Children with Special Healthcare Needs

Summary of the 2019 AAP Recommendations for Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs

- Clinical Practice Guidelines for Psychosocial Care of Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs were released in December 2018 by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Follow recommendations in the AAP's 2017 Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents report.
- Promote health and wellness as well as timely assessments of child social-emotional health and parental and/or caregiver depression.
- Use practice transformation strategies to promote psychosocial screening and assessment, referrals, and follow-up among children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) and their families. Examples of such strategies include quality improvement, patient registries, and pre-visit planning.
- Use team-based care strategies, care protocols, and dedicated care coordinators (if available) to identify psychosocial risk and protective factors. This may involve collocation, consultation, co-management, and/or behavioral health integration into medical home and specialty care teams.
- Consider strategies for working with childcare and school staff to monitor progress and improve learning experiences and academic performance.
- Offer flexible payment options for mental health treatment, care coordination, and collocation or co-management with specialists; advocate for payment redesign with Medicaid and other insurers.
- Promote evidence-based interventions and strategies in the medical home and subspecialty settings to support psychosocial development of CYSHCN, parenting competencies, and family resilience.
- Advocate for research into interventions and psychosocial screening tools specifically for use with CYSHCN.
- Advocate for community-based resources and strategies to address the reduction of disparities for CYSHCN and their families.

This guideline summary is not all-inclusive of available guideline content. Please reference the full guideline for comprehensive content.