Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

September 2022

From COVID-19 to climate change, economic instability to insecurity around food, housing and other basic needs, our young people today face challenges that are daunting and difficult to navigate. These challenges have created a major impact on the mental, emotional and behavioral health and well-being of our youth. Young people face rising rates of anxiety, depression and other mental health issues, with children and youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, low-income youth and underserved communities being disproportionately impacted.

The Newsom Administration recognizes this need, and it has made historic investments in a range of youth and family-focused initiatives, from expanding early childcare to enhancing physical and mental health support, ensuring access to healthy meals and clearing pathways to college and the workforce. As part of the suite of investments, the administration and the legislature have created the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI).

What is behavioral health?

CYBHI uses the term "behavioral health" to encompass both mental health and substance use disorders.

What is the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI)?

Announced in July 2021, the CYBHI is a historic, five-year, $4.7 billion initiative to reimagine and transform the way California supports the social and emotional well-being and behavioral health of children, youth and families. The CYBHI focuses on promoting behavioral health, preventing challenges and providing services, support and routine screening to ALL children and youth for emerging and existing needs connected to mental health and substance use. The initiative is managed by the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) working in partnership with CalHHS Departments, other state agencies, and a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

Why does the current system need to change?

The ecosystem supporting the mental, emotional and behavioral health of California young people and families is fragmented, and the burden of navigating it is placed on children, youth and families. The CYBHI aims to ensure that children and youth find the support they need when, where and in the way they need it – regardless of race, income, language or ability.

What is the behavioral health ecosystem?

Clinical and behavioral health providers play a critical role in caring for and addressing the behavioral health needs of young people. Together with schools, childcare providers, community-based organizations, social service agencies, primary care physicians, parks and many others, they are part of a larger "ecosystem" that supports the mental, emotional and behavioral health and well-being of our children and youth.

The CYBHI is NOT meant to replace this ecosystem, but to instead act as a catalyst to create greater alignment and integration of these systems of care; to strengthen and transform how this ecosystem functions and operates; to expand the capacity of the ecosystem; and to foster and build partnerships with institutions that are vital parts of this ecosystem.

How is the Initiative managed?

CalHHS is responsible for the overall management of the CYBHI, including stakeholder engagement, initiative design, goal setting, coordination and collaboration across workstreams, communications and evaluation.

The CYBHI's expansive work has been divided into 14 separate workstreams, under four primary focus areas. Each workstream is managed by a CalHHS department or office that has a deep connection to the issues the workstream addresses and the stakeholders it involves. For more information on the 14 workstreams, please see the CYBHI 101 presentation on the Initiative's webpage.

What are the focus areas of the CYBHI workstreams?

- Behavioral Health Ecosystem Infrastructure: Transform today's behavioral health infrastructure to ensure equitable access and ensure there is no wrong door for children, youth, and families.
- Workforce Training and Capacity: California needs a bigger workforce to meet the behavioral health needs and demands of our diverse children and youth. Thus, CYBHI prioritizes building a larger, more diverse and more skilled behavioral health workforce that is more reflective of California by expanding workforce recruitment and training, and increasing capacity for prevention, treatment and recovery across points of access and care.
- Coverage Architecture: Expand coverage and access to critical behavioral health services for ALL children and youth.
- Public Awareness: Raise awareness and engage communities and families to increase behavioral health literacy using culturally-and linguistically appropriate campaigns.

What ages does the CYBHI focus on?

Children and youth between the ages of 0-25, with a particular focus on those who face the most systemic barriers to wellness and have had the greatest impacts of trauma, social isolation and challenges in the pandemic, including children and youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and low-income and underserved communities.

What is the Newsom Administration doing now to expand services available for young people immediately?

While we work to ensure the CYBHI will have a meaningful impact on outcomes for children and youth in the long-term, Governor Newsom and the Legislature recognize the urgency of the mental health crisis facing children and

youth today. In response to these concerns and building on prior investments, the 2022-23 State Budget includes $290 million in one-time General Fund investments over three-years to address youth behavioral health urgent and emergent issues.

How will equity be prioritized and operationalized in the CYBHI?

Equity is a foundational component of this initiative. To ensure equity throughout the Initiative, the CYBHI has launched the Equity Working Group, which will advise CYBHI leadership and implementing state departments.

How is the CYBHI listening to the diverse constituencies and stakeholders it seeks to serve and support?

The CYBHI is designed to meet the needs of young people, families, and other stakeholders. To do this, the Initiative is engaging in extensive outreach, conducting interviews, and facilitating listening sessions that will shape and inform the design and execution of the Initiative.

As of July 2022, 757 organizations have been engaged; more than 1,600 people have registered for CYBHI informational webinars; 257 stakeholder and expert interviews have been conducted; and initiative leaders have attended more than 25 roundtable discussions and forums. The Initiative will continue to actively engage children, youth and families throughout every stage of the process, and their input will be incorporated into every phase of the initiative, from design to evaluation.

Stakeholders should also email CYBHI@chhs.ca.gov to receive regular engagement opportunities, updates, and funding opportunities.

How will the CYBHI evaluate its impact and success?

In fall 2022, CalHHS will distribute a request for proposals (RFP) to select an evaluation partner that will help measure the CYBHI's progress and impact across various phases and milestones, as well as inform the work moving forward. The Initiative's long-term vision, outcomes and success metrics, which will support the evaluation process, are currently being defined and are expected to be finalized in late 2022.

Where can I find more information about the CYBHI?

You can learn more by visiting the CYBHI web page. If you would like to provide thoughts or comments or sign up to receive regular updates and engagement opportunities on the CYBHI, please email CYBHI@chhs.ca.gov.

How can I further engage with the CYBHI workstreams?

To engage on workstream-specific topics, please use the following contact information and resources:

- Department of Health Care Services (DHCS):
    - Contact information for questions/feedback: CYBHI@dhcs.ca.gov
    - Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative webpage
    - Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program (SHIP) webpage
    - Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) webpage
    - CalHOPE Student Support webpage
- Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI): CYBHI@hcai.ca.gov
- Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC): CYBHI@dmhc.ca.gov
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH): CYBHI@cdph.ca.gov
- Office of the California Surgeon General (OSG): info@osg.ca.gov