



## The Referral Process

*Single Point of Accountability (SPOA) application is now combined with FVN Referral Process in Erie County.*

### *Brief History*

The Erie County Single Point of Accountability (SPOA) initiative has been evolving over the past five years since it began through New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) New Initiatives in 2001. The progress of the Initiative has intensified since October 2004 when Erie County was awarded a six year Systems of Care SAMHSA Grant to support children, youth, and families experiencing mental health challenges.

Family Voices Network of Erie County (FVN) is both the name of the SAMHSA grant and includes a network of Care Coordination agencies and vendors that are involved with the referred youth and their families receiving care coordination services through the wraparound process. *FVN Wraparound Process and Single Point of Accountability (SPOA) have been combined into one process, simply called the "Referral Process" within Erie County for children with mental health, involved in juvenile justice, youth services, foster care and social services.*

Erie County has been, and continues to be, committed to simplifying the identification of referrals and access to the best possible services and supports within our community for those youth and their families that are most at risk for hospitalization and/or placement outside of their homes or communities.

### *About Family Movement*

Families CAN! is an organization both designed and directed by family members for the purpose of ensuring access to needed support; for information and services to all families in Erie County raising children with emotional, behavioral, and/or social disabilities. This organization supports, and empowers families to fully partner with agencies and service providers who work with their family. It also encourages families to actively participate in the evaluation and service planning process for their family. Additionally, it provides a way for the family voice and choice to be recognized and heard within the Erie County system of care.

Families CAN provides education and support to families to help families move through the Erie County system as easily as possible. They support family empowerment and provide workshops to help families reach their goal by focusing on their strengths and providing additional supports were needed.



## *Who make referrals?*

Children, youth, and their families are identified and referred to FVN by caseworkers, counselors, parents, hospitals, schools, Family Court, juvenile justice staff, child protective services and other agencies. The children and youth are referred because they are currently experiencing emotional, behavioral, or social challenges that place them at **significant risk** of hospitalization or re-hospitalization, and placement or re-placement out of their home or community.

These identified youth usually have a history of mental health diagnosis and/or treatment and will receive initial or updated diagnosis along with a thorough life domain assessment after assignment to a Care Coordination agency.

## **The Referral Process:**

### *How it Works?*

Once a referral source has identified a family as being in need of the intensity level of the wraparound process to keep the child or youth at home and in their community, the parent, or legal guardian must sign the *FVN Permission for Disclosure* (Informed Consent) Form and assist the referral source in the completion of the FVN Referral Form.

This process must include clear documentation explaining how the child or youth is at immediate risk for out of home placement or hospitalization and what efforts have already been made to prevent that from happening. A thorough treatment history or summary may be sufficient. A referral package includes three major documents:

1. The completed FVN Referral Form,
2. Supporting documentation that includes a “Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale” (CAFAS), and
3. The *FVN Permission for Disclosure Form* is also referred to as the “Informed Consent Form”

### *About the Referral Process Form*

All forms are sent to Family Voices Network of Erie County (FVN) by e-mail or by regular mail. FVN cannot process the Referral Form unless a hard copy of the FVN Permission for Disclosure Form has been received. If this form is missing when the Referral Form is sent to FVN, processing the application is delayed. Additionally, when you download the “Referral Form” from our website, this form is included in the download.

### *What happens next?*

When we receive the FVN Referral Form, a representative from Family Voices Network will FAX a letter to the agency that referred the family (the referral source), and mail a letter to the family to inform the family that FVN has received a referral for their child or youth.

## *The Referral Source Responsibility*

The Referral Form is reviewed by FVN to make sure all information is provided before sending any information out a family. The referring agency or person who made the referral must review the form for completeness before sending to FVN. This way, FVN can readily process the application as quickly as possible for the family.

The family and referral source are given a date and time to attend the FVN Intake Screening Committee meeting. This is the first step to making sure that families are recommended to an agency that will provide the needed services and supports the family need.

## *The Intake Screening Committee Purpose*

The Intake Screening Committee meets on a weekly basis to review completed applications and may include representatives from any of these organizations in making a decision to assign the family to the appropriate agency.

Erie County Departments of Mental Health	WNY Children's Psychiatric Center (WNY CPC)
Department of Social Services (DSS)	licensed providers of Family Based Treatment
Juvenile Justice	Residential Treatment Facility
Care Coordination agency staff	Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD)
Family Advocate(s)	Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
Families Child Adolescent Network (Families' CAN!)	other similar providers such as Local School District(s)
New York State Office of Mental Health (NYS OMH)	Community Residence

Representative from any of the above organizations may participate in the decision of assigning a child, youth or family to Care Coordination services through Family Voices Network of Erie County (FVN).

Once the decision is made that the child or youth and family is eligible for Care Coordination, the Intake Screening Committee will assign the family to one of six Care Coordination agencies:

Child & Adolescent Treatment Services (CATS)	Hopevale, Inc.
Child & Family Services (CFS)	Mid-Erie Counseling and Treatment Services
Gateway-Longview	New Directions Youth Services



The specific agency or program assignment is made based upon available openings, family preference, and/or agency specialty.

If a family is not eligible for Care Coordination, the Intake Screening Committee may make service or support recommendations to the family and/or referral source. If a family disagree with our recommendations they have two choices:

1. they may contact the FVN Clinical Director for clarification regarding this decision or
2. request to be reviewed again with additional information.

Family Voices Network tracks all referrals through a Management Information System (MIS) called CareManager. All of the Care Coordination agencies and vendors providing services use the same system for:

treatment planning	service delivery	recording of progress notes
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### *Required Orientation Session for all Families*

All eligible families are required to attend an Orientation Session to the Child and Family Team (CFT) process with Families CAN! At this orientation, families will understand their role in providing information about their child, youth and family; and what to expect from the system and how it will work with their family. The Child and Family Team (CFT) is important to all families enrolled in the Wraparound Process.

### *Utilization Review (UR) Committee Purpose*

1. Review all families that are receiving services/treatment for six month, the families case is reviewed for the 6-month Length of Stay (LOS) point;
2. Review family cases to see what Natural and/or Community-based Supports have been identified to help families with the transition plans;
3. The committee will randomly call families to obtain feedback and comments about their plan of care while involved in the system.

FVN’s Management Team monitors performance and outcomes of each family and discuss ways to achieve quality improvements.

### *Questions:*

If you have questions about this document “Referral Process,” please contact Linda Eckert, Clinical Director FVN/SPOA via email: [eckertl@erie.gov](mailto:eckertl@erie.gov).