The Fostering Health Program of CCNC brings together care providers, local departments of social services, foster families, foster home placements, and Care Managers to better coordinate medical and social/emotional needs to improve health and wellbeing outcomes of children and youth in Foster Care. We all have a collective responsibility ensure children are healthy, safe, and thriving. By taking a team approach, we can accomplish this goal.

What we know:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) deems children and youth in foster care to be children with special health care needs.
- Children in Foster Care have higher service utilization than the general pediatric population due to acute and chronic conditions, growth and development issues, and serious behavioral health diagnoses.
- Brain architecture and development is disrupted when children experience toxic stress which ultimately leads to increase risk for stress-related disease, cognitive impairment, and emotional/behavioral issues that negatively impact them well into adulthood.

DSS can:

- Ensure children/youth coming into custody are connected to Care Management and Primary Care and dental services.
- Follow the enhanced visit schedule recommended by the AAP. Ensure health forms get to the Medical home timely.
- Collaborate with Care Managers around medical and social/emotional needs.
- Utilize Care Managers for disease and medication education with foster/biological families.
- Encourage foster and biological families participate in Care Management.
- Utilize VirtualHealth™ HELIOS Provider Portal to access clinical history and review care plans and assessments.

Care Management can:

- Assess/address needs as child comes into custody by coordinating with DSS Staff, e.g. imminent medical needs, emergency appointments, medication, and devices, etc.
- Ensure foster parents have the child’s health history and provide education on medical conditions, medications-including red flags, devices, and care plans.
- Support continuity of care by encouraging the Medical Home concept. In the absence of a medical home, Care Managers can assist with linkage to a Medical Home and other needed services.
- Facilitate information flow between DSS staff, medical providers, foster/biological parents.
- Support the foster family by assisting with navigation of the medical and behavioral health system and removing barriers to care.
- Coordinate with Care Managers across the state when children are placed out of county. Link DSS to Out-of-Region Care Managers who know services and resources in the child’s placement area.