



The Cheyenne Story

Understanding your health plan can be intimidating for any of us, but especially when your child has a disability and sees multiple specialists.

Fortunately for the parents of Cook Children's STAR Kids Members, they have a service coordinator to call like Cheyenne Feldhaus.

Feldhaus is a service coordinator for the STAR Kids program at Cook Children's. STAR Kids is a Texas managed care program that provides Medicaid benefits to children and adults 20 and younger who have disabilities.

Families with children enrolled in STAR Kids are able to choose a health plan that covers necessary health services needed through a network of doctors, specialists and other providers.

Kriss and Riley Stewart are parents of twins in Cook Children's Star Kids program. The couple has private insurance and in January were approved for Medicaid's Star Kids coverage in addition. Kriss and Riley had a choice between another insurance provider and Cook Children's, but chose Cook Children's Health Plan after looking over their benefits book and providers.

"We fall in the Medicaid Buy-In program and we are thankful we do! Having five children and being able to have secondary insurance through Cook Children's Health Plan lets us provide more therapies for the twins that we ultimately could not afford before," Kriss said. "Like for example, we had to choose OT or Speech but not both for the twins because we could not afford to do both. Doing one therapy for two children one day a week is a car payment for us. With Cook Children's help, we will be able to do both now and not pick one over the other since they need both so badly."

In her role, Feldhaus has a current caseload of about 130 members. All of the members have a disability and she coordinates the many services a Member may



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need such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy or finding a DME (Durable Medical Equipment) scooters, connect to a provider and more.

“I am also the person for many of these parents that they can call when they are overwhelmed and unsure of what the next step is they need to be taking care of their child,” Feldhaus said. “There are many little things for them to have to remember and resources available to keep up with, on top of caring for their child’s sometimes very complex needs.”

Feldhaus said many parents aren’t familiar with STAR Kids and how the service coordinators can help them. After meeting with families for the first time and going over her role and the assistance she can provide them, Feldhaus is often times met with tears because they didn’t know a program like STAR Kids was available to them.

“Some of these parents have been living day to day with their ill child sometimes since birth,” Feldhaus said. “As a parent, when your child is sick or hurting, all you want is to take that away from them. I am able to come in and help them and take some of the burden off of them by simply finding a provider that is accepting new patients or helping them get personal care services.

The team of service coordinators at Cook Children’s is made up equally of social workers and nurses. The team members all perform the same job functions, but they work closely together and rely on each other’s background and expertise. Each Service Coordinator is assigned to Members based on the specific needs of the child and family.

Feldhaus became a social worker with the goal of working with children.

“I feel they are our most vulnerable population,” she said. “These families are like all families. Each one is unique and has to be treated as such. Many have just been surviving and trying to get through each day. All they want is what every single parent wants for their child, to give them the best chance possible for a happy healthy life.”



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