

Children and Youth with Special Health Needs News

August 2026

CYSHN updates

Upcoming CYSHN local public health workshops

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has opened registration for the final in-person [2026 Children and Youth with Special Health Needs Local Public Health Workshops](#).

The purpose of these workshops is to bring together local public health professionals to connect, share best practices, and explore solutions to today's public health challenges. Our theme is "Equipped for the Future: Tools and Resources for CYSHN Outreach."

- **Southwest workshop:** Wednesday, Oct. 7 at the Lyon County Southwest Health and Human Services Office in Marshall. (Register by Monday, Sept. 7)
- **Northeast workshop:** Tuesday, Oct. 20 at the St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services - Duluth Government Services Center. (Register by Monday, Sept. 21)

Remembering Ashley Fredrickson

We are saddened by the passing of Ashley Fredrickson, RN, who served Marshall and Kittson counties. Ashley was a valued partner of Minnesota's condition follow-up and Follow Along programs and a dedicated public health nurse whose compassion and commitment to children and families made a lasting impact. We are grateful for Ashley's contributions to children and families in Minnesota and extend our sincere condolences to her family, friends, colleagues, and community.

Read [Ashley Fredrickson](#)'s obituary.

Program-specific updates

Upcoming Follow Along Program invoice deadlines

After completing semi-annual data reporting for the program, please submit your invoice using the [data reporting](#) survey, the separate [FAP semi-annual](#)

[invoicing](#) survey, or send your invoice by email to health.cyshn@state.mn.us no later than Thursday, Aug. 20.

September awareness activities

Folic Acid Awareness Week

Folic Acid Awareness Week is Sept. 13 – 19, and the [National Birth Defects Prevention Network](#) has released a collection of free resources to help organizations and individuals raise awareness about the role of folic acid in reducing the risk of neural tube defects. About 2,300 pregnancies in the United States are affected by a neural tube defect each year, and getting 400 mcg of folic acid daily before pregnancy can help reduce that risk.

The [Folic Acid Awareness Week](#) webpage includes ready-to-use social media graphics and messages; infographics; sample articles and press releases; and links to additional educational resources that can support local outreach efforts throughout the year. Many materials are available in multiple languages, and versions without NBDPN branding are also provided for partners with their own communication requirements.



National Sickle Cell Awareness Month



Every September, MDH and our partners recognize National Sickle Cell Awareness Month to increase understanding of sickle cell disease, a genetic blood disorder that affects approximately 100,000 people in the United States and millions worldwide.

People living with sickle cell disease have red blood cells that become hard, sticky, and crescent- or sickle-shaped, which can block blood flow and cause severe pain, anemia, and other serious health complications.

Read stories from Minnesotans living with sickle cell disease in the Minnesota Sickle Cell Foundation's [Warrior Stories](#) series. Another story will be released in September. Learn more about [National Sickle Cell Awareness Month](#) on the campaign webpage.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Month

September is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness, amplify the voices of people with lived experience, and strengthen support for individuals, families, and communities impacted by FASD.



Throughout September, Proof Alliance is offering several ways to get involved, including a lived experience panel on Tuesday, Sept. 1, the GlowRed campaign for FASD Awareness Day on Wednesday, Sept. 9, and an FASD Awareness Challenge running all month.

Learn more about FASD Awareness Month activities and how to participate on the Proof Alliance [FASD Awareness Month](#) webpage.

Upcoming webinars, trainings, and events

Regional systems gatherings

Join MDH for a series of in-person regional gatherings across Minnesota during summer and fall 2026 for [Supporting Well-Functioning Systems for CYSHN and Families](#). These conversation-based gatherings will bring together partners from across health and related systems to reflect on what helps systems work well within each region, where families experience challenges or disconnection, and how systems can become more coordinated and supportive for children and youth with special health needs and disabilities and their families.

Next regional gathering dates

All gatherings will take place from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and will include lunch.

- **Monday, Aug. 10:** Metro South (Lakeville)
- **Tuesday, Sept. 15:** Southwest (Mankato)
- **Thursday, Oct. 8:** Southeast (Rochester)
- **Thursday, Oct. 28:** Metro North (Brooklyn Center)

Complete the [Regional Systems Gatherings Registration](#) form to attend.

Aug. 21 – National Center's Title V virtual café

These monthly virtual cafés are designed for Title V children and youth with special health care needs programs and staff, offering a space to connect, learn, and share ideas with peers. Please be sure to register for each session individually. The next session is listed below, but you can find registration links for all of the virtual cafés on the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) website.

- **Friday, Aug. 21 at 11 a.m.:** [Advancing Care Coordination & Medical Home for CYSHCN](#)

Sept. 2 – Introduction to using the ages and stages questionnaires

Family home visiting is offering a combined ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 training on **Wednesday, Sept. 2, from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.** via Microsoft Teams. This training is open to Follow Along Program contacts who want an introduction to understanding the use and purpose of these developmental and social emotional screening tools. To register, visit [training and professional development](#) webpage underneath “current trainings.”

Sept. 17 – Dear Future Me: Lifelong Benefits of Folic Acid



Join MDH and the National Birth Defects Prevention Network for **Dear Future Me: Lifelong Benefits of Folic Acid on Thursday, Sept. 17 from noon – 1 p.m.**

During this multidisciplinary webinar, panelists will share examples of initiatives to increase folate and folic acid intake, discuss promising approaches and implementation challenges, and highlight practical takeaways for professionals working to improve maternal and infant health.

Registration will open later in August on the [Folic Acid Awareness Week](#) webpage.

Resource corner

Help spread the word about Camp Superkids

Registration is open for [Camp Superkids](#), an overnight YMCA camp for youth ages 7 to 16 with asthma, as well as children who want to learn how to better support a friend or family member with asthma. Held Aug. 23 to 27 at YMCA Camp Ihduhapi in Loretto, Camp Superkids combines traditional camp activities with asthma education in a medically supervised environment designed to build confidence, independence, and self-management skills. Scholarships are available, and some families may qualify for insurance coverage through participating health plans. Register by Sunday, Aug. 9

Invoicing

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Jan. 1 - March 31	April 1 - June 30	July 1 - Sept. 30	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

Condition Follow-up

Complete nursing follow-up documentation in MEDSS by the end of the quarter after the one in which the referral was made. For example, if the date the event was sent to local public health is July 15 (in quarter 3), the follow-up documentation should be submitted by Dec. 31 (the end of quarter 4).

Invoice letters are sent to local public health by MDH in the month following the end of the quarter in which documentation was submitted, or training was completed. So, in the example, the invoice letter would be sent to local public health some time before Jan. 31 (the month following the end of quarter 4).

Follow Along Program

Follow Along Program semi-annual data reports are due every 6 months. Data for quarters 1 and 2 are due annually on July 31. Data for quarters 3 and 4 are due annually on January 31. Invoices for quarters 1 and 2 are due each year on August 20. Invoices for quarters 3 and 4 are due each year on February 20. Semi-annual data reports must be received prior to the invoice being paid.

About the CYSHN newsletter

Children and Youth with Special Health Needs (CYSHN) section staff at MDH work together to champion the health and well-being of people living in Minnesota with special health needs and disabilities, from the earliest states of life through transition to adulthood.

As the Child and Family Health Division works to coordinate and collaborate on communication, this newsletter may evolve to include a broader focus, but the following CYSHN programs are the primary focus: Birth Defects; Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI); Heritable Conditions (HC); Congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV); Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD); Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS); and the Follow Along Program.