State Spotlight: North Carolina

Overview

North Carolina, the 10th largest state in the country, with the third largest prevalence rate of ASD. It is a largely rural state with a relatively low number of medical professionals across disciplines trained to screen, assess, diagnose, and provide evidence-based interventions for children with ASD/DD. North Carolina has many state and private agencies that focus on children's needs. Led by the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the grant team will organize agencies through the Autism Alliance to address many of the state wide service needs for young children with ASD. Partners include Title V, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the TEACCH Program, and the Autism Society of North Carolina.

To view North Carolina's State Grantee Profile, click here.

To learn more about North Carolina's work, visit the Autism Alliance's webpage here.

Project Activities

North Carolina's team goals include:

- Increasing the number of children with ASD who are identified by 24 months, receive a diagnostic evaluation by 36 months and are enrolled in early intervention services by 48 months.
- Increasing access to culturally-competent family-centered medical homes
- Improving the organization and capacity of community-based systems with the state
- Increasing public and private awareness of the signs and symptoms of ASD
- Increasing family and youth involvement
- Completing phase III of the statewide needs assessment addressing family needs and barriers

The project activities are described below.

Regional Networks

Using a state wide regional approach, the North Carolina team will identify regional services, training needs, and barriers to appropriate screening, assessment, diagnosis, and early intervention for young children with special needs.

Autism Society Family Support Network

North Carolina's team utilized the Autism Society Family Support Network to provide outreach to underserved populations, particularly those with minority backgrounds.

To view the Autism Society of North Carolina's Family Support webpage, click here.
Statewide Family Survey

North Carolina conducted a comprehensive, statewide family survey that focused on children with ASD/DD. The data gathered from the survey will be used to facilitate future work with families and children with ASD/DD.

Partnerships with State and Community Programs

The team is partnering with state-based agencies, such as Child Development Services Agencies, to increase the knowledge and capabilities of these professionals, particularly in interdisciplinary settings. The team is also working with the North Carolina Council of Community Programs in order to provide training to the mental health community on appropriate ASD-screening and targeted triage and referral to appropriate professionals in the regional medical home/health home for that individual and their family.

To visit the North Carolina Council of Community Programs webpage, click here.

Successes & Lessons Learned

North Carolina faced challenges with statewide budget cuts to services and agencies that work with children with special health care needs. However, their efforts have been a good gap-filler for professional development needs. Additionally, their engagement with both public and private agencies that focus on early childhood services facilitated the development of a statewide infrastructure and sustained ASD-related services.

To access more of North Carolina's resources through SPHARC's search engine, click here.