

**The Value of Family-to-Family Health Information Centers**

Imagine a family that is suddenly confronted with a severely premature baby who is likely to have multiple health problems or disabilities, or discovers that their child needs a kidney transplant, or has autism, diabetes, epilepsy or a serious mental illness. They are likely to be at a loss for information about how to get the best treatment for their child – how to find the right specialists, therapists, or caretakers – and how to pay for that costly care (autism therapies, private-duty nursing, and medications, for example, can cost tens of thousands dollars per year).

When a family receives help from a Family-to-Family Health Information Center, they can get this vital information, emotional support, and help in finding ways to get their costs covered. Each state’s Family-to-Family Health Information Center can provide examples of how it has helped families in one or more of these ways.

This assistance:

1. improves health outcomes for kids;
2. reduces government health care spending (i.e., to Medicaid, public clinics, public hospitals) or costs to the health system in general (e.g., to families, insurance companies) by ensuring that children get timely and appropriate care;
3. reduces government education spending (i.e., where early intervention helps to avoid or reduce the need for special education);
4. enables families to get care for their kids without having to face bankruptcy or spend all their college funds or retirement savings;
5. enables parents to continue to work (e.g., because they can get nursing care for their child); and/or
6. keeps children out of costly and psychologically harmful institutional care.

*For national and state-specific information about F2F HICs, see*

[*http://familyvoices.org/ncfpp/f2fs/*](http://familyvoices.org/ncfpp/f2fs/) *or*

*contact Janis Guerney* *(**jguerney@familyvoices.org* *or 202-669-5233)*

***Family Voices*** *is an organization of families whose children have special health care needs.*

[*www.familyvoices.org*](http://www.familyvoices.org)

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