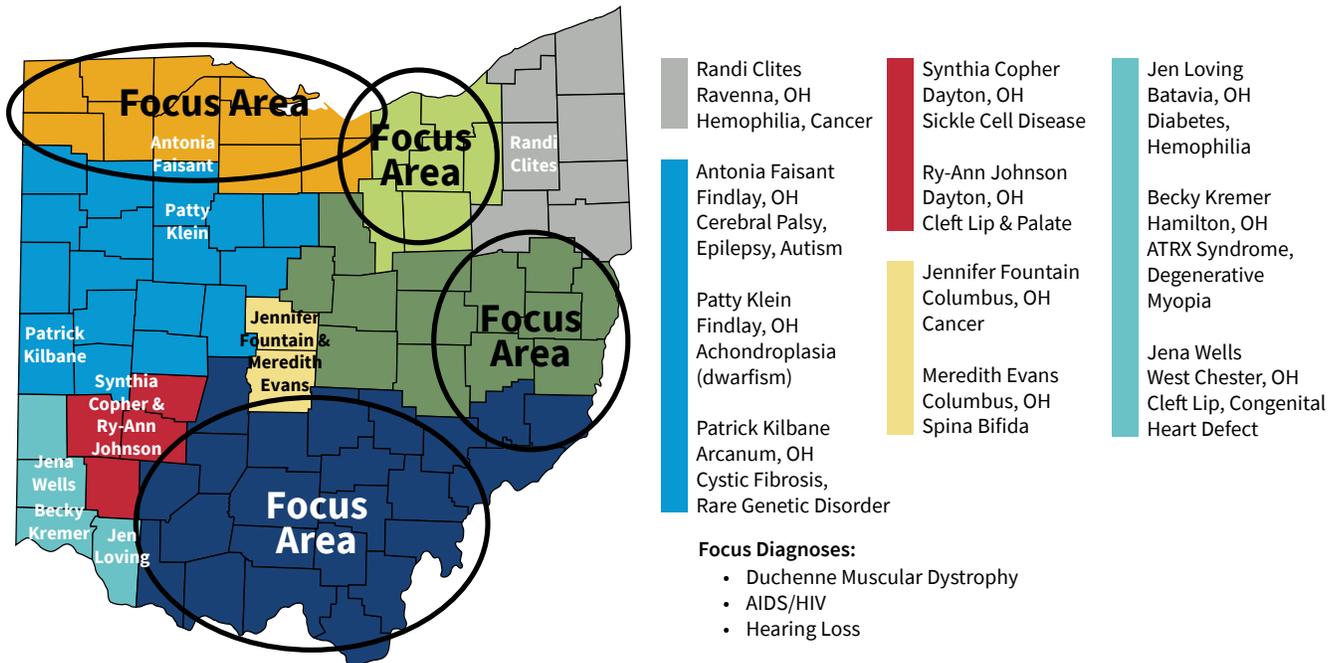
The CMH Parent Advisory Committee

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Complex Medical Help program is a group of parents whose children are on CMH. PAC members represent geographic, cultural, and diagnostic diversity. They receive updates about the CMH program, share information from their parts of the state or their diagnosis-specific groups, and they give input about ODH programs and materials to help ensure that they are family-focused and accessible. Meetings are quarterly and are sometimes in person but often virtual.

Do you live in one of these focus areas? If so, please consider applying to join our advisory committee. If you are interested or would like more information, reach out to one of our [Parent Consultants](#) about how to apply.



CMH PAC MEMBERS



“Every day may not be good, but there is something good in every day.” ~ Alice Morse Earle

YOUTH CORNER



This section of the newsletter is dedicated to items of interest to teens and young adults in the CMH program. We hope you find something interesting that encourages you to experience new things and make your voice heard.

Healthcare Transition spotlight – In this section we will be highlighting a resource that is helpful when you are planning for the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare. This issue’s featured resource is:



Community Life Guide: Transition to Adult Care

This set of learning modules is geared to young people with disabilities. The [Community Life Guide](#) series is found on the Ohio Employment First website. Transition to Adult Healthcare is one of several topics covered, enabling teens and young adults to learn about transition topics at their own pace.

Self-advocacy spotlight – Here we feature an opportunity for young people with disabilities in Ohio to learn more about self-advocacy, build leadership skills, and/or connect with other disabled youth to build community.

Disability Connect meetings

[Disability Connect](#) is a virtual gathering where Ohioans with disabilities can network with one another and connect with the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). These meetings are a great way to learn more about how DODD support and services can help you plan for and live your best life as an adult with disabilities. They are also an opportunity for building your network beyond your immediate friends and family in your community.

Looking for more resources for the transition to adulthood? This is just one of over 100 helpful resources collected on our website at the [Transition to Adulthood Resources page](#).

“To the world, you may be one person, but to one person, you may be the world.” ~ Dr. Seuss



Are you excited to get out and enjoy the outdoors, regardless of the weather? Here are some adaptive winter sports activities to check out:

1. Three Trackers of Ohio (Cleveland area):

- Specializes in adaptive skiing and snowboarding with trained instructors and equipment.
- **Website:** <http://www.3trackers.org>.

2. Adaptive Sports Ohio

- **Location:** Wooster, OH (with satellite offices in Warrensville Heights and Austintown).
- **Winter Sports:**
 - Sled Hockey (Columbus Blades and other teams).
 - Wheelchair basketball, rugby, and other adaptive sports year-round.
- **Website:** adaptivesportsohio.org.
- **Contact:** (330) 601-1400

3. Adaptive Sports Connection (Central Ohio)

- **Location:** Powell, OH.
- **Programs:**
 - Adaptive Skiing and snowboarding at Snow Trails Ski Resort (Mansfield) and Mad River Mountain (Zanesfield).
 - Specialized equipment: Mono-skis, bi-skis, ski bikes, adaptive snowboards.
- **Website:** adaptivesportsconnection.org.
- **Contact:** (614) 389-3921

4. Cincinnati Ice Breakers sled hockey

- **Website:** cincinnatiisledhockey.org.

Being a special needs parent means celebrating strengths, choosing to believe there is sun behind the clouds, and never ever giving up.” ~ Unknown

Not a fan of being outside in the cold? Dive into family fun at an indoor water park!

Whether the weather outside is frightful or delightful, it’s a balmy 84 degrees in Ohio’s exciting [indoor water parks!](#) Five parks throughout Ohio offer unique combinations of waterslides, water rides, pools, full-service spas, and more.

With its tropical theme, guests at [Castaway Bay](#) will feel like they’ve just landed on an island paradise upon entering this lush indoor water park resort. Great Wolf Lodge in [Mason](#) and [Sandusky](#) both feature plenty of fun - from waterslides and pools to interactive water features.

There is also [Kalahari Resorts](#) in Sandusky, which is considered the Midwest’s largest indoor waterpark, boasting 173,000 square feet of ‘wet, wild, fun.’ And lastly, there’s [Splash Harbor](#) in Bellville. It’s known for its 6,000-square-foot indoor water park that features plenty of water activities to enjoy, like a 49-foot looping water slide.

