



# BEACON

Creating Connections for a Brighter Future

SUPPORTING ILLINOIS  
FAMILIES THROUGH  
THE CHILDREN'S  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
TRANSFORMATION  
INITIATIVE

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TRANSFORMATION

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# ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE (CBHTI)

- Established in 2022 to address rising youth mental health service needs.
- Focuses on closing gaps in behavioral health services for children across Illinois.
- Brings together child-serving agencies to improve access and coordination of care.
- Enhances seamless and efficient services for families, helping create a more unified system of care.

**BEACON**, a core component of **CBHTI**, is a single website that connects families to people, programs and services.



# KEY TRANSFORMATION PRIORITIES

01

**SIMPLIFY:** Absorb complexity behind the scenes to ease family experience of seeking services.

02

**SPEED:** Leverage technology to improve efficiency and transparency.

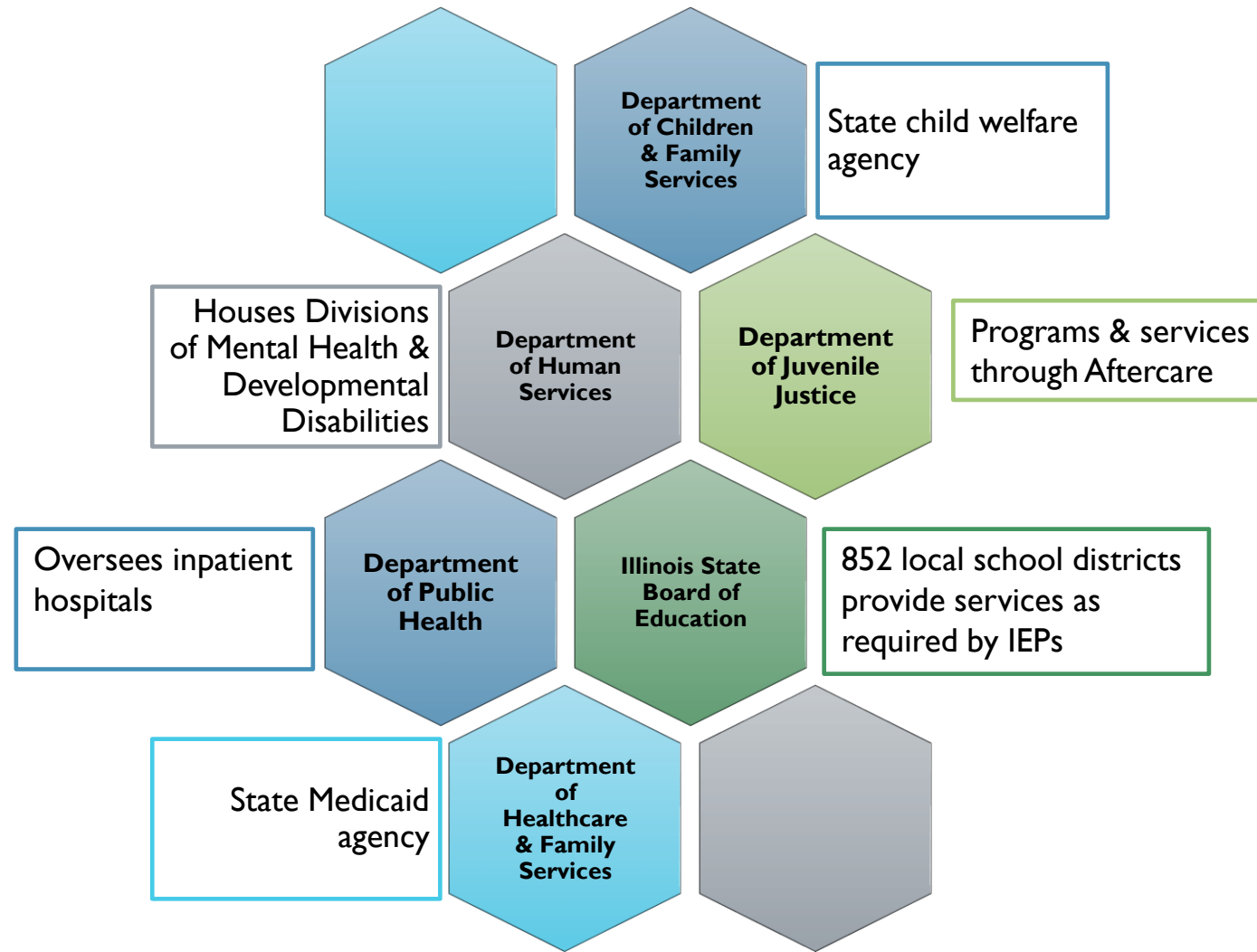
03

**LISTEN:** Elevate the voices of consumers by engaging parent leadership and youth participation.

04

**WORK TOGETHER:** Continue to support creative collaboration between public system partners.

# ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM – SIX CHILD-SERVING AGENCIES



# TWELVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

## Centralize & Streamline

1. Develop Care Portal as centralized resource for families seeking services for children with significant and complex needs.
2. Improve coordination of service delivery.
3. Centralize oversight of residential beds.
4. Implement resource referral technology.

## Adjust Capacity

5. Conduct regular data analytic review to inform capacity adjustments.
6. Adjust rates, including standardizing rates for similar services.
7. Increase capacity by expanding eligibility and developing new service types.
8. Partner with providers in a standard protocol.

## Intervene Earlier

9. Offer universal screening in education and pediatrics.
10. Facilitate information sharing across agencies.
11. Build workforce using paraprofessionals and other roles.
12. Fortify community networks by investing in local communities and parent leadership.

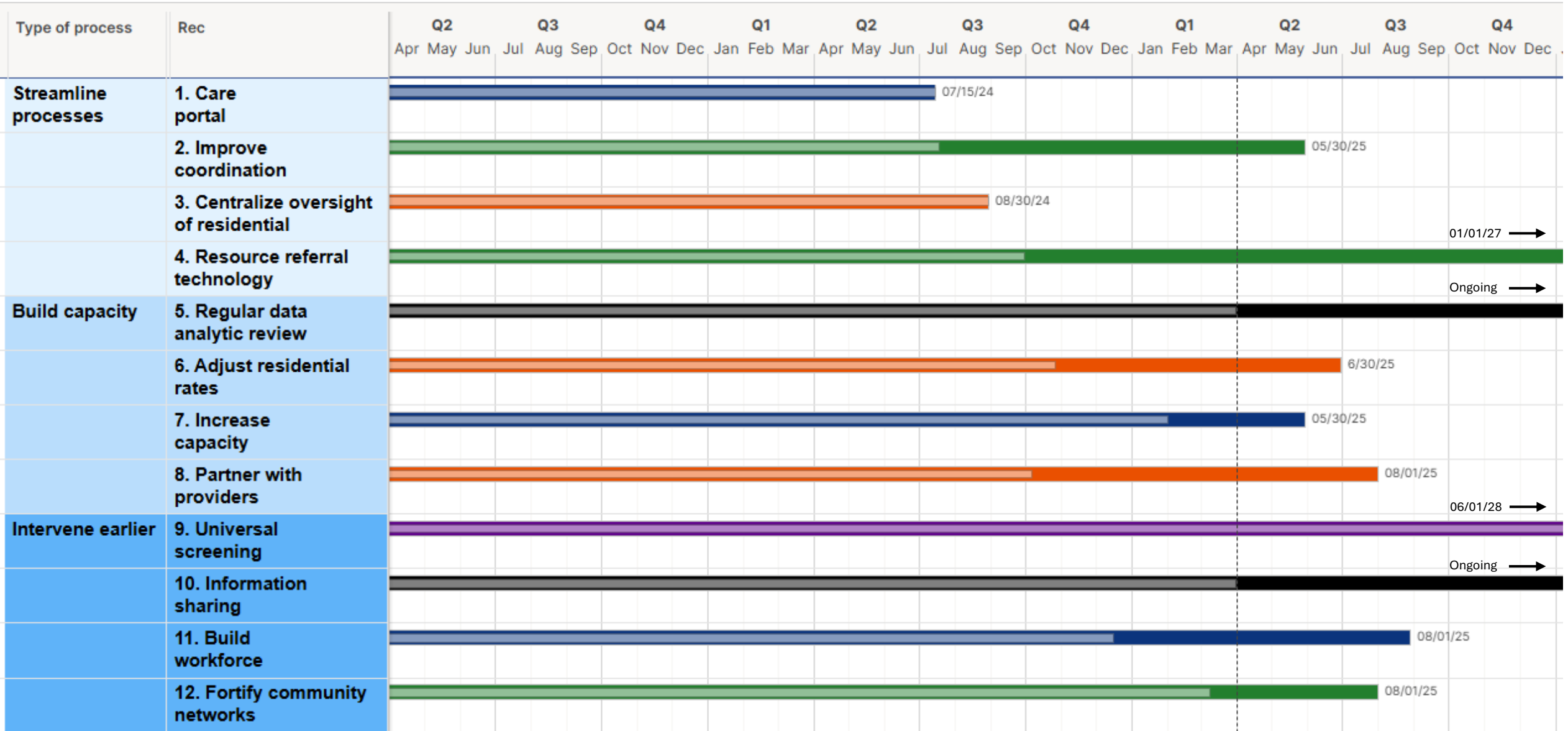
# BLUEPRINT RECOMMENDATIONS BY AGENCY

Recommendation	DHS	DCFS	HFS	ISBE	DJJ	DPH
Portal - Rec 1						
Care Coordination - Rec 2						
Centralize Residential Oversight - Rec 3						
Resource Referral Tech - Rec 4						
Data analytics - Rec 5						
Standardize Rates - Rec 6						
Expand Eligibility - Rec 7						
Provider Partnerships - Rec 8						
School Screening - Rec 9						
Information Sharing - Rec 10						
Expand Workforce - Rec 11						
Community Networks - Rec 12						

2023

2024

2025



# IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS - ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Public release of BEACON, the centralized online care portal for families and state partners, on January 15, 2025
- Capacity Reporting Tool allows state agencies to jointly assess and manage residential treatment resources.
- Pilot program to provide in-home behavioral health aides to assist parents caring for youth with autism and mental health challenges which, pending results, will then be Medicaid billable.
- With philanthropic funding, establishment of seven Family-Run Organizations (FROs; planning grants from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation) that will serve as community network anchors in partnership with IDPH.
- Launch of ISBE MH Screening Readiness Tool to inform the development of a phased approach to implementing screenings.
- Successful resolution of 356 portal cases, diverting 187 cases with hotline calls to other service pathways.



# INTRODUCTION TO BEACON

# WHY WAS BEACON CREATED?

- To help families easily find and connect to the right services in one simple place.
- To use technology to streamline communication and reduce delays.
- To provide tools for tracking progress and maintaining communication.
- To create a shared platform for agencies to work together seamlessly.



# BEACON: A ROUTING APPLICATION

- **Centralized Service Portal:** BEACON connects families to the right services through a single website.
- **Service Matching:** Helps families find services based on youth needs and characteristics.
- **Coordination:** Allows state agencies with consent to share data, track cases, and collaborate in real-time to provide holistic care.
- **Family Features:** Offers families the ability to create accounts, manage important documents, and connect to agency representatives and navigators for help.




# BEACON ROLL-OUT COMMUNICATIONS

- Directors' messages/website column/newsletters
- Targeted webinars and trainings
- Email blasts and announcements
- Recorded trainings and instructional videos : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MC289PSy5l4>
- Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative (CBHTI) [IDHS: Chief Officer for Children's Behavioral Health Transformation](#)



# CBHTI WEBSITE

Progress and Updates



Links

- [Recording of BEACON Training for School Personnel from 11.1.24](#)

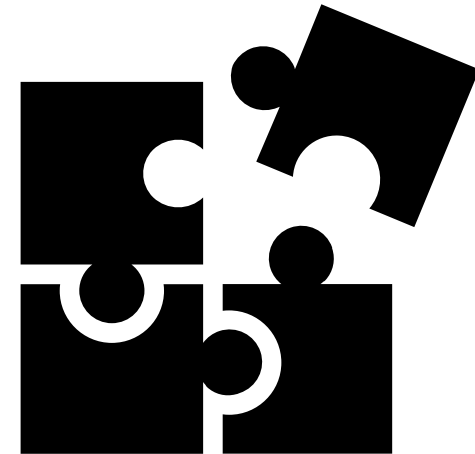
In the months since Governor Pritzker signed an Executive Order establishing the Initiative and our state's commitment to achieving transformational change with the full implementation of the [Blueprint for Transformation: A Vision for Improved Behavioral Healthcare for Illinois Children \(pdf\)](#), we have many accomplishments to report. Read more about them here:

- [BEACON Flyer \(pdf\)](#)
- [BEACON one-pager for providers \(pdf\)](#)
- [BEACON Languages Available \(pdf\)](#)
- [BEACON Training for School Personnel from 11.1.24 \(pdf\)](#)
- [Recording of BEACON Training for School Personnel from 11.1.24](#)

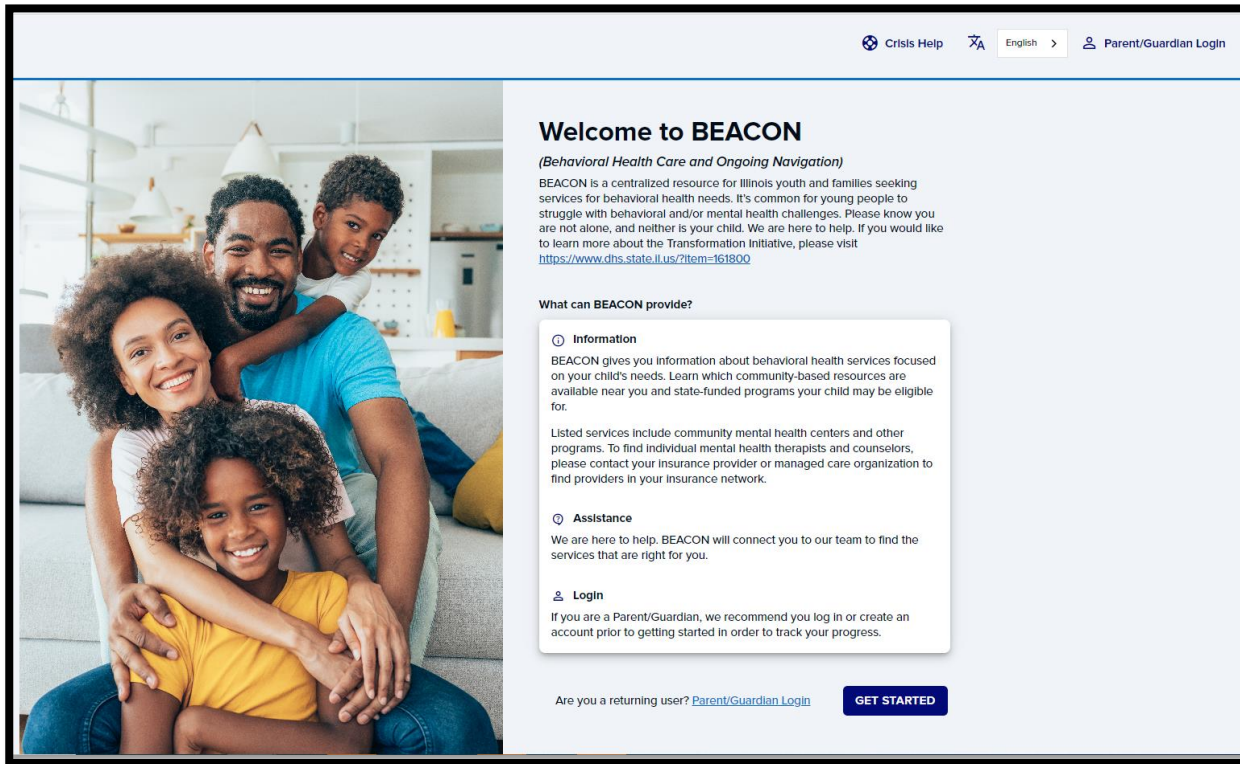
# ONLINE RESOURCES

# BEACON IS JUST ONE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

- BEACON connects families with helpers and allows everyone to see what is available for youth.
- Many other improvements are underway, including:
  - statewide resource referral tool
  - additional capacity for services to reduce wait times
  - community networks
  - behavioral health workforce expansion
- *BEACON does not* provide diagnostic assessment, prescribe services, or make appointments at this time.



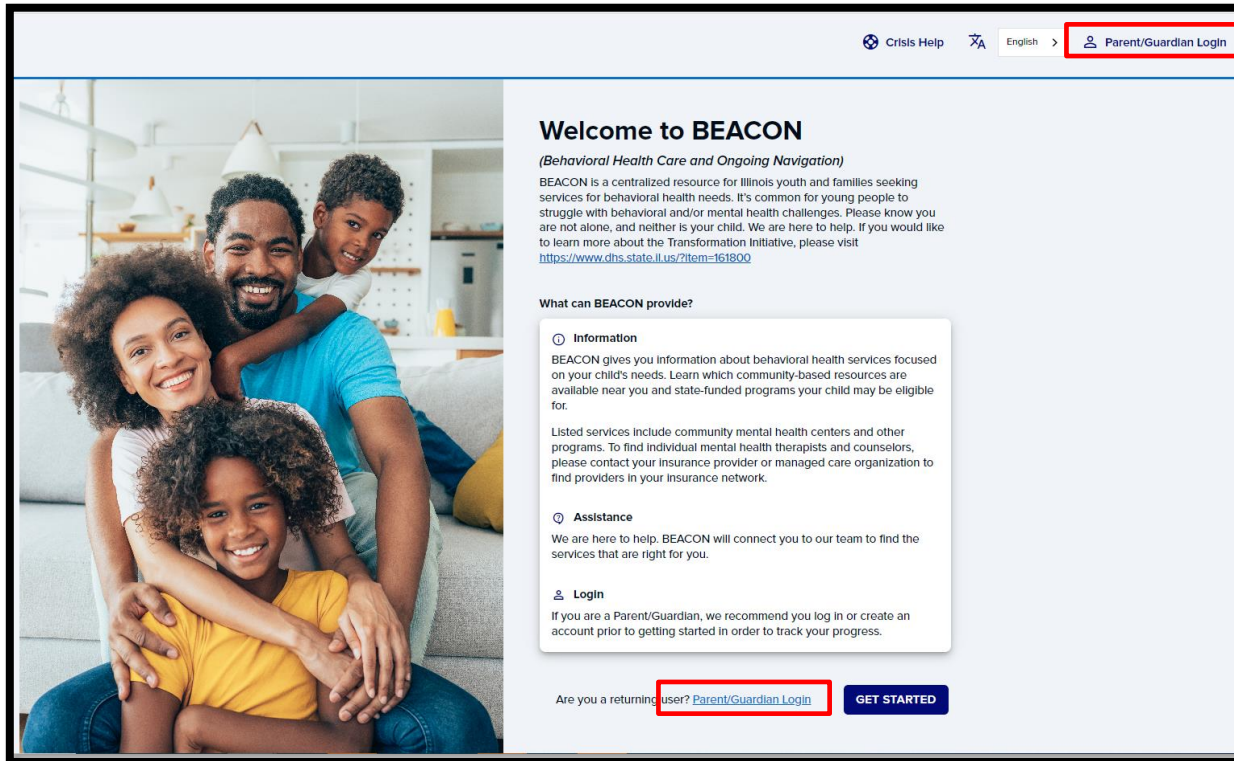
# ACCESSING BEACON



- **Website URL:** Access the portal at [beacon.illinois.gov](https://beacon.illinois.gov)
- **Create an Account:** Recommended for parents/guardians to track requests and save progress.
- **Anonymous Use:** Option to use without creating an account, though tracking is not available.
- **Crisis Resources:** Immediate access to crisis services, including 24/7 support like the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

# CREATE AN ACCOUNT (FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS)

We recommend parents/guardians log in or create an account prior to getting started in order to track requests, save their progress, and make future interactions with the portal smoother.



The screenshot shows the BEACON website home page. On the left is a large image of a smiling family (a man, a woman, and two children). On the right, the text reads "Welcome to BEACON" followed by a description of the service. Below this, there are sections for "Information", "Assistance", and "Login". The "Login" section includes a link to "Parent/Guardian Login" which is highlighted with a red box. At the bottom, there is a question "Are you a returning user?" followed by a "Parent/Guardian Login" link (also highlighted with a red box) and a "GET STARTED" button.

[Crisis Help](#) [English](#) [Parent/Guardian Login](#)

## Welcome to BEACON

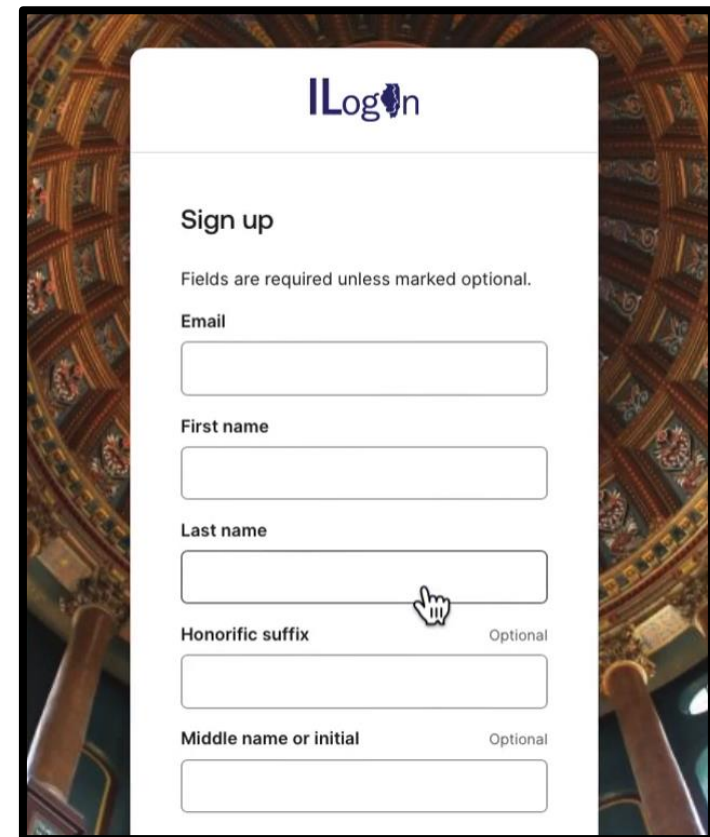
*(Behavioral Health Care and Ongoing Navigation)*

BEACON is a centralized resource for Illinois youth and families seeking services for behavioral health needs. It's common for young people to struggle with behavioral and/or mental health challenges. Please know you are not alone, and neither is your child. We are here to help. If you would like to learn more about the Transformation Initiative, please visit <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/?item=161800>

What can BEACON provide?

- Information**  
BEACON gives you information about behavioral health services focused on your child's needs. Learn which community-based resources are available near you and state-funded programs your child may be eligible for.  
Listed services include community mental health centers and other programs. To find individual mental health therapists and counselors, please contact your insurance provider or managed care organization to find providers in your insurance network.
- Assistance**  
We are here to help. BEACON will connect you to our team to find the services that are right for you.
- Login**  
If you are a Parent/Guardian, we recommend you log in or create an account prior to getting started in order to track your progress.

Are you a returning user? [Parent/Guardian Login](#) [GET STARTED](#)



The screenshot shows the BEACON login/sign-up form. The form is titled "Sign up" and includes a note that "Fields are required unless marked optional." The form fields are: "Email", "First name", "Last name", "Honorific suffix" (marked as optional), and "Middle name or initial" (marked as optional). A hand cursor is pointing at the "Last name" field.

## Sign up

Fields are required unless marked optional.

Email

First name

Last name

Honorific suffix Optional

Middle name or initial Optional

# ANYONE CAN USE BEACON WITHOUT CREATING AN ACCOUNT

Without sharing information about the child/youth, you can still access a list of community-based services.

If you are comfortable sharing some basic intake information about the child/youth, you can access community-based and State-funded programs they may be eligible for.

## Community-Based Services

Local community-based organizations can support your child and connect you to behavioral health professionals. If you have trouble finding or using these services, please contact our staff at [dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov](mailto:dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov). We're here to help. If you would like to learn more about the Transformation Initiative, please visit <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/?item=161800>

The following are resource directories that may have more services in your area:

[Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics](#)

[SPIDER](#)

[FindHelp](#)

[211](#) (in some parts of Illinois)

[School-based mental health resources](#)

## The following programs are a great place to start:

Please note that the following community-based program results are listed by distance, displaying only the first 25. For more assistance, please visit the Service Provider Identification & Exploration Resource ([SPIDER](#)) to view additional options.

At this time, programs appearing on this list are not endorsed by the state nor guaranteed to have availability. Future versions of this system will be able to incorporate availability. Please continue to visit our site for improvements!

### List of eligible programs

[Download Selected](#) [Email Selected](#)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Program	Type	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marillac St.Vincent Family Services <a href="#">Child Development Program</a>	Community Based Programs	2145 N. Halsted St. Chicago, IL 60614 <a href="#">312-943-6776</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DePaul Family and Community Services <a href="#">Psychological Testing Program</a>	Community Based Programs	2219 N. Kenmore Ave. Chicago, IL 60614 <a href="#">773-325-7780</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DePaul Family and Community Services <a href="#">Child and Family Therapy</a>	Community Based Programs	2219 N. Kenmore Ave. Chicago, IL 60614 <a href="#">773-325-7780</a>

# REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

You can request additional assistance from the BEACON team if you would like more guidance after viewing the list of services you may be eligible for.

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List of eligible programs [DOWNLOAD SELECTED](#) [EMAIL SELECTED](#)

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[Back](#) [Next Step](#)

## Do you need more assistance?

If so, please mark "yes" to talk to our Resource Coordination team for more information about services for the child/youth.

Do you need further assistance?

Yes

No



**Your request for assistance has been submitted.**

**Please note:** Requests will be reviewed by the DHS team within 24 hours excluding holidays and weekends.

### What's Next?

A Resource Coordinator will review the details and follow up with the youth or parent/guardian with next steps.

**Request ID: BEACON-100070**

**Date: 08/8/2024**

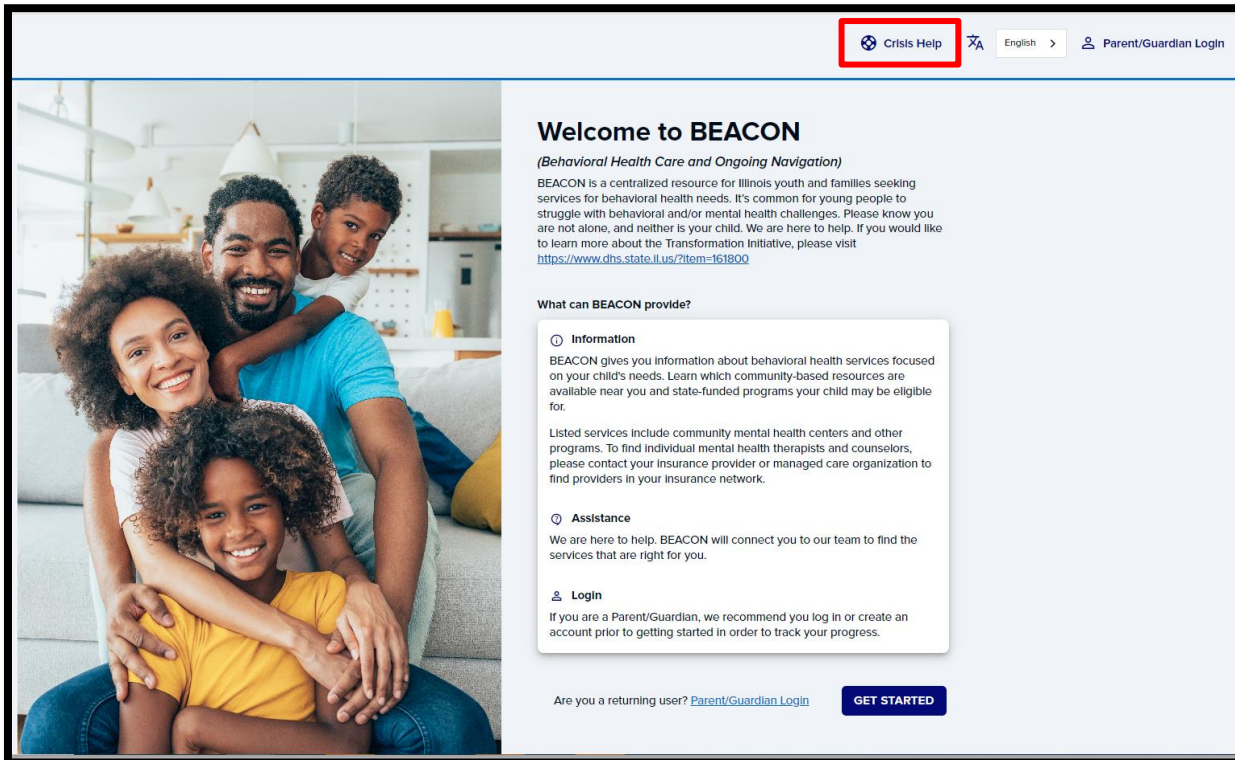
If you have questions about your requests, please contact 1-800-843-6154 during business hours.

Thank you for using BEACON. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact our staff at [dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov](mailto:dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov). We are here to help you receive the support and guidance you need.

The Division of Mental Health understands how stressful it can be to care for a child facing mental health challenges. We want you to have access to mental health resources that would benefit you as well as those whom you are responsible for. If you are an adult looking for support for yourself, please visit our [Office Locator](#).

# CRISIS RESOURCES

BEACON has a quick access link at the top of every page to resources for a child/youth experiencing a mental health crisis.



[Crisis Help](#) English [Parent/Guardian Login](#)

## Welcome to BEACON

*(Behavioral Health Care and Ongoing Navigation)*

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- Assistance**  
We are here to help. BEACON will connect you to our team to find the services that are right for you.
- Login**  
If you are a Parent/Guardian, we recommend you log in or create an account prior to getting started in order to track your progress.

Are you a returning user? [Parent/Guardian Login](#) [GET STARTED](#)

## Crisis Services

*If you or your child is experiencing a mental health emergency, please contact 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or Illinois CARES Line. If the current crisis is a life-threatening emergency, please call 911.*

### 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call 988 or Text 988 or Chat [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat)

This lifeline offers a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, including family, friends, and/or caregivers. This service is free and confidential, and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can call or text 988 or go to [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat) to get connected to a trained crisis counselor who will listen to you, provide support, and get you the help you need.

### Illinois CARES Line (24/7)

CARES is an around-the-clock mental health crisis line for Illinois residents. For those who have Medicaid or may be Medicaid-eligible, CARES can dispatch mobile crisis response services to provide support. Call 1-800-345-9049 or TTY: (866) 794-0374.

Phone: (800) 345-9049

TTY: (773) 523-4504

### 911

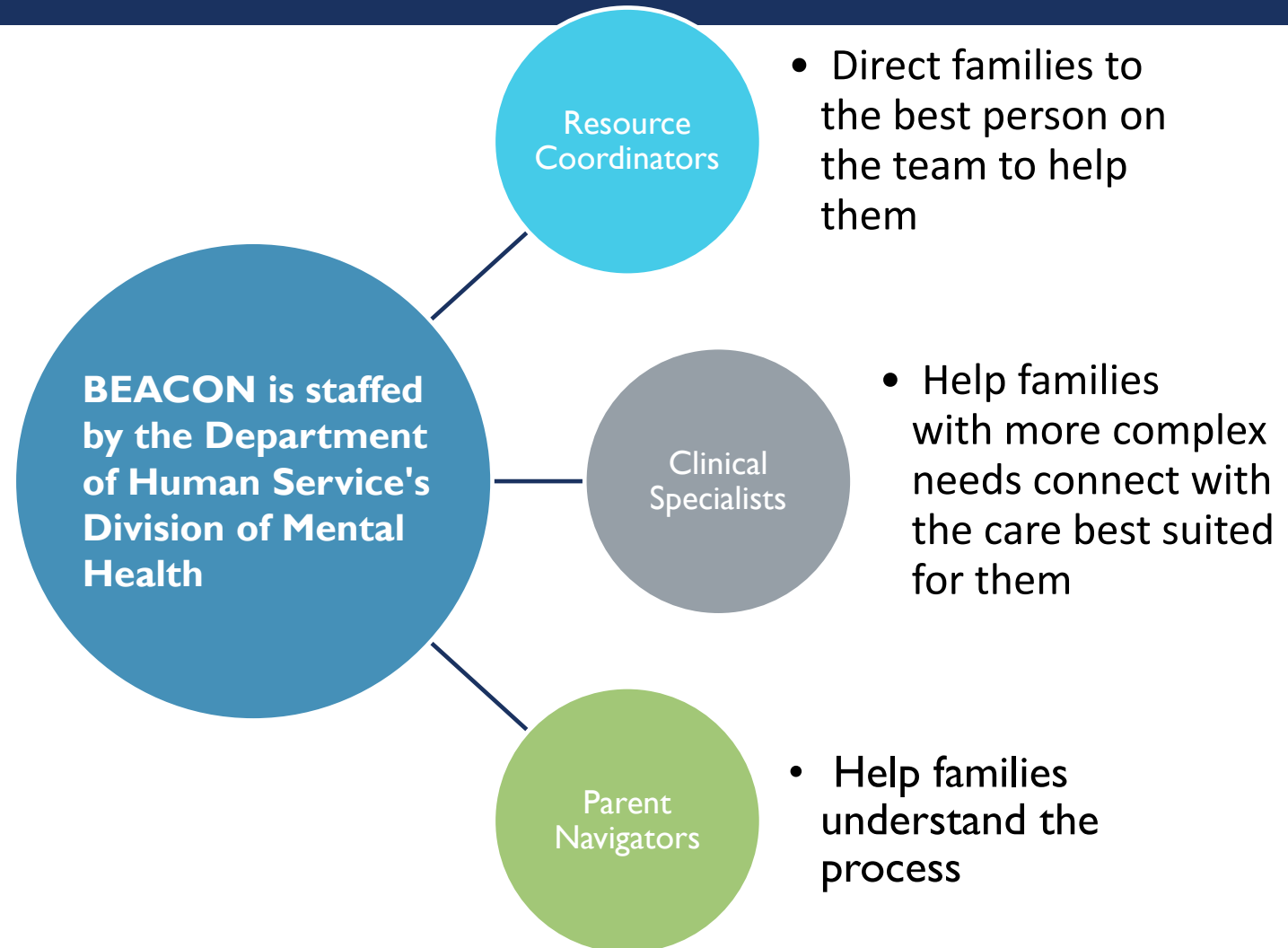
If this is a medical emergency, please contact 911.

# BEACON LANGUAGES

BEACON is available in Arabic, Hindi, Polish, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, and Ukrainian



# BEACON STAFF



## Basic Information:

Your Relationship to Child/Youth\*

State Agency Partner



### Child/Youth Information

Child/Youth First Name\*

Suzzie

Child/Youth Last Name\*

Smith

Child/Youth Date of Birth (Optional)



Child/Youth Age

12

What do you need help with? (Optional)

Continue




## Child/Youth Address

---

Address Line 1 (Optional)

Address Line 2 (Optional)

City\*

State\*  

Zip Code\*

Ext. (Optional)

## Child/Youth Current Residency

---



### Child/Youth Information

#### Who has the legal custody of the child?

Custody Status\*

Parent



#### Does the child/youth have any of the following needs? (Optional)

Select all that apply:

- ☐ Aggressive Behavior [i](#)
- ☒ Anxiety [i](#)
- ☐ Disrupted eating or sleeping [i](#)
- ☒ Depression or mood problems [i](#)
- ☐ Use of drugs or alcohol
- ☐ Crisis Care [i](#)
- ☐ Medically Complex [i](#)
- ☐ Developmental Disability [i](#)
- ☐ Severe Emotional Disturbance [i](#)
- ☐ Functional Impairment [i](#)
- ☐ 24-HR Nursing [i](#)
- ☐ Psychotic Episode [i](#)



**Is the child/youth signed up for or receiving any current involvement with the following programs/services? (Optional)**

Select all that apply:

- ☒ CARES/Mobile Crisis Response [i](#)
- ☐ Developmental Disabilities Waiver [i](#)
- ☐ DCFS Hotline [i](#)
- ☐ Family Support Program / Specialized Family Support Program [i](#)
- ☐ Specialized Education Due Process [i](#)
- ☐ Individualized Education Plan (IEP) [i](#)
- ☐ On PUNS List [i](#)
- ☐ DCFS Investigation [i](#)

**Does the child/youth have a specific need for any of the following services? (Optional)**

Service Type

Counseling/Therapy

⊗

Service

Individual Counseling

⊗

### Medical Information

---

**What type of health insurance does the child/youth have?**

If you have Tricare insurance, select “Private” from the menu below.

Insurance\*

Medicaid

⊗



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## List of eligible programs

[↓ DOWNLOAD SELECTED](#) [✉ EMAIL SELECTED](#)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Program	Type	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Heritage Behavioral Health Center <a href="#">Outpatient Mental Health Counseling</a>	Community-Based Programs	151 N Main Decatur, IL 62523 <a href="#">217-362-6262</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center <a href="#">Counseling and Support Groups</a>	Community-Based Programs	270 W Prairie Ave Decatur, IL 62523 <a href="#">217-428-0770</a>
			Helps families with youth aged 11-17 to avoid child welfare

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Next Step

## Do you need more assistance?

If so, please mark "yes" to talk to our Resource Coordination team for more information about services for the child/youth.

**Do you need further assistance?**

Yes

No

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Continue





## Your request for assistance has been submitted.

**Please note:** Requests will be reviewed by the DHS team within 24 hours excluding holidays and weekends.

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### What's Next?

A Resource Coordinator will review the details and follow up with the youth or parent/guardian with next steps.

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**Request ID: BEACON-10004W**

**Date:** 08/2/2024

If you have questions about your requests, please contact 1-800-843-6154 during business hours.

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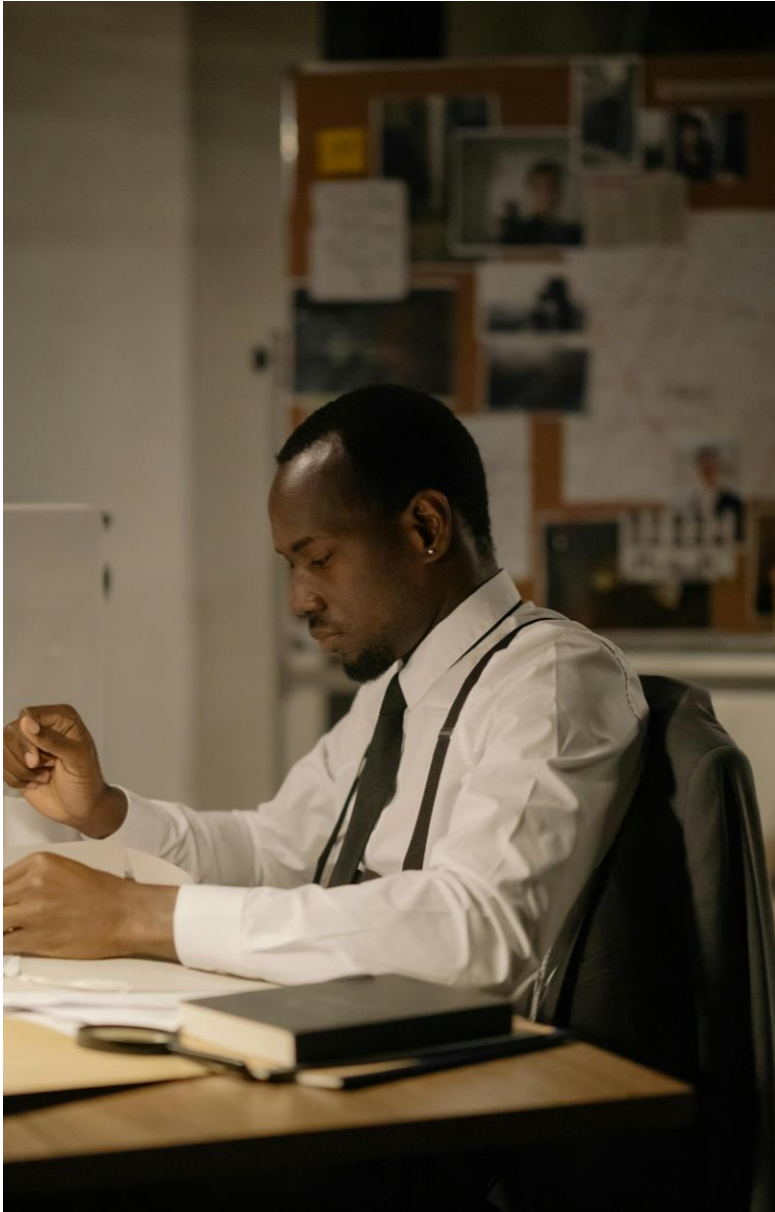
Thank you for using BEACON. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact our staff at [dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov](mailto:dhs.dmh.beacon@illinois.gov). We are here to help you receive the support and guidance you need.

The Division of Mental Health understands how stressful it can be to care for a child facing mental health challenges. We want you to have access to mental health resources that would benefit you as well as those whom you are responsible for. If you are an adult looking for support for yourself, please visit our [Office Locator](#).

# HOW PARENTS AND GUARDIANS USE BEACON

- Access BEACON for Service Navigation:** Parents/guardians use BEACON to identify behavioral health services for their child.
- Create a Case for Immediate Support:** Enter their child's information to be connected to Resource Coordinators who can help identify appropriate services.
- Track Progress and Engage with Providers:** Parents can follow the status of their case and communicate with state agencies and service providers to ensure timely support.
- Request Navigational Assistance:** Ask for additional help navigating service linkage and eligibility processes.





## HOW PROBATION OFFICERS USE BEACON

- Connect Youth to Behavioral Health Services:** Probation officers use BEACON to help youth in the juvenile justice system access counseling, therapy, and other support services.
- Coordinate Court-Ordered Services:** BEACON helps ensure that court-mandated behavioral health interventions, such as counseling or residential treatment, can be received.
- Collaborate with Other Service Providers:** BEACON facilitates communication between probation officers, service providers, and agencies, ensuring youth receive coordinated care.

## HOW JUDGES AND ATTORNEYS USE BEACON

- Expedite Service Coordination:** Judges and attorneys use BEACON to ensure that court-ordered behavioral health services can be quickly connected to youth in need.
- Reduce unnecessary custody relinquishment:** when psychiatric services and/or residential treatment is the primary need, BEACON connects judicial partners with the interagency team that can seek placement.
- Facilitate Interagency Communication:** BEACON allows judges and attorneys to work with service providers, probation officers, and State agencies to ensure care is coordinated.
- Ensure Holistic Support for Youth:** BEACON provides visibility into the full range of services a youth may receive, ensuring a comprehensive care approach.



# CASE VIGNETTE - AMELIA



Amelia is a 14-year-old with diagnoses of ADHD, Depression, and Anxiety. Amelia was hospitalized after a suicide attempt and had been implicated for aggression toward a younger sibling. The hospital social worker entered Amelia's information into the portal to assist the family with finding residential treatment after discharge, as her grandparents felt they could not take her home because of concerns about her behavior. Prior to entry into BEACON this family had not been connected to support services. A BEACON clinical specialist worked with the family to enroll Amelia in Pathways, FSP and Interim Relief, as well as completion of the IM+CANS. The FSP program successfully found a residential placement for the youth, and she was discharged from the hospital to this placement.

## CASE VIGNETTE - ERIC

Eric is a 15-year-old male with a history of behavioral health challenges and juvenile justice involvement. CCBYS entered the youth's information into BEACON after his Mom expressed she did not want the youth returning home and was seeking residential treatment for him. No applications had been initiated on the part of the family, but a BEACON Resource Coordinator worked in partnership with CCBYS, the CCSO (for Pathways) and the family to enroll youth in Medicaid services, find youth a safe place to reside at a relative's and complete FSP & IR applications. The BEACON Resource Coordinator continued provided the relative guardian with a list of local services for Eric, which the family connected to. They are no longer seeking residential treatment and are making use of supportive services in their community.



## TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING BEACON'S BENEFIT FOR FAMILIES



**If you are searching for information on behalf of a family, provide them with the entire list of services they may be eligible for.**



**If you request additional assistance on behalf of a family, let them know that a Resource Coordinator will be reaching out to them.**



**Remind the family that we need their permission to share any information with the BEACON team (consent). If the family needs help submitting consent, the BEACON team can assist.**

# NEXT STEPS

- **Ongoing Development:**  
New features and enhancements will be added based on feedback from families and providers.
- **Expansion of Services:**  
BEACON will integrate additional services, ensuring a broader range of support options.
- **Continuous Improvement:**  
BEACON will undergo regular updates to remain responsive to the evolving needs of families.



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT



Access the Blueprint for Transformation: A Vision for Improved Behavioral Healthcare for Illinois Children



## BLUEPRINT for TRANSFORMATION

*Vision for Improved  
Behavioral Healthcare  
for Illinois Children*

January 2023

# QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION