The Maternal and Child Health Bureau’s Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs awarded the “Innovation in Care Integration for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Developmental Disabilities (ASD/DD) Program” grants to 4 distinct grantees in Sept. 2016. The purpose of this program is to support the implementation of strategies to integrate care at a state system level for children and youth with ASD/DD with a special emphasis on improving care for children and youth in medically underserved populations. The recipients were charged with integrating care across systems to improve access to appropriate screening, referral, diagnosis, care coordination, and services through the implementation of innovative, evidence-informed models of 1) family support and navigation, 2) shared resources, and 3) telehealth and/or telemedicine (including mobile health) health information technologies.

The below four awarded grantees participated in a community of learners facilitated by AMCHP’s State Public Health Autism Resource Center, which allowed the grantees to collectively problem solve and share strategies through brainstorming sessions, workshops, and skills training sessions.

The “Building Bridges: Improving Access to Timely and Effective Services for Children with ASD/DD and Their Families” project, funded through the University of Delaware, focuses on creating an innovative model that improves the delivery of screening, evaluation and intervention services for children with ASD/DD and their families, through new linkages between families and both existing and new programs. The project seeks to enhance current initiatives, bridge identified gaps, and connect key community stakeholders towards a system that values family involvement, promotes evidence-based practices, and provides coordinated services reimbursable by insurance.

The Autism Project’s Creating the Connections project provides peer navigation, support, and training to Rhode Island families of children at risk for or diagnosed with ASD/DD and to the professionals who support them. The program leverages partnerships and technologies to engage program participants in recognizing the early signs of ASD/DD, navigating systems of care on behalf of their children/the children they work with, referring children for screening and evaluation in a timely manner, and increasing their sense of efficacy in providing support. The Autism Project is a trusted resource for families and professionals across the state to access both knowledge and lived wisdom to support children with ASD/DD.

The WA State Department of Health (DOH), state Title V Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program coordinates the grant through collaboration and partnership with several project partners including family-led and community organizations, autistic advocates and other state agencies. This Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Developmental Disabilities Project in WA “AS3D” is centered around Systems Integration, Family Navigation, and Policy Reform.

The “Wisconsin Care Integration Initiative” at the Waisman Center University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, University of Wisconsin-Madison, is designed to advance the goals of the WI Act Early State Plan, with a particular emphasis on providing the “linkages” between the goals using the grant strategies of family navigation, telehealth, and shared resource. The Act Early State Plan goals are organized around addressing family engagement; system of early identification and referrals; assessment, evaluation, and diagnosis; intervention and coordinated community supports; and statewide coordination. The Wisconsin Care Integration Initiative utilizes family engagement and local partnership in medically underserved communities to pilot system changes to promote care integration.