

Family-Centered Care Policy Fact Sheet

Advocacy plays a pivotal role in driving meaningful change within the healthcare system.

To effectively advance family-centered approaches as the standard of care, healthcare professionals, educators, and organizations can champion policy initiatives that strengthen and promote the delivery of FCC.

Championing FCC initiatives through all legislative, regulatory, and rules-based pathways enables a relational policy force for shaping and sustaining best practice.

Family-centered services are characterized by three fundamental aspects: (a) respect for patients and families, (b) recognition of the family's systemic impact on well-being, and (c) promotion of a collaborative relationship between the family and healthcare professionals. Through advocacy, policy shifts can elevate these fundamental FCC priorities in healthcare delivery.

Examples of needed high value-high impact FCC policy initiatives in the US:

- The 2025 Rural Health Transformation Program, established under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R.1), is aimed at strengthening behavioral health workforce pathways and services for families in rural America.
 - Strengthening retention of FCC providers while expanding the workforce to meet families' needs—and prioritizing systemic health and well-being—can increase capacity to better serve patients and their families while also enhancing economic impact and sustainability.

Did you know...Individual CPT codes (e.g., 90837) are often reimbursed at a higher rate than family-level CPT codes (e.g., 90847), even when delivered for the exact same amount of time; yet FCC can simultaneously influence and treat more people at one time.

Did you know...Family-inclusive discharge planning can significantly decrease hospital readmission rates (Rodakowski et al. 2017).

- Providers and families can work with state Medicaid administrators to develop FCC initiatives.

Did you know...You can advocate to influence what services can be covered within a Medicaid 1115 waiver (e.g., some states had no reimbursement codes for autism spectrum disorder until 2019).

Did you know...California's Medicaid program, Medi-Cal, launched a [dyadic services benefit](#) in 2023 that supports healthy child development through care delivered to a child's parents/caregivers.

- Until 2024, family therapists could not enroll as Medicare providers.

Did you know...The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 established marriage and family therapists and mental health counselors as Medicare-eligible providers. This policy initiative expanded the behavioral health workforce and strengthened the healthcare system's capacity to deliver FCC.

Did you know...Even after Medicare in-person primary care visits resumed in May 2020 after the COVID-19 transition to telehealth, demand remained steady for telehealth visits (Bosworth et al., 2020). Researchers suggest that telemedicine can enhance providers' understanding of their patients through access to family members' perspectives and insights regarding patients' home environment and lifestyle (DePuccio et al., 2022; Mahdavi et al., 2025).

Research exemplars for supporting FCC policy initiatives:

- Reduced caregiver stress
 - Lisanti, A. J., Min, J., Golfenshtein, N., Marino, B. S., Curley, M. A., & Medoff-Cooper, B. (2024). Perceived family-centered care and post-traumatic stress in parents of infants cared for in the paediatric cardiac intensive care unit. *Nursing in critical care*, 29(5), 1059-1066. doi: 10.1111/nicc.13094
- Increased healthcare satisfaction for patients and families
 - Park, M., Giap, T. T. T., Lee, M., Jeong, H., Jeong, M., & Go, Y. (2018). Patient- and family-centered care interventions for improving the quality of health care: A review of systematic reviews. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 87, 69-83. doi: 10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2018.07.006
- Shorter hospital stays and reduced costs
 - Lee, H. W., Park, Y., Jang, E. J., & Lee, Y. J. (2019). Intensive care unit length of stay is reduced by protocolized family support intervention: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Intensive care medicine*, 45(8), 1072-1081. doi: 10.1007/s00134-019-05802-y.

References

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- DePuccio, M. J., Gaughan, A. A., Shiu-Yee, K., & McAlearney, A. S. (2022). Doctoring from home: Physicians' perspectives on the advantages of remote care delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PLOS ONE*, 17(6), e0269264. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0269264
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- Mahdavi, S., Fekri, M., Mohammadi-Sarab, S., Mehmandoost, M., & Zarei, E. (2025). The use of telemedicine in family medicine: A scoping review. *BMC Health Services Research*, 25, 376-389. doi: 10.1186/s12913-025-12449-7
- Park, M., Giap, T. T. T., Lee, M., Jeong, H., Jeong, M., & Go, Y. (2018). Patient- and family-centered care interventions for improving the quality of health care: A review of systematic reviews. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 87, 69–83. doi: 10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2018.07.006
- Rodakowski, J., Rocco, P.B., Ortiz, M., Folb, B., Schulz, R., Morton, S.C., ... and James III, A.E., (2017). Caregiver integration during discharge planning for older adults to reduce resource use: A meta-analysis. *J Am Geriatr Soc*, 65, 1748-1755. doi: 10.1111/jgs.14873

Recommended Sources for Further Reading

- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. (2019, updated April). [Systemic Family Therapists Within Healthcare Settings](#). Alexandria, VA.
- Hodgson, J., & Lamson, A. L. (2020). The importance of policy and advocacy in systemic family therapy. In K. S. Wampler, R. B. Miller, & R. B. Seedall (Eds.), *The handbook of systemic family therapy: The profession of systemic family therapy* (pp. 729–751). Wiley Blackwell.
- Hriberšek, M., Eibensteiner, F., Bukowski, N., Yeung, A. W. K., Atanasov, A. G., & Schaden, E. (2024). Research areas and trends in family-centered care in the 21st century: A bibliometric review. *Frontiers in Medicine*, 11, 1401577. doi: 10.3389/fmed.2024.1401577
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2021). *Implementing high-quality primary care: Rebuilding the foundation of health care* (S. K. Robinson, M. Meisner, & R. L. Phillips Jr., Eds.). National Academies Press. doi: 10.17226/25983
- Roberts, K. M., & Trejo, A. N. (2022). Provider, health system: An examination of institutionally racist healthcare regulatory practices and structures. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 44(1), 4–15. doi: 10.1007/s10591-021-09630-5

See our FCC Resources and Exemplars page for a list of other texts, policy resources, and research exemplars to facilitate FCC policy initiatives.