

**Title: Assuring Access to Quality Nutrition Services for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs**

**Project Leaders:** Susan Filkins, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition Consultant and Marilyn Hartzell, Director, Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs

Others involved in this project: Sharon Feucht, MA, RD, CD, Center on Human Development and Disability (CHDD) University of WA; Joan Zerzan, MS, RD, WA State Dept of Health; Cheryl Alto, MS, RD, Oregon WIC; Mary Ann Evans, MPH, PhD, OCCYSHN.

**Background/Introduction:** In Oregon, dietitians providing medical nutrition therapy for children with special health needs are concentrated in the Portland metro area creating access problems for families and creating challenges evaluating effectiveness of care. Using the Washington State Nutrition Network as an example, Oregon is seeking to create a similar Network to provide training and support for dietitians who could see CYSHN closer to their home communities.

**Methods:**

- Medicaid data analysis. Who receives MNT in Oregon (by whom, for what and where)?
- Workforce analysis: Oregon Healthcare Workforce Committee report. OR licensing agency: geographic distribution of LDs.
- Parent to Parent Listening sessions.
- Surveys of RDs to identify reimbursement barriers and educational needs.

**Results:**

- Medicaid data analysis: 2007-2011; 12,157 claims paid for 7,404 clients (1.64 visits each).
  - Obesity, FTT, dysphagia, preemie, feeding problems most common dx codes.
- Projected openings for RDs in OR by 2018 = 312. 9 counties in OR have 0 LDs; 3 have 1 LD each, 2 have 2 LDs each.
- Parent-to-Parent: on-going. Blended diet, ASD, oral/motor feeding difficulties.
- RD surveys: on-going. WIC RDs frequently provide services that are not separately billed.
- Telemedicine may be an appropriate strategy in rural areas of Oregon lacking any RD services.

**Summary/Discussion:** The Oregon Nutrition Network project aims to create infrastructure in communities to support the delivery of quality nutrition care services for children and youth with special health needs. Ongoing data collection and analysis, with focused interviews of nutrition service providers and families throughout the state, are providing a better understanding of service gaps and will lead to a focused response to address them.