

# **The Children's Behavioral Health Transformation**

Dr. Dana Weiner

Chief Officer for Children's  
Behavioral Health  
Transformation



## Speaker

Dr. Dana Weiner

Senior Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall

Chief Officer for Children's Behavioral Health  
Transformation, Office of Governor JB Pritzker

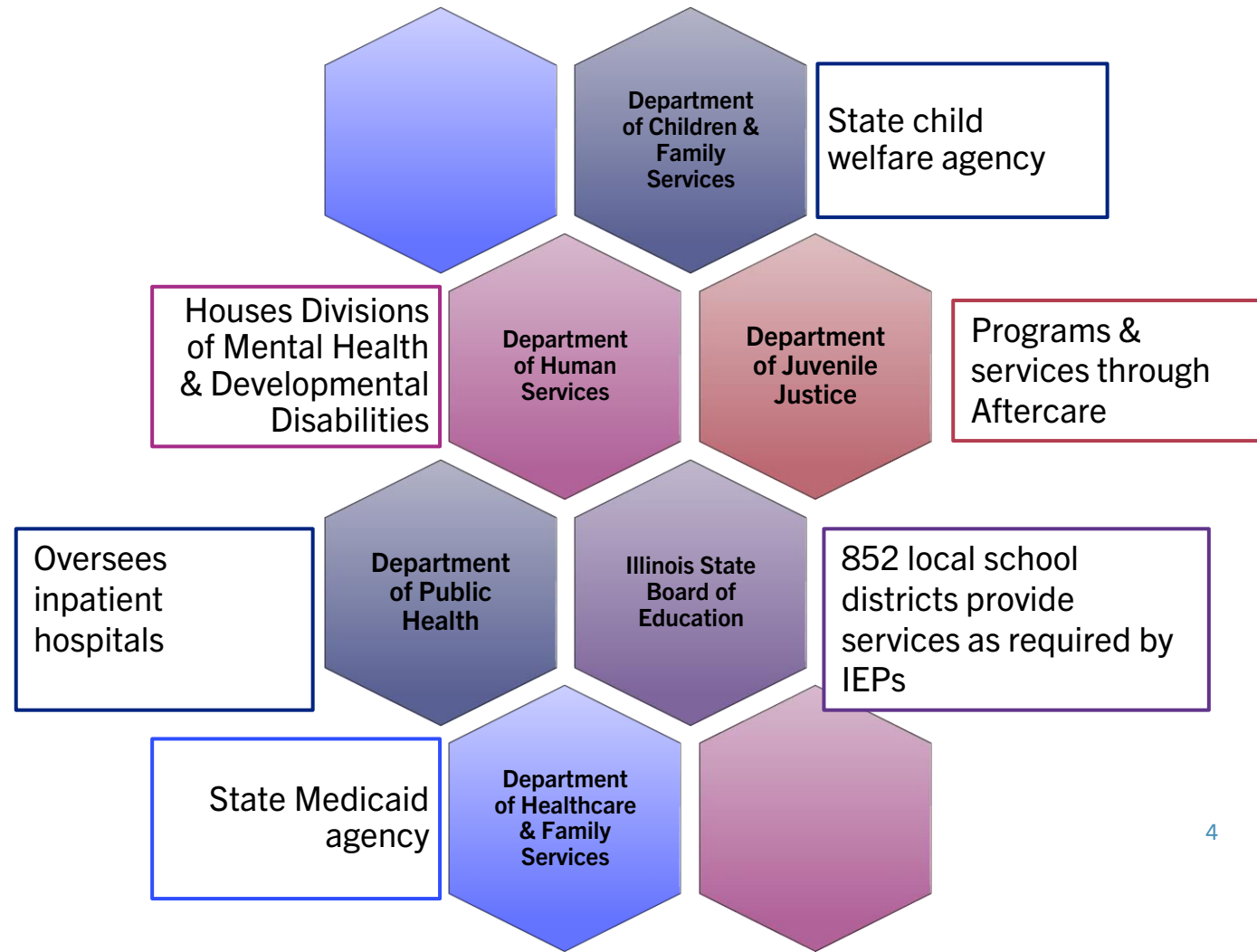
# Illinois Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative (CBHTI)

- Established in 2022 to address rising youth mental health service needs.
- Focuses on closing gaps in behavioral health services for children across Illinois.
- Brings together child-serving agencies to improve access and coordination of care.
- Enhances seamless and efficient services for families, helping create a more unified system of care.

**BEACON**, a core component of CBHTI, is a single website that connects families to people, programs and services.



# Illinois Children's Behavioral Health Care System – Six Child-Serving Agencies



# Twelve Recommendations to Address Identified Barriers

## Centralize & Streamline

1. Develop Care Portal as centralized resource for families seeking services for children with significant and complex needs.
2. Improve coordination of service delivery.
3. Centralize oversight of residential beds.
4. Implement resource referral technology.

## Adjust Capacity

5. Conduct regular data analytic review to inform capacity adjustments.
6. Adjust rates, including standardizing rates for similar services.
7. Increase capacity by expanding eligibility and developing new service types.
8. Partner with providers in a standard protocol.

## Intervene Earlier

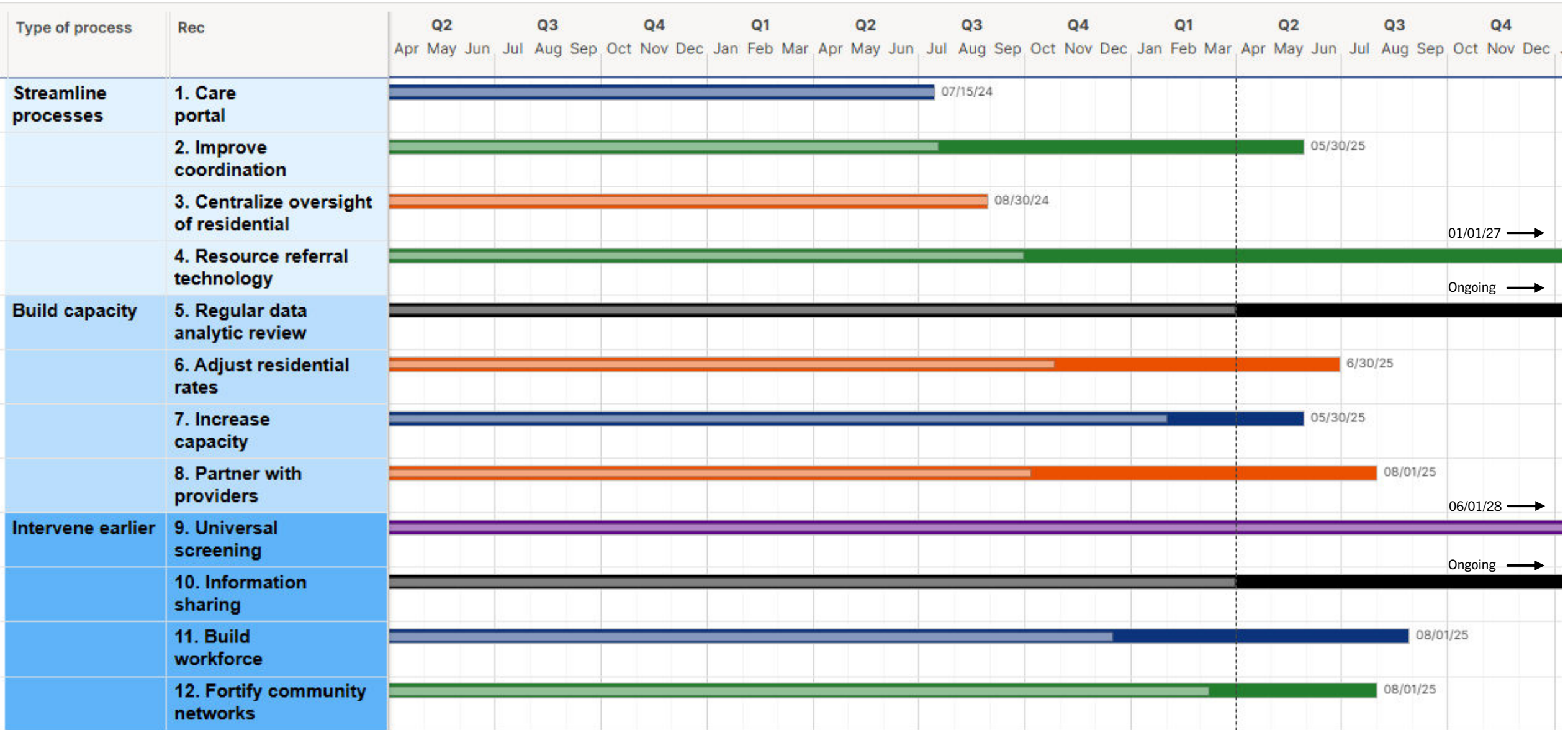
9. Offer universal screening in education and pediatrics.
10. Facilitate information sharing across agencies.
11. Build workforce using paraprofessionals and other roles.
12. Fortify community networks by investing in local communities and parent leadership.

**Structural Changes:** Centralized Hub, Coordinated Advisory Groups, Interagency Coordination, Data Analytic Support

2023

2024

2025



# Implementation Highlights - Accomplishments

Public release of BEACON, the centralized online care portal for families and state partners, on January 15, 2025

Capacity Reporting Tool allows state agencies to jointly assess and manage residential treatment resources.

Pilot program to provide in-home behavioral health aides to assist parents caring for youth with autism and mental health challenges which, pending results, will then be Medicaid billable.

With philanthropic funding, establishment of seven Family-Run Organizations (FROs; planning grants from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation) that will serve as community network anchors in partnership with IDPH.

Launch of ISBE MH Screening Readiness Tool to inform the development of a phased approach to implementing screenings.

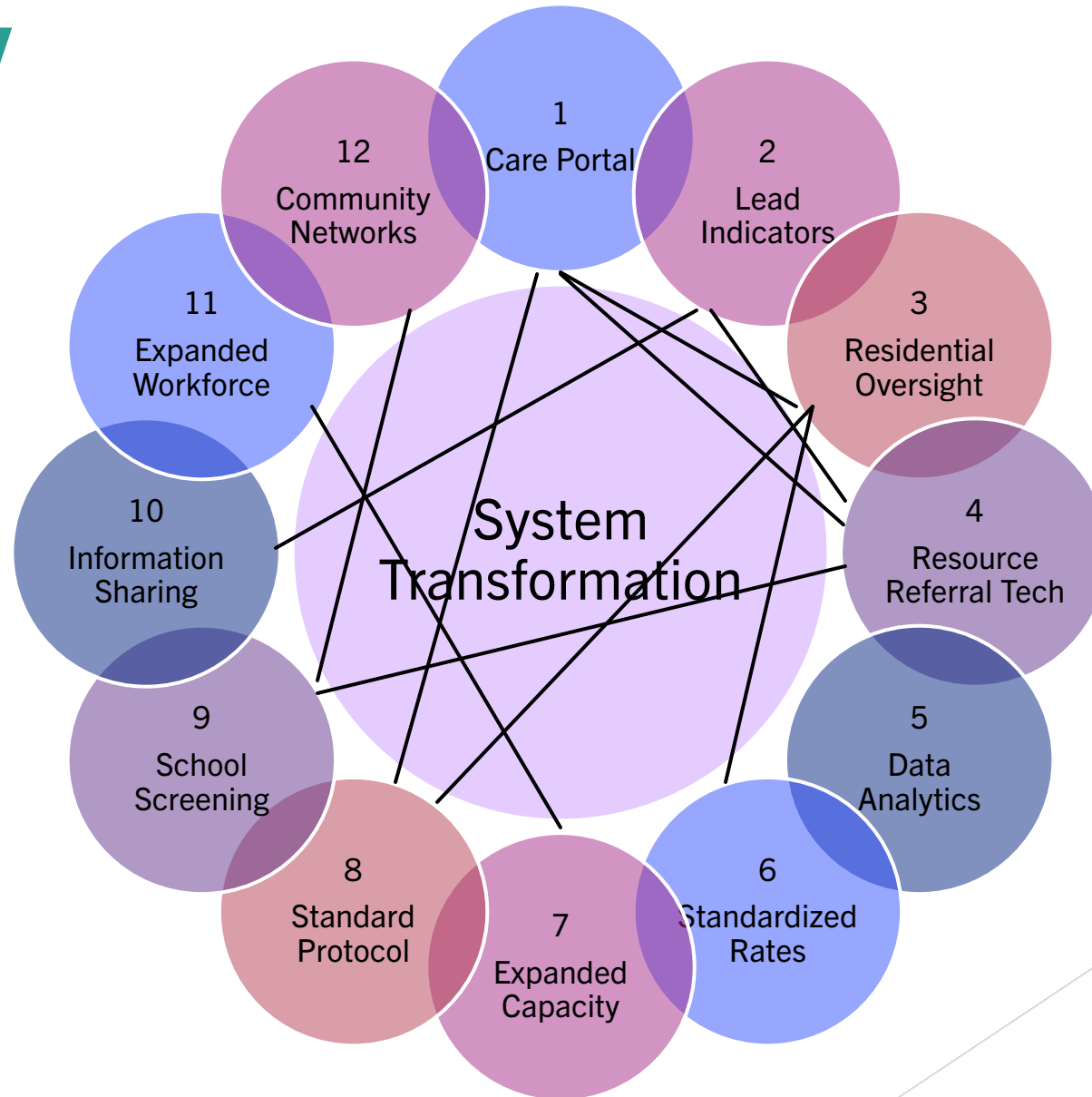
Successful resolution of 356 portal cases, diverting 187 cases with hotline calls to other service pathways.

## Next Up...

- ▶ Changing workflows to maximize the impact of new technologies
- ▶ Supporting school districts in preparing to implement universal screening
- ▶ Standing up and supporting community networks
- ▶ Procuring the statewide resource referral tool



# Complementary Strategies for System Transformation



# Progress on Universal MH Screening

School Landscape Scan – Completed year one

School Readiness Assessment – Released 4/1/25

Policy guidance (9/26) technology (1/27) and tool provided to districts

Phased approach to implementation based on readiness – complete by School Year '27-'28

# Support for Pediatricians Through Transformation



BEACON (BEACON.Illinois.gov)



Statewide Resource Referral Technology – RFP released  
8/25



Community networks, in partnership with IDPH, to include  
pediatrician participation

# Legislative Support – Public Act 103-0546

- ▶ Establishing Children’s Behavioral Health Transformation Officer to lead systems change efforts
- ▶ Creating Interagency Children's Behavioral Health Services Team, consisting of DHS, HFS, DCFS, DJJ, DPH, and ISBE;
- ▶ Creating a public-facing, centralized intake portal (the “Portal”) housed at DHS to triage cases, manage information, and provide parents with guidance to access state programs;
- ▶ Broadening supports and length of placement without custody that Comprehensive Community Based Youth Support (CCBYS) can provide to youth in crisis at risk of entering the child welfare system or juvenile detention
- ▶ Modifying the Community and Residential Services Authority to operate as a Parent/Guardian Navigator Assistance Program
- ▶ Requiring ISBE to build the foundation for annual mental health screenings for students in grades K-12 by conducting a landscape scan of current district-wide screening practices;
- ▶ Requiring all residential and institutional providers who receive reimbursement for children’s mental health, substance use, and developmental disability services from HFS, DHS, DJJ, ISBE, or DCFS to submit staffing and occupancy numbers to the state for the purpose of establishing state need and placement availability;
- ▶ Requiring HFS to identify leading indicators for elevated behavioral health crisis risk and share them with Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and other HFS care coordination entities.

# Legislative Support - Public Act 103-0885

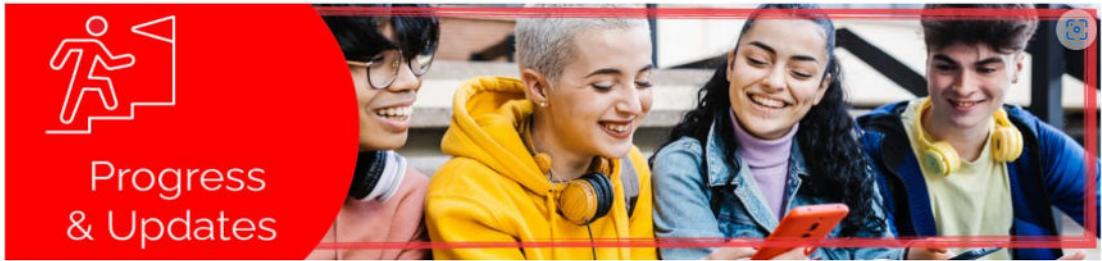
- ▶ Requires HFS to describe data elements and detail phases to utilize lead indicators to ensure MCO's are held accountable to respond to lead indicators triggers with increased service intensity.
- ▶ Requires ISBE to create a capacity assessment tool to gauge readiness to implement universal mental health screenings in schools informed by the findings of the landscape scan.
- ▶ Shifts oversight of Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (ICMHP) from Lurie Children's Hospital to IDPH where the Partnership can leverage broad engagement to work with community networks to raise awareness of gaps in community-based services for youth.
- ▶ Repeals school wellness checks for Medicaid-enrolled youth (Wellness Checks in Schools Program Act)
- ▶ Develops Personal Support Workers to provide in-home respite for youth with intensive MH service needs.

# Senate Bill 1560

1. Requires DHS to establish and offer a voluntary training that will be recorded and made available on the DHS website to all hospital social workers, clinicians, and administrative staff to inform them of BEACON. The training shall include how families and hospital staff can access BEACON, the process once a case is entered into BEACON, and State and community programs accessible through BEACON.
2. Requires psychiatric hospitals to contact a youth or the youth's parents, guardian, or caregiver about the BEACON portal (rather than the Family Support Program and the Specialized Family Support Program) prior to referring the youth to the Department of Children and Family Services because the youth was left at the psychiatric hospital beyond medical necessity.
3. Requires ISBE to make available resource materials for schools to implement universal mental health screenings, including model policies and guidance by Sept 1, 2026.
4. Requires that mental health screenings shall be offered by school districts to students enrolled in grades 3-12, at least once a year, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, contingent upon State's provision of technology and screening tool at no cost to districts.



Progress and Updates



Links

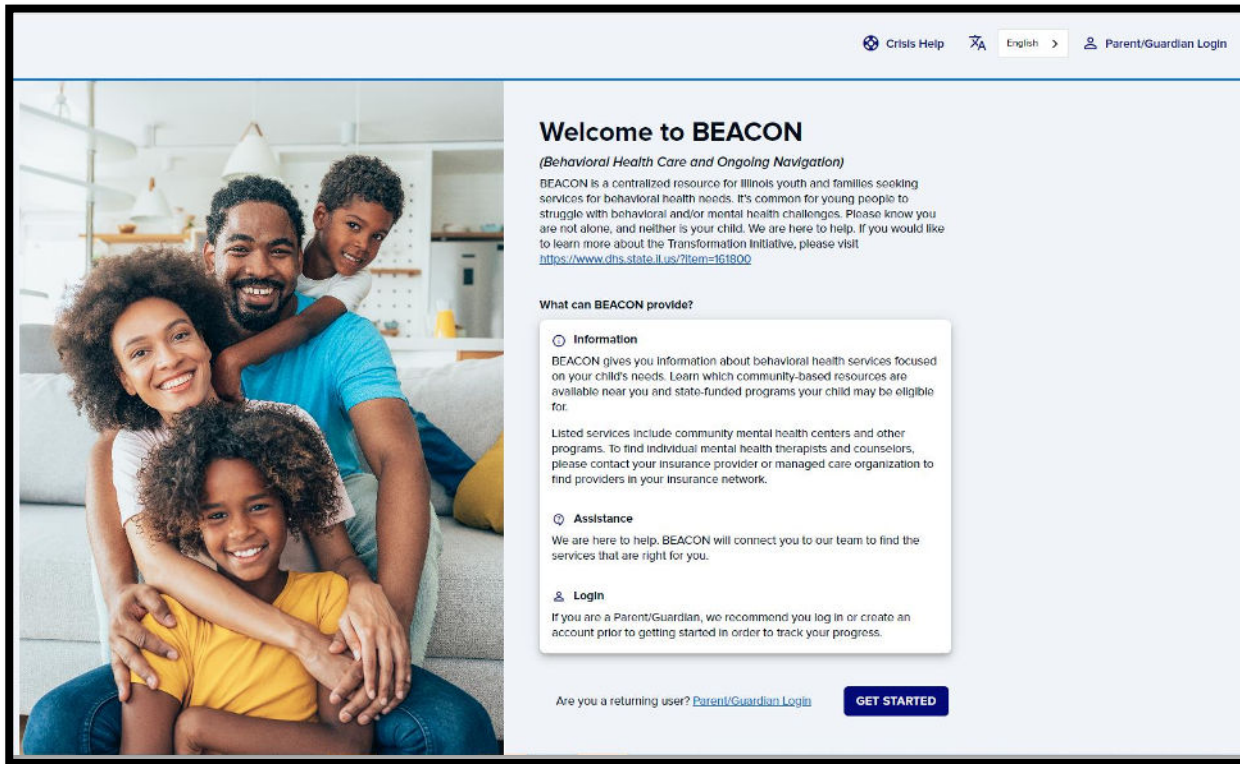
- [Recording of BEACON Training for School Personnel from 11.1.24](#)

In the months since Governor Pritzker signed an Executive Order establishing the Initiative and our state's commitment to achieving transformational change with the full implementation of the [Blueprint for Transformation: A Vision for Improved Behavioral Healthcare for Illinois Children \(pdf\)](#), we have many accomplishments to report. Read more about them here:

- [BEACON Flyer \(pdf\)](#)
- [BEACON one-pager for providers \(pdf\)](#)
- [BEACON Languages Available \(pdf\)](#)
- [BEACON Training for School Personnel from 11.1.24 \(pdf\)](#)
- [Recording of BEACON Training for School Personnel from 11.1.24](#)



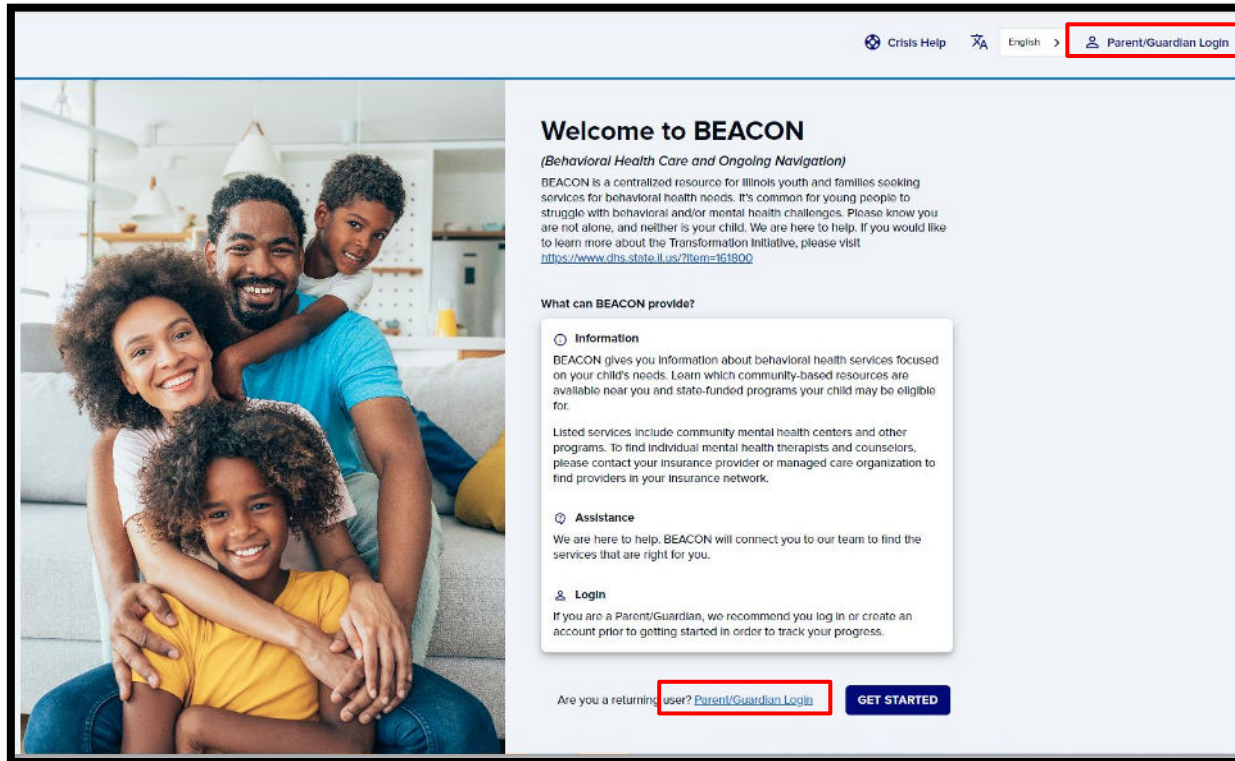
# Accessing BEACON



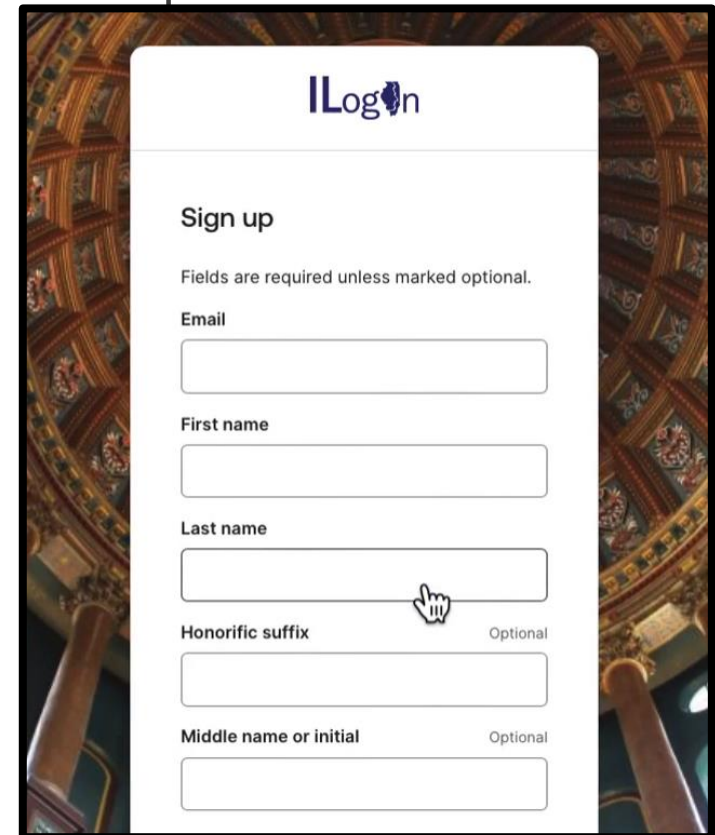
- **Website URL:** Access the portal at [beacon.illinois.gov](https://beacon.illinois.gov)
- **Create an Account:** Recommended for parents/guardians to track requests and save progress.
- **Anonymous Use:** Option to use without creating an account, though tracking is not available.
- **Crisis Resources:** Immediate access to crisis services, including 24/7 support like the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

# Create an Account (for parents/guardians)

We recommend parents/guardians log in or create an account prior to getting started in order to track requests, save their progress, and make future interactions with the portal smoother.



The screenshot shows the BEACON portal home page. At the top right, there is a navigation bar with "Crisis Help", "English", and a "Parent/Guardian Login" link highlighted with a red box. The main content area features a large image of a smiling family on the left. To the right of the image, the text reads "Welcome to BEACON" followed by a subtitle "(Behavioral Health Care and Ongoing Navigation)". Below this, a paragraph describes BEACON as a centralized resource for Illinois youth and families. A link is provided: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/?item=161800>. Under the heading "What can BEACON provide?", there are three sections: "Information", "Assistance", and "Login". The "Login" section states: "If you are a Parent/Guardian, we recommend you log in or create an account prior to getting started in order to track your progress." At the bottom left, there is a question "Are you a returning user?" followed by a "Parent/Guardian Login" link highlighted with a red box. A "GET STARTED" button is located at the bottom right.



The screenshot shows the BEACON portal sign-up form. The form is titled "Sign up" and includes the instruction "Fields are required unless marked optional." The form fields are: "Email", "First name", "Last name", "Honorific suffix" (marked as Optional), and "Middle name or initial" (marked as Optional). A hand cursor is visible over the "Last name" field.

# Anyone can use BEACON without creating an account

Without sharing information about the child/youth, you can still access a list of community-based services.

If you are comfortable sharing some basic intake information about the child/youth, you can access community-based and State-funded programs they may be eligible for.

## Community-Based Services

Local community-based organizations can support your child and connect you to behavioral health professionals. If you have trouble finding or using these services, please contact our staff at [dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov](mailto:dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov). We're here to help. If you would like to learn more about the Transformation Initiative, please visit <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/?Item=161800>

The following are resource directories that may have more services in your area:

[Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics](#)

[SPIDER](#)

[FindHelp](#)

[211](#) (In some parts of Illinois)

[School-based mental health resources](#)

## The following programs are a great place to start:

Please note that the following community-based program results are listed by distance, displaying only the first 25. For more assistance, please visit the Service Provider Identification & Exploration Resource ([SPIDER](#)) to view additional options.

At this time, programs appearing on this list are not endorsed by the state nor guaranteed to have availability. Future versions of this system will be able to incorporate availability. Please continue to visit our site for improvements!

### List of eligible programs

[Download Selected](#) [Email Selected](#)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Program	Type	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marillac St.Vincent Family Services <a href="#">Child Development Program</a>	Community Based Programs	2145 N. Halsted St. Chicago, IL 60614 <a href="#">312-943-6776</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DePaul Family and Community Services <a href="#">Psychological Testing Program</a>	Community Based Programs	2219 N. Kenmore Ave. Chicago, IL 60614 <a href="#">773-325-7780</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DePaul Family and Community Services <a href="#">Child and Family Therapy</a>	Community Based Programs	2219 N. Kenmore Ave. Chicago, IL 60614 <a href="#">773-325-7780</a>

# Request additional assistance

You can request additional assistance from the BEACON team if you would like more guidance after viewing the list of services you may be eligible for.

**The following programs are a great place to start:**

Please note that the following community-based program results are listed by distance, displaying only the first 25. For more assistance, please visit the Service Provider Identification & Exploration Resource [SPIDER](#) to view additional options.

At this time, programs appearing on this list are not endorsed by the state nor guaranteed to have availability. Future versions of this system will be able to incorporate availability. Please continue to visit our site for improvements!

List of eligible programs [DOWNLOAD SELECTED](#) [EMAIL SELECTED](#)


<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Program	Type	Description
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[Back](#) [Next Step](#)

**Do you need more assistance?**

If so, please mark "yes" to talk to our Resource Coordination team for more information about services for the child/youth.

**Do you need further assistance?**



**Your request for assistance has been submitted.**

**Please note:** Requests will be reviewed by the DHS team within 24 hours excluding holidays and weekends.

**What's Next?**  
A Resource Coordinator will review the details and follow up with the youth or parent/guardian with next steps.

**Request ID: BEACON-100070**  
**Date: 08/8/2024**

If you have questions about your requests, please contact 1-800-843-6154 during business hours.

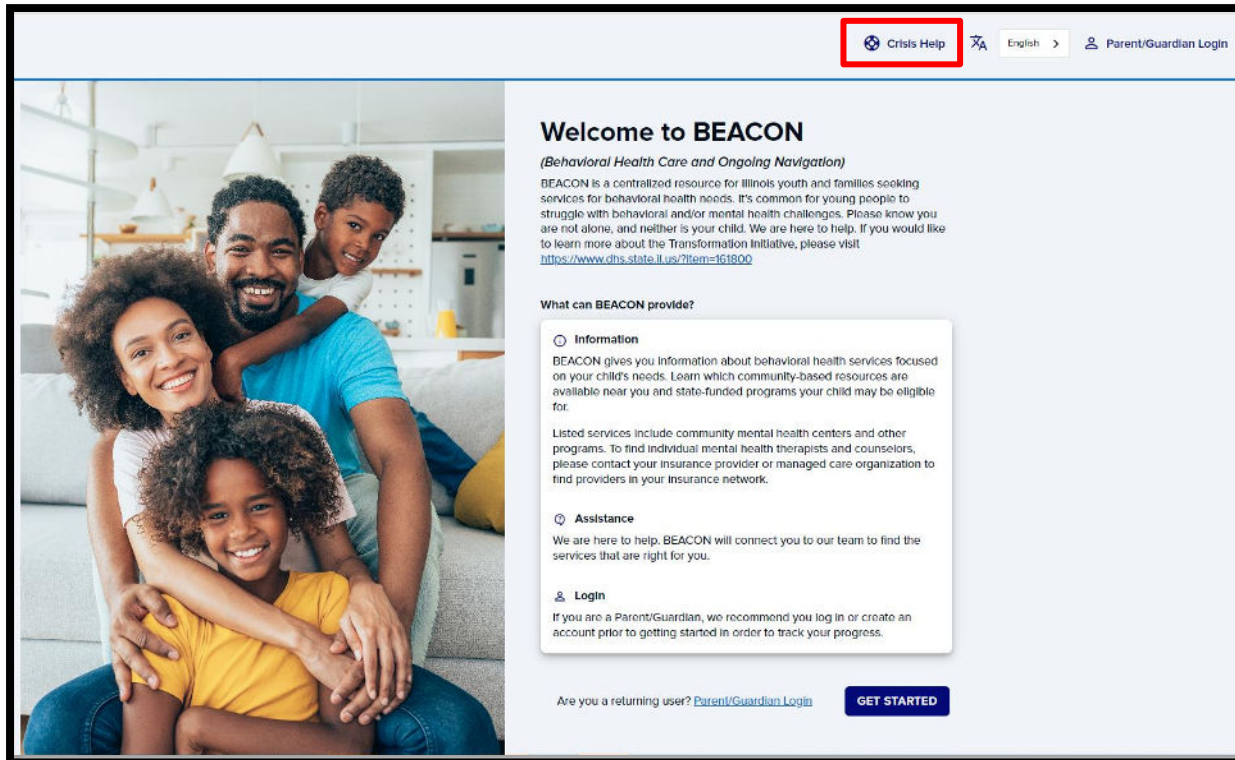
Thank you for using BEACON. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact our staff at [dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov](mailto:dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov). We are here to help you receive the support and guidance you need.

The Division of Mental Health understands how stressful it can be to care for a child facing mental health challenges. We want you to have access to mental health resources that would benefit you as well as those whom you are responsible for. If you are an adult looking for support for yourself, please visit our [Office Locator](#).



# Crisis Resources

BEACON has a quick access link at the top of every page to resources for a child/youth experiencing a mental health crisis.



[Crisis Help](#) [English](#) [Parent/Guardian Login](#)

## Welcome to BEACON

*(Behavioral Health Care and Ongoing Navigation)*

BEACON is a centralized resource for Illinois youth and families seeking services for behavioral health needs. It's common for young people to struggle with behavioral and/or mental health challenges. Please know you are not alone, and neither is your child. We are here to help. If you would like to learn more about the Transformation Initiative, please visit <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/?item=161800>

What can BEACON provide?

- Information**  
BEACON gives you information about behavioral health services focused on your child's needs. Learn which community-based resources are available near you and state-funded programs your child may be eligible for.  
Listed services include community mental health centers and other programs. To find individual mental health therapists and counselors, please contact your insurance provider or managed care organization to find providers in your insurance network.
- Assistance**  
We are here to help. BEACON will connect you to our team to find the services that are right for you.
- Login**  
If you are a Parent/Guardian, we recommend you log in or create an account prior to getting started in order to track your progress.

Are you a returning user? [Parent/Guardian Login](#) [GET STARTED](#)

## Crisis Services

*If you or your child is experiencing a mental health emergency, please contact 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or Illinois CARES Line. If the current crisis is a life-threatening emergency, please call 911.*

### 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call 988 or Text 988 or Chat [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat)

This lifeline offers a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, including family, friends, and/or caregivers. This service is free and confidential, and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can call or text 988 or go to [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat) to get connected to a trained crisis counselor who will listen to you, provide support, and get you the help you need.

### Illinois CARES Line (24/7)

CARES is an around-the-clock mental health crisis line for Illinois residents. For those who have Medicaid or may be Medicaid-eligible, CARES can dispatch mobile crisis response services to provide support. Call 1-800-345-9049 or TTY: (866) 794-0374.

Phone: (800) 345-9049

TTY: (773) 523-4504

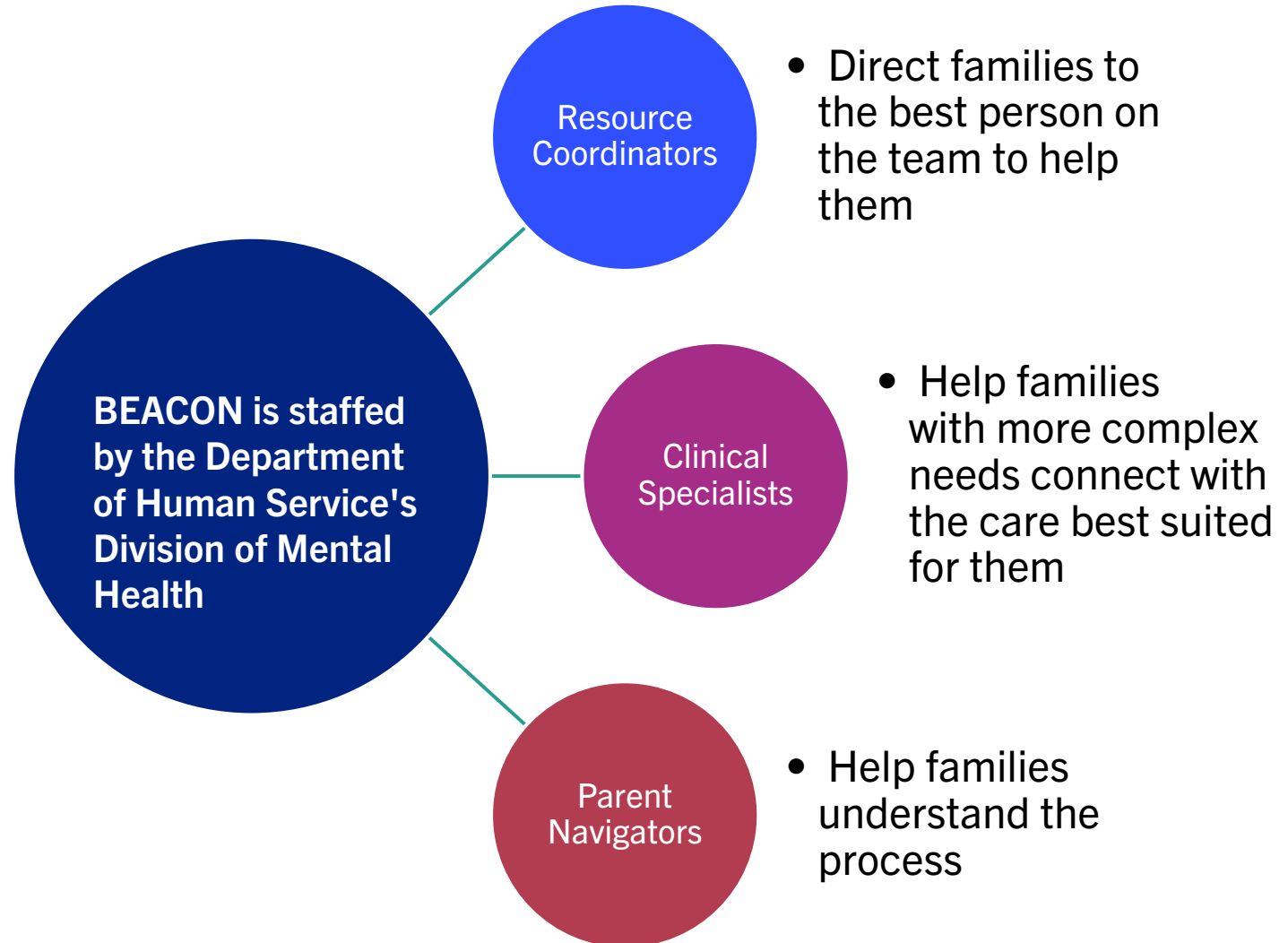
### 911

If this is a medical emergency, please contact 911.

# BEACON Languages




# BEACON staff



# Basic Information:

Your Relationship to Child/Youth\*

State Agency Partner



## Child/Youth Information


Child/Youth First Name\*

Suzzie

Child/Youth Last Name\*

Smith

Child/Youth Date of Birth (Optional)



Child/Youth Age

12

What do you need help with? (Optional)

Continue



# Current Living Situation

## Child/Youth Address

---

Address Line 1 (Optional)

Address Line 2 (Optional)

City\*

Decatur

State\*

Illinois



Zip Code\*

62521

Ext. (Optional)

0000


## Child/Youth Current Residency

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# Additional Information:












## Child/Youth Information

### Who has the legal custody of the child?

Custody Status\*  
Parent 

### Does the child/youth have any of the following needs? (Optional)

Select all that apply:

- ☐ Aggressive Behavior 
- ☒ Anxiety 
- ☐ Disrupted eating or sleeping 
- ☒ Depression or mood problems 
- ☐ Use of drugs or alcohol
- ☐ Crisis Care 
- ☐ Medically Complex 
- ☐ Developmental Disability 
- ☐ Severe Emotional Disturbance 
- ☐ Functional Impairment 
- ☐ 24-HR Nursing 
- ☐ Psychotic Episode 

**Is the child/youth signed up for or receiving any current involvement with the following programs/services?** (Optional)

Select all that apply:


- ☒ CARES/Mobile Crisis Response [i](#)
- ☐ Developmental Disabilities Waiver [i](#)
- ☐ DCFS Hotline [i](#)
- ☐ Family Support Program / Specialized Family Support Program [i](#)
- ☐ Specialized Education Due Process [i](#)
- ☐ Individualized Education Plan (IEP) [i](#)
- ☐ On PUNS List [i](#)
- ☐ DCFS Investigation [i](#)

# Services Seeking:

Does the child/youth have a specific need for any of the following services? (Optional)


Service Type

Counseling/Therapy



Service

Individual Counseling



## Medical Information


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What type of health insurance does the child/youth have?

If you have Tricare insurance, select “Private” from the menu below.

Insurance\*

Medicaid



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 [DOWNLOAD SELECTED](#)  [EMAIL SELECTED](#)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Program	Type	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Heritage Behavioral Health Center <a href="#">Outpatient Mental Health Counseling</a>	Community-Based Programs	151 N Main Decatur, IL 62523 <a href="#">217-362-6262</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center <a href="#">Counseling and Support Groups</a>	Community-Based Programs	270 W Prairie Ave Decatur, IL 62523 <a href="#">217-428-0770</a>

Helps families with youth aged 11-17 to avoid child welfare

[Back](#)

[Next Step](#)

# Do you need more assistance?

If so, please mark "yes" to talk to our Resource Coordination team for more information about services for the child/youth.

**Do you need further assistance?**

Yes

No

Back

Continue



## Your request for assistance has been submitted.

**Please note:** Requests will be reviewed by the DHS team within 24 hours excluding holidays and weekends.

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### What's Next?

A Resource Coordinator will review the details and follow up with the youth or parent/guardian with next steps.

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**Request ID: BEACON-10004W**

**Date:** 08/2/2024

If you have questions about your requests, please contact 1-800-843-6154 during business hours.

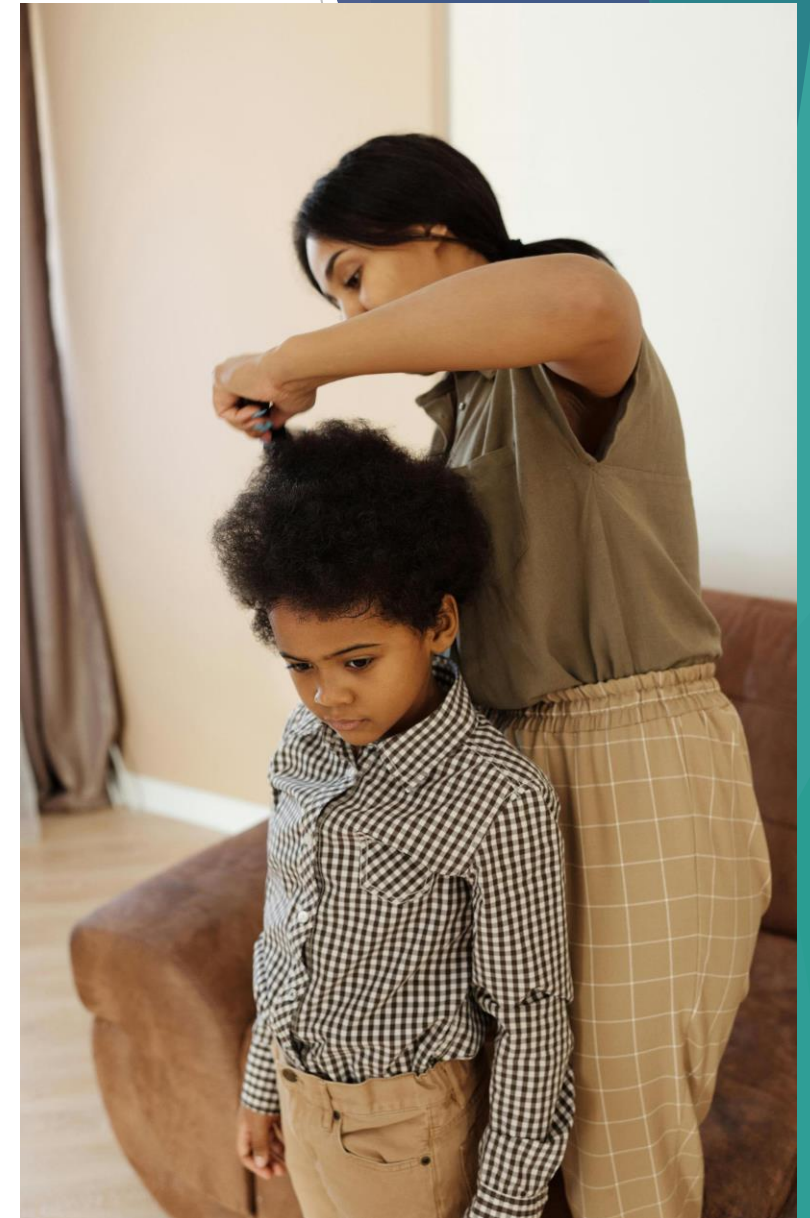
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Thank you for using BEACON. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact our staff at [dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov](mailto:dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov). We are here to help you receive the support and guidance you need.

The Division of Mental Health understands how stressful it can be to care for a child facing mental health challenges. We want you to have access to mental health resources that would benefit you as well as those whom you are responsible for. If you are an adult looking for support for yourself, please visit our [Office Locator](#).

# How Parents and Guardians Use BEACON

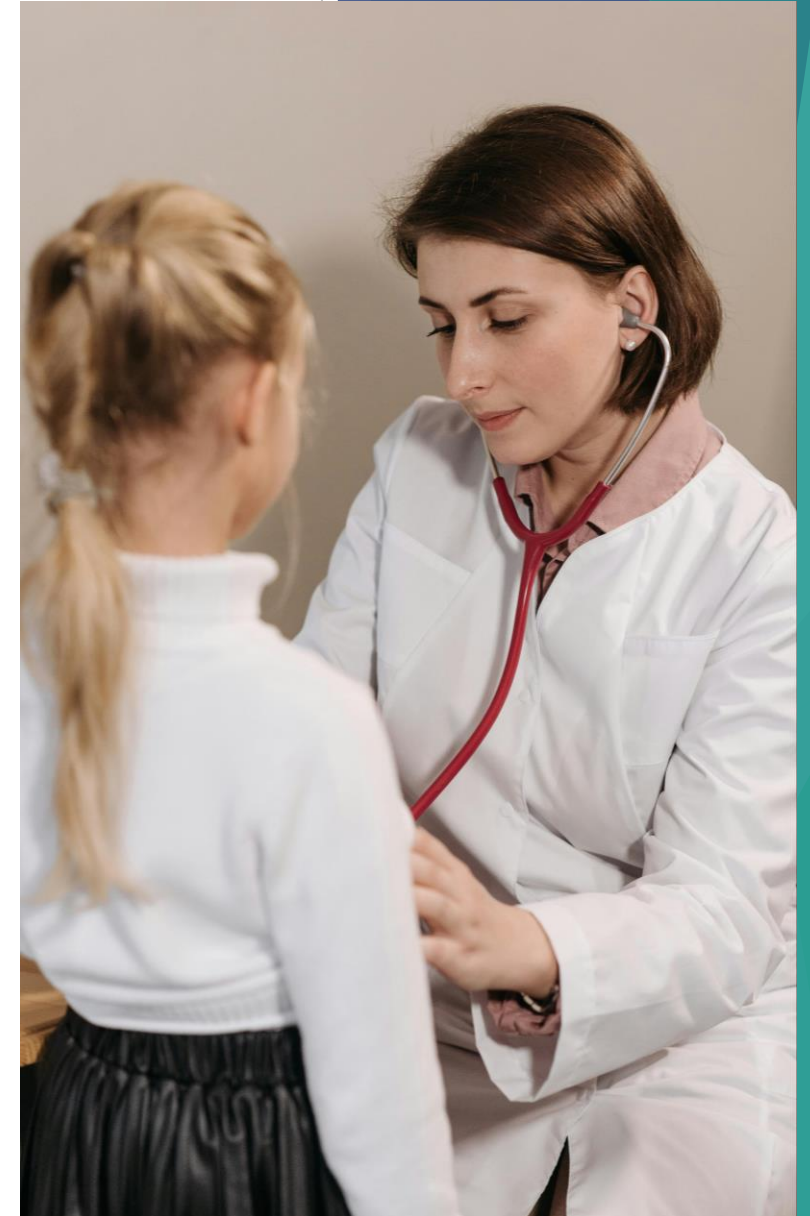
- **Access BEACON for Service Navigation:** Parents/guardians use BEACON to identify behavioral health services for their child.
- **Create a Case for Immediate Support:** Enter their child's information to be connected to Resource Coordinators who can help identify appropriate services.
- **Track Progress and Engage with Providers:** Parents can follow the status of their case and communicate with state agencies and service providers to ensure timely support.
- **Request Navigational Assistance:** Ask for additional help navigating service linkage and eligibility processes.





# How Pediatricians Use BEACON

- **Provide Assistance to Families on Behavioral Health Needs:** Pediatricians use BEACON to refer families to navigational help when concerns arise during routine visits.
- **Connect Families to Specialized Services:** BEACON helps pediatricians connect children with community-based services, such as therapy, counseling, or crisis intervention.
- **Become Familiar with Available State-funded and Community-Based Services:** BEACON provides clear and transparent information about the types of services available to address behavioral health concerns.





## Case vignette - Amelia

Amelia is a 14-year-old with diagnoses of ADHD, Depression, and Anxiety. Amelia was hospitalized after a suicide attempt and had been implicated for aggression toward a younger sibling. The hospital social worker entered Amelia's information into the portal to assist the family with finding residential treatment after discharge, as her grandparents felt they could not take her home because of concerns about her behavior. Prior to entry into BEACON this family had not been connected to support services. A BEACON clinical specialist worked with the family to enroll Amelia in Pathways, FSP and Interim Relief, as well as completion of the IM+CANS. The FSP program successfully found a residential placement for the youth, and she was discharged from the hospital to this placement.

## Case vignette - ERIC

Eric is a 15-year-old male with a history of behavioral health challenges and juvenile justice involvement. CCBYS entered the youth's information into BEACON after his Mom expressed she did not want the youth returning home and was seeking residential treatment for him. No applications had been initiated on the part of the family, but a BEACON Resource Coordinator worked in partnership with CCBYS, the CCSO (for Pathways) and the family to enroll youth in Medicaid services, find youth a safe place to reside at a relative's and complete FSP & IR applications. The BEACON Resource Coordinator continued provided the relative guardian with a list of local services for Eric, which the family connected to. They are no longer seeking residential treatment and are making use of supportive services in their community.





# Tips for maximizing BEACON's benefit for families



If you are searching for information on behalf of a family, provide them with the entire list of services they may be eligible for.



If you request additional assistance on behalf of a family, let them know that a Resource Coordinator will be reaching out to them.



Remind the family that we need their permission to share any information with the BEACON team (consent). If the family needs help submitting consent, the BEACON team can assist.

# Opportunities for engagement



Access the Blueprint for Transformation: A Vision for Improved Behavioral Healthcare for Illinois Children

