



February 25, 2020

## Heart Health Month Includes Children Too!

February is American Heart Health Month! Traditionally this month raises awareness of heart health and urges adults to make health choices to prevent heart disease. This year, Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) is focusing on helping children with heart conditions lead healthy lives.

Congenital heart defects (CHDs) are the most common types of birth defects. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about one million children are living with a congenital heart defect. A 2016 study found that compared to children without a heart condition, children with a heart condition were more likely to have special health care needs; including medication needs, physical or speech therapy, and treatment for developmental or behavioral problems. Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) can help families with these special health care needs.

CSHCS, a Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) program, coordinates and pays for specialty health care for children and some adults with special health care needs. Eligibility for CSHCS is based on the child's medical condition rather than income. More than 2,700 chronic medical conditions are eligible for CSHCS coverage, including asthma, cancer, cerebral palsy, cleft palate, liver disease, limb abnormalities, certain vision disorders, paralysis or spinal injuries, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, insulin-dependent diabetes, muscular dystrophy, certain heart conditions, epilepsy, and kidney disease. In addition to having a qualifying medical condition, the child must live in Michigan and be under the age of 21 to qualify. There is a sliding-scale fee to join CSHCS that is based on family income and family size. If the client has Medicaid or MICHild insurance or has a court-appointed guardian or is in foster care, this fee is waived.

Children's Special Health Care Services can assist children with special health care needs and their families by:

- Paying for specialty medical bills, and covering co-pays and deductibles
- Covering qualifying travel expenses
- Helping find specialty services
- Supporting coordination of services
- Helping families with language and cultural differences
- Assisting in locating resources
- Connecting families to community-based services through local health departments

BEDHD is an advocate for CSHCS and provides services to eligible residents in Barry and Eaton counties. For more information on the types of diagnoses covered or the services CSHCS provides visit [barryeatonhealth.org/childrens-special-health-care-services](http://barryeatonhealth.org/childrens-special-health-care-services) or call (269) 798-4115 (Barry County) or (517) 541-2696 (Eaton County).

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