

**Ohio**

**Children's  
Alliance**

*Leading change for child  
and family service providers*

## 2020 IMPACT STATEMENT

Each year the Ohio Children's Alliance strives to improve the lives of children and families by focusing our work on our four pillars: Educate, Advocate, Innovate, Connect. 2020 proved uniquely challenging as COVID-19 caused significant, lasting challenges that impact all of us. When the going got tough, the Ohio Children's Alliance got going. We expanded our communications efforts, connected community agencies to the most up-to-date information and resources, and provided a voice for our sector in state and federal COVID-19 response policies.

While we went full-force into responding to the pandemic, we did not let it disrupt our routine operations or inhibit our ability to grow. We utilized new, innovative modalities to continue convening trainings, conferences, and committee meetings, and to advance our initiatives. We released new reports, expanded our scope of work, enhanced our advocacy efforts, and secured several new grants through new partnerships.

Despite the challenges our sector faced, we are proud of what we accomplished together in furthering *our mission to sustainably improve the provision of services to children, young adults, and families through policy advocacy, performance improvement, and member support.*

## EDUCATE

### Sharing Knowledge, Resources and Opportunities

- ♦ Created a COVID-19 response webpage which was updated in real-time and included local, state, and federal COVID-19 policies, state and federal guidance, best practices, COVID-19 related legislation analyses, PPE information, and legal resources
- ♦ Utilized a new email platform to provide up-to-the-minute updates about COVID-19 policies and breaking news
- ♦ Informed members about state and federal COVID-19 funding streams from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Federal Communications Commission, the U.S. Small Business Administration, OhioMHAS, and the Ohio Office of Budget and Management
- ♦ Hosted a free telehealth virtual training series for behavioral health agencies
- ♦ Hosted an informational webinar on telehealth policy with Behavioral Health Directors from OhioMHAS and the Ohio Department of Medicaid
- ♦ Hosted three listening sessions on strategies to prevent out-of-state placements for residential care
- ♦ Convened the Seventh Annual Trauma-Informed Care Summit as the first-ever Virtual Summit with more than 1,000 participants, in partnership with OhioMHAS
- ♦ Expanded trauma informed care training options for 2020, including conversion to virtual training events, training more than 170 behavioral health practitioners across the nation
- ♦ Hosted a 3-part virtual Telehealth webinar series with an expert psychologist at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing critical information to more than 200 providers across the state
- ♦ Hosted a 2-part racial equity webinar and active discussion led by the Executive Director of Equity in the Center, for leadership teams with more than 40 community agencies across the state
- ♦ Convened our Annual Conference and OhioMHAS System of Care Conference for 5 days during the Fall. This first-ever Virtual Conference hosted more than 400 participants and included 20+ sponsors and exhibitors, four keynote speakers, and more than 20 breakout sessions, with expert trainers and state representatives, including three OPENMINDS workshops

- ◆ Facilitated answers for member organizations through our contract with a certified medical coder, providing timely information on telehealth services, documentation, and reimbursement medical coding questions
- ◆ Hosted a pre-COVID in-person training led by Sonda Kunzi, addressing best practices for coding and billing mental health, and managing healthcare reimbursement for 50 behavioral health providers from across the state
- ◆ Coordinated a 5-part webinar series on Value-Based Reimbursement and Quality Measures, with Michael Flora, MTM Services (National Council for Behavioral Health)

## ADVOCATE

### Applying Collective Strength to Promote Best Outcomes for Children and Families

- ◆ Successfully advocated for sustained, expanded flexibility and reimbursement of telehealth services through state legislation and administrative rules as well as federal legislation
- ◆ Submitted a letter to the Governor and leaders across the Child and Family Services sector advocating for decisive action in providing critical flexibilities and resources for community agencies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆ Successfully advocated for qualified civil immunity for community agencies responding to the COVID-19 crisis through state legislation
- ◆ Successfully advocated for state and federal COVID-19 relief efforts through calls-to-action, letters to government leaders and partnership with other state and federal advocacy groups, such as:
  - ◇ Extending foster care and Bridges program eligibility
  - ◇ Increasing the state's Medicaid payments through enhanced FMAP rates
  - ◇ Increasing PPE production and access for community agencies
  - ◇ ODJFS and OhioMHAS rule flexibilities
  - ◇ \$670 billion in PPP loans
  - ◇ \$425 million for community behavioral health organizations
- ◆ Fought for legislative changes and administrative enforcement of non-emergency Medicaid transportation (NEMT) on behalf of kids and families who rely on transportation assistance in order to attend day treatment programs
- ◆ Provided leadership to the State of Ohio on implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) by serving on the state Steering Committee, co-chairing the QRTP Subcommittee, serving on subcommittees and workgroups, and assisting in securing QRTP grant funding (\$16 million)
- ◆ Submitted comprehensive feedback to the Ohio Department of Medicaid on the re-procurement of their contracts with Managed Care Organizations
- ◆ Represented the Ohio Children's Alliance on the statewide Multi-System Youth Action Plan Committee and subcommittees, contributing to its recommendations on ending the practice of custody relinquishment, which were presented to the state legislature
- ◆ Successfully spearheaded advocacy efforts on Ohio House Bill 8, legislation to improve Ohio's foster caregiver training program, which was unanimously passed and signed by the Governor
- ◆ Celebrated the renewal of a \$100,000 Partnership for America's Children grant to continue advocacy efforts

- ◆ Represented our members' voices on several advocacy coalitions including the Ohio Legislative Children's Caucus, Advocates for Ohio's Future, Lead Free Kids Coalition, Ready Set Soar Ohio, Coalition for Healthy Communities, and Parity at 10 Coalition
- ◆ Became a member of the Ohio Children's Budget Coalition and initiated one of the coalition's budget briefs to present to the Governor's Office and the legislature
- ◆ Represented the Ohio Children's Alliance on the Governor's Children Services Transformation Advisory Council and contributed to its report on comprehensive child welfare recommendations
- ◆ Promoted opportunities for agencies to achieve deemed status in light of FFPSA
- ◆ Joined children's advocacy coalitions across the state to advocate for the creation of adoption linked deposit program, which would provide reduced interest loans for adoption expenses
- ◆ Raised awareness of the viability of Medicaid coverage for children placed in residential centers, through advocacy with state leaders and Ohio Members of Congress, joining the Association of Children's Residential Centers, and joining a national IMD coalition through the National Organization of State Associations for Children
- ◆ Assisted the Ohio Department of Health in establishing a new youth homelessness program to equip community agencies to address this important need

## INNOVATE

### Up Front, In Front and Prepared for the Future

- ◆ Established a formal commitment to pursuing achievement of racial equity for the first time in our history
- ◆ Earned the first value-based payment for our Clinically Integrated Network, totaling more than \$20,000, through a partnership with UnitedHealthcare
- ◆ Partnered with UnitedHealthcare and Molina to award grants totaling more than \$100,000, to equip community agencies to adopt telehealth, and \$20,000 to support Intensive Home-Based Treatment (IHBT) program expansion
- ◆ Partnered with Aetna to secure an investment of \$100,000 to establish a statewide network of same-day access centers so that families can access the care they need, when they need it
- ◆ Partnered with ODJFS to provide \$50,000 in mini-grants to residential and group home agencies to meet the immediate need for additional PPE
- ◆ Formed a Learning Community for Home Visiting providers to foster peer learning, advance best practices, and help more agencies access FFPSA prevention dollars through accredited programs
- ◆ Celebrated almost three years of operating the Bridges program which has successfully served almost 2,000 young adults who aged out of Ohio's foster care system; 94% of whom successfully enrolled in education or maintained employment
- ◆ Developed an Americorps program, with the support of ServeOhio, to administer mentoring support to foster care children approaching emancipation, as well as young adults preparing to be on their own without the support of our state's extended foster care program, Bridges
- ◆ Equipped our Clinically Integrated Network to achieve success on behavioral health outcome measures by launching a comprehensive training and improvement plan
- ◆ Advanced cutting-edge data sharing capabilities by onboarding our Clinically Integrated Network to a Health Information Exchange platform

- ◆ Partnered with CareSource to develop a respite care program to quickly connect kids to a much needed and underutilized service
- ◆ Collaborated with Nationwide Children's Hospital to create an innovative referral platform to improve transitions of care for children with mental illness

## CONNECT

### Fostering a Respected Community of Collaborators

- ◆ Expanded our full membership to 82 agencies statewide for the first time in our history
- ◆ Launched a brand new, redesigned website containing enhanced members-only content, an updated events page, weekly policy updates, and an advocacy toolkit for members to utilize
- ◆ Adapted to virtual platforms, including Zoom and Microsoft Teams, to connect with community providers, our training audience, and policy makers
- ◆ Obtained PPE from Humana and NAMI Ohio to distribute to community agencies and essential personnel
- ◆ Provided exemplary support to Bridges participants during the COVID-19 outbreak, in partnership with ODJFS, allowing participants to remain connected to their service teams and other needed resources during a time of great stress
- ◆ Increased the frequency of all committee meetings and created a weekly Leadership Roundtable virtual meeting for member agency CEOs and upper management
- ◆ Partnered with the Ohio Department of Higher Education to administer the Ohio Reach program and its mission to provide support services to former foster youth attending college
- ◆ Released a back-to-school toolkit to help schools connect with community behavioral health resources to combat the effects of COVID-19 on children
- ◆ Released a best practices report for the state to expand the vital role of kinship caregivers in Ohio's public child welfare system
- ◆ Re-launched a streamlined monthly member newsletter