

Executive Summary

Responder must provide an executive summary clearly stating their interest in applying to a future RFP, or entering into a CEA, to operate the Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS) statewide program. The summary shall exhibit qualifications to run like programs and seriousness of potential to respond to a future RFP, or enter into a CEA, for administration of this program. LDH expects the response to demonstrate the responder's awareness and experience with infants/young children and families, vulnerable populations, Medicaid services administration, coordinating and collaborating with community agencies to address environmental risks and social determinants of health (SDOH), and statewide program operations including multiple provider contracting and monitoring.

Beacon Health Options (Beacon) respectfully submits our response to the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) for the Request for Information for the statewide Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS) program. We applaud the leadership and direction of the Louisiana State Legislature and the LDH/OBH in providing more coordinated services for children under age five and their families/guardians across Louisiana. Beacon is interested in responding to a request for proposal (RFP) for the ECSS program, should an RFP be issued.

Beacon's experience serving similar programs. Beacon serves the behavioral health needs of one out of six people across all 50 states. We work with state and federal agencies, health plans, and employers to support mental health and emotional well-being, crisis and child welfare, substance use disorder (SUD) recovery, and employee health programs that improve the health and wellness of people every day.

Beacon operates in several states and counties across the country as a specialty behavioral health management entity offering a wide range of services for children and families, adults, and other specialty populations. We advocate for a person-centered approach to behavioral health treatment and have extensive experience coordinating care for the most vulnerable individuals in our society. This includes behavioral health services as well as coordinating the social determinants of health (SDoH) needs of these populations. Beacon's programs for government agencies also provide programmatic oversight, quality management, data analytics, and other administrative functions.

Nationally, Beacon covers 14 million Medicaid lives across 16 states and the District of Columbia. Within our current programs, Beacon collaborates locally with state, county, and local agencies; providers; community-based organizations; managed care organizations (MCOs); and other identified stakeholders to develop an extensive presence and competence in managing integrated behavioral health care for individuals with complex behavioral health conditions, including children and youth in the child welfare and foster care systems. Beacon has demonstrated experience developing customized specialty care programs that meet the specific needs across the spectrum of Medicaid and/or Block Grant-funded population categories. These populations include:

- Multi-system involved children and youth (e.g., child welfare, foster care, juvenile justice)
- Children with severe emotional disturbance (SED)

- Individuals who are pregnant and using substances
- Parents with SUDs and their dependents, including infants and young children
- Individuals with serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI)
- Individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) or autism spectrum disorders
- Other individuals with SUDs
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Aged, blind, and disabled
- Individuals who are experiencing homelessness
- Individuals eligible for special needs plans
- Dual-eligible individuals

Beacon’s multi-modal, insights-driven approach allows us to integrate social, behavioral, and physical health solutions to drive improved outcomes for everyone we serve. We recruit, contract, and train a comprehensive network of more than 115,000 behavioral health providers. This, in turn, enables individuals to receive high-quality behavioral health treatment that **helps them to live their lives to the fullest potential.**

Beacon’s children and family programs operate within a Wraparound Model to engage families and their support systems to address stated and assessed needs and support family well-being. This use of an evidenced-based practice allows Beacon to offer superior clinical behavioral and IDD services, insightful analytics for programs like ECSS, and improve the delivery of care for children, youth, and families across the country.

Our high-touch individual and family navigation programs help address individuals’ basic needs, leading to better overall health outcomes and well-being. Solutions include wraparound resource coordination/health advocacy program to help address SDoH needs such as housing, food, and transportation; onsite or virtual access to resource coordinators (social workers) to navigate local resources; assessment and interventions developed internally; and resources and closed-loop reporting.

In Louisiana, Beacon is the behavioral health subcontractor for Healthy Blue, a Medicaid MCO participating in the State’s Healthy Louisiana program, which currently serves approximately 370,000 individuals.

Responder shall include in this section a singular contact name and contact information with phone number, email address, and physical address.

Requested Information	Response
Contact Name	Debbie Atkins, LPC
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ECSS Philosophy

Describe your entity's understanding of the ECSS principles and philosophy and the role of local/regional ECSS programs/consortiums.

The ECSS principles and philosophy, as envisioned by LDH/OBH, are child and family centered with the program serving infants and children from birth to age 5 as well as their families/guardians. Child-centered treatment is evidence-based and includes developmentally appropriate interventions that incorporate the integration of emotional and behavioral changes in the child's internal world and recognize the important relationships in the child's environment. These services focus on the prevention and early intervention of behavioral health issues. ECSS is founded on the principles of interagency collaboration and provides access to child-and-family-centered service planning, services, and supports to accommodate the diverse needs of Louisiana children and families, including behavioral health and SDoH needs.

ECSS is designed to reduce significant mental health symptoms, and difficult or detrimental behaviors for infants, toddlers, and young children. This includes children with complex behavioral health needs and SED. The ECSS program provides coordinated care for children to prevent severe and lifelong symptomatology. ECSS has several components of wrap around support to vulnerable children and families, including:

- Screening, evaluation, referral services, and treatment planning for young children and families
- A case management team to assist with the coordination of care to reduce fragmentation and improve outcomes for individuals
- Prevention programs, to include early detection and intervention campaigns; health promotions to broaden awareness; and informed incentives to reduce the stigma of seeking help
- Individual and family treatment from Licensed Mental Health Professionals (LMHPs) and psychiatric intervention services with qualified professionals having specialized knowledge and experience in infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH)

Role of the ECSS management entity. The ECSS contractor will act as the LDH/OBH's agent to ensure the ECSS program is best serving individuals and families by providing administrative support, data analytics of the system of care's performance, financial oversight, credentialing and quality monitoring of providers, claims payment, and clinical and medical insights and training. In turn, this enables providers to deliver the best supportive interventions possible to children and families in their local parishes.

Promoting sustainability. At the beginning of the program, the ECSS contractor will work intensively with LDH/OBH to promote the success of the program by identifying and recruiting early childhood mental health clinicians and providers to provide the service and provide in-kind training and support to refresh, maintain, and provide new training via Louisiana's expert university partners (e.g., Tulane University, Southern University, Louisiana State University, New Orleans Children's Bureau, and the University of Lafayette). As the program matures, the ECSS contractor will support ongoing forums for providers to receive continued training in the form of grand rounds and regular

topical training led by internal experts and university partners. The contractor will also provide ad hoc consultation services for providers in need of consultation for these cases.

Serving Louisiana infants, children, and families. The ECSS management entity will assist individuals in linking to the local or regional ECSS program/consortium in their area, promoting the development of an integrated plan of care, and providing consultation as needed. The local/regional ECSS program/consortium will assist children and families with coordinated care and referrals that are relevant and responsive to their specific cultural, linguistic, and geographic needs.

Role of the local/regional ECSS programs/consortia. The ECSS consortia will conduct assessments with the child and family/guardian to determine their care coordination needs. Based on the tier, clinicians will work with the family to determine a care plan. This care coordination approach assists children in gaining access to needed medical, behavioral health, social, educational, and other services with the goal of treatment in the least restrictive setting. Care Managers achieve these goals through assessment, service plan evaluation, monitoring, advocacy, linkage, and referral. Children enrolled in the ECSS program are referred to the appropriate services as determined by their behavioral health provider. Services may include counseling, behavior modification programs, mental health screening, assessment and referrals, intervention to prevent child abuse and domestic violence, and services to address the medical needs of the children.

As articulated by the Zero to Three Infant Mental Health Task Force Steering Committee in 2001, wraparound services focus on the family-child dyad to ensure the infant/young child is developing the capacity to experience, regulate, and express emotions; form close interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn—within the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development. This definition incorporates a broad range of factors that impact current and later functioning and development. The result is a child-and-family-centered, effective treatment plan for very young Louisiana children that will circumvent the lifelong risk of long-term services with poor outcomes.

Beacon has experience serving similar programs. Since 2006, Beacon has served as the Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership (CT BHP). A collaboration between several State agencies and Beacon, CT BHP was developed to improve behavioral health care for children with complex behavioral health conditions enrolled in the State's Medicaid program and their families. In 2015, Beacon began managing autism services. Since February 2020, Beacon manages the Integrated Family Care and Support (IFCS) program on behalf of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Through IFCS, Beacon provides care coordination and peer support services, and collaborates and coordinates with children and family State and provider-led agencies in the service delivery for children, youth, and families. IFCS engages families while connecting them to concrete, traditional and non-traditional resources in their community, including the full array of DCF-funded services, using components of the Wraparound Practice Model approach. Families eligible for the program have been the subject of an investigation that has not been substantiated and the children have been determined safe, yet needs have been identified jointly with the family and require in-home supports. Through the IFCS program, we serve approximately 400 Connecticut families with youth under 5 who are referred by the child welfare system (DCF) at any given time. Several of Beacon's Care Coordinators in this program have completed the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health training.

Corporate Background and Experience

Provide a brief description of your entity's history, organizational structure including presence in other states and years in business. Describe experience in operations of programs administered for infants/young children and families, vulnerable populations, Medicaid, coordinating/collaborating with community agencies to address environmental risks/SDOH, under administratively complex/regulatory driven programs or with complex financing systems and multiple vendor contracting.

Beacon is an industry-leading specialty behavioral health organization backed by tailored clinical programs and core administrative capabilities that promote prevention, recovery, and resiliency. We are one of the nation's leading administrators of behavioral health services, singularly focused on delivering cost-effective access to high-quality behavioral health care.

Brief history. Founded in 1983 by a former US Navy psychiatrist, Beacon's history is rooted in behavioral health. Through growth, mergers, and acquisitions through the years, Beacon grew to be the largest privately held behavioral health company in the US. In 2020, Beacon was acquired by the company now known as Elevance Health, Inc. Beacon continues to develop customized mental health, SUD/ODU, IDD, behavioral health crisis, children and families, and SDOH programs for State and federal agencies, health plans, and employers.

Organizational structure. To fulfill our mission to serve the behavioral health needs of more than 45 million members nationwide, Beacon has developed the corporate infrastructure necessary to deliver high-quality, cost-effective, accountable services for our clients. Beacon's designated local staff serve our clients, providers, and members. To solve customer needs, our local teams rely on consistent, efficient, and streamlined centralized administrative services.

Presence in other states and years in business. Beacon has served individuals with complex behavioral health conditions for nearly 40 years. We have built our expertise as a behavioral health MCO by working closely with State agencies to develop customized programs to meet the needs of publicly funded individuals and their families. We recognize that health care is local; therefore, we tailor our clinical programs using an in-depth understanding of the populations served, the nuances of local health care communities, and our State partners' vision and goals to transform behavioral health service delivery in their states.

In **Massachusetts**, for example, Beacon manages a statewide, comprehensive system of behavioral health care management support services and specialty services for more than 525,000 individuals in the Primary Care Clinician (PCC) Plan (a Massachusetts Medicaid program) and three Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). Since 1996, this innovative contract between Beacon and the Commonwealth has promoted both access to quality care and fiscal accountability.

In 2009, MassHealth created the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) in response to the Rosie D settlement. In response, Beacon collaborated with MassHealth to develop program specifications, contract and credential providers, build out the system of care, and drive fidelity to the CBHI model. With a mission to strengthen, expand, and integrate Massachusetts state services

into a comprehensive, community-based system of care, CBHI ensures that families and their children with significant behavioral health needs obtain the services necessary for success in their homes, schools, and/or communities. CBHI is child-centered and family-driven, strengths-based, culturally responsive, collaborative, and integrated, and is continuously improving. Because of CBHI, children in Massachusetts are less likely to rely on hospitals for treatment and receive care in their homes and within the community.

In **New York**, Beacon has developed an extensive history and presence in managing integrated behavioral health care for more than four million New Yorkers with complex conditions. Beacon's broad footprint extends across the state, providing access to behavioral health services for individuals enrolled in Children's Health Insurance and Medicaid managed care, as well as commercial, exchange, and Medicare programs. In addition to behavioral health services, Beacon offers autism care management services that connect children with an autism spectrum disorder to Applied Behavior Analysis and other therapies. In 2011, the State redesigned the Medicaid system to "achieve measurable improvement in health outcomes, sustainable cost control, and a more efficient administrative structure." Part of this effort included a multi-year roadmap for carving in certain fee-for-service (FFS) Medicaid benefits and populations, including behavioral health, into the State's Medicaid Managed Care Program. A critical component of this redesign was to develop an integrated children's health care system where there is "no wrong door" for children/youth with complex medical and/or behavioral health needs. In partnership with eight Medicaid MCOs in New York, Beacon manages the behavioral health components of these programs.

In **Pennsylvania**, Beacon has administered behavioral health services as part of Pennsylvania's HealthChoices (Medicaid) program. Beacon is leading a transformational effort through County-based contracts for 11 counties to administer the behavioral health component of the program for approximately 330,000 adults and children. For more than 20 years, Beacon has committed to working with County and State agencies to create recovery-oriented, responsive behavioral health programs that meet HealthChoices enrollees' unique needs, including special programs for children and adolescents. For example, Beacon has developed a specialized Integrated Case Planning (ICP) program for children and adolescents with complex behavioral, emotional, and social needs that facilitates strong coordination of care within all child-serving systems. ICP starts in the child's home and community, and services are strengths-based and focused on the skills, knowledge, capacity, and potential of children and families. Beacon facilitates complex case meetings in collaboration with the family and/or guardian, the child (whenever appropriate), and the child's treatment providers.

In **Kansas**, Beacon manages a crisis program for children and families. On behalf of the Kansas Department for Children and Families, Beacon manages a 24/7 crisis contact center and system oversight for the dispatch of mobile crisis teams for children and youths ages 20 and younger.

In **Arkansas**, Beacon served as the Quality Improvement like Organization and managed two contracts for the Department of Human Services to assist in administering the behavioral health care delivery system. From 2010 to 2019, Beacon conducted utilization review (UR) and authorization of inpatient services for the under-21 population and UR for outpatient services for individuals of all ages. Beacon also provided care coordination for individuals under the age of 21 who were high-risk.

In-Kind Services

If applicable, present a description of the in-kind services of monetary value reasonably determined by LDH to be an amount no less than 5% of the total contract amount that your entity plans to provide, that would meet the stipulations of a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement. This should describe services in the form of marketing, education, training, or otherwise, as related to the services at issue in order to satisfy a cooperative endeavor collaboration between the parties.

Oftentimes, Beacon provides in-kind services within our Medicaid/publicly-funded programs, and we would agree to meet the stipulations of the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement by providing in-kind services of monetary value reasonably determined by LDH to be an amount no less than five percent of the total contract amount.

In-kind services offered in other Medicaid/publicly-funded programs often include, but are not limited to:

- Program consultation, training, and/or technical assistance through national subject matter experts
- Learning community development and knowledge exchange practices
- Public awareness and social media campaigns, program marketing, and informational websites
- Targeted technical assistance on local program development and implementation

Further RFP information would be required to respond; however, the successful ECSS contractor would ideally offer a portfolio of supplemental services that align with LDH/OBH's vision for the program and the feedback from the community of program stakeholders including families/guardians, community leaders, and providers. These in-kind services should be based on ongoing discussion with and guidance from LDH/OBH leaders. Services should be tailored for each contract year as more program data and stakeholder feedback are collected and as needs are identified and change from year to year.

Approach and Methodology

The responder must demonstrate the following:

- There is a comprehensive, operational strategy in place at the organization level to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal rules guiding program operation on a routine basis and when new laws or regulations are enacted, such as but not limited to Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Service Standards, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Section 1915(b) of the Social Security Act, and Medicaid Managed Care, as applicable.

Our Legal and Compliance Departments, as well as all corporate managers, ensure that our operations are compliant with the laws and regulations of each jurisdiction with the authority to

regulate their operations. The Legal Department is responsible for legislation tracking activity, and informs and instructs appropriate staff about new or amended laws and regulations that impact operations to ensure our compliance with all laws and regulations. The Compliance Department tracks relevant federal laws and regulations, state legislative bulletins, regulatory websites, fraud alerts, as well as health care–related publications.

The Legal and Compliance Departments also issue regulatory alerts for major legislative and regulatory issues to managers and executives at all levels of the organization to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the changes and knowledgeable of the operational changes that will occur to ensure continued compliance.

Our Executive Compliance Committee coordinates the monitoring and review of applicable laws and regulations that affect our operations and is responsible for setting compliance goals and oversight of compliance activities throughout the organization. This committee identifies new risk areas resulting from new or revised laws and regulations, and for establishing corporate policies and procedures, standards of conduct, and measurement tools to monitor compliance. Our National Compliance Committee is responsible for providing technical assistance during the implementation of specific policies, procedures, and training to respond to changes in the law.

Our implementation and project management staff assists the organization in change management and service transformation to ensure that Beacon adapts business practices to remain in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulatory guidance across our lines of business. This team ensures that resources and staff are marshaled to engage the organization in making changes to respond to regulatory guidance. Support includes project planning, prioritization, tracking, resource allocation, budgeting, justification, as well as communication internally and externally with Beacon’s partners regarding compliance with federal and state standards.

Beacon proactively complies with rules and regulations regarding Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Service Standards, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Section 1915(b) of the Social Security Act, and Medicaid Managed Care. We further support our State agency partners as program changes become necessary to ensure compliance and closely monitor all requirements and regulations that currently exist as well as any future requirements as they develop.

- If applicable, the organization has achieved high compliance with federal managed care rules as evidenced by a current technical report in accordance with 42 CFR 438.358 and produced by an external quality review organization which meets the criteria at 42 CFR 438.354.

Beacon does not have a current External Quality Review Organization technical report to offer as we are not directly subject to these reports as a managed behavioral health organization delegate. However, we have broad experience in complying with federal and state managed care rules in the Medicaid and other publicly funded programs we manage across the country. We have developed a robust compliance program that continuously monitors the performance of internal and delegated operations using tools that reflect regulatory and accreditation requirements. Compliance staff uses internal and external monitoring and auditing results to identify specific compliance risks and conduct an annual risk assessment to determine Beacon’s overall compliance risk profile.

The Compliance program provides the infrastructure and oversight for Beacon’s compliance activities. This is our framework for executing our operations in a manner that is consistent with applicable federal and state laws and regulations and maintaining processes that support compliant conduct by our employees and contractors. We focus the program on detecting, correcting, and preventing non-compliance and violations, and on incorporating principles of continuous quality improvement into our methods.

Beacon’s clinical and quality programs, information technology and security systems, financial operations, and other functions undergo numerous external audits annually by state and federal regulators, accrediting/certifying agencies, and our clients to ensure our operations are conducted in a manner that complies with the laws and regulations of each of the jurisdictions we conduct business. Internal audits are also conducted to assess and identify potential non-compliance and unethical practices. Audits are initiated by the Board of Managers, Corporate Compliance Committee, General Counsel, or Corporate Compliance management staff. Audit activities specific to regional, Shared Services, and corporate functional areas may also be initiated by the assigned compliance lead or executive management staff.

- The organization has an effective business continuity, disaster recovery and emergency preparedness and management plan in place, which ensures operations are not interrupted when a disaster or a state of emergency is declared by the State, including demonstrated strategies for locating all enrollees prior to an impending emergency/disaster, locating providers and enrollees post emergency/disaster, actively linking enrollees to new or temporary providers for services as needed, maintaining consistent, effective communication with agencies providing case management and providers to obtain near real-time information on enrollee needs and provider status, addressing identified needs and issues timely to ensure enrollee continuity of care and health and welfare in the community, and reporting activities and progress on no less than a daily basis to the State as requested.

Beacon has a robust business continuity, disaster recovery, and emergency preparedness plan in place and tested annually. Our disaster recovery and business continuity plans include established processes that safeguard information and ensure we can continue to respond to client, provider, and individual needs in the event of a computer system failure, disaster, or state of emergency declared by the state. The plans cover all systems, including telephony, Local Area Networks (LAN)/Wide Area Networks (WANs), data servers, application servers, help desk processes, and facility power. They also include specific support activities for each department within Beacon (e.g., clinical operations, customer service, finance, human resources). The plans incorporate detailed instructions that cover all phases of the disaster recovery process, including:

- **Plan activation procedures** – protocols for first alert procedures, identification of emergency team members, assessment of the severity of an incident, impending regional disaster procedures (e.g., snowstorm, hurricane), and contingency contact procedures to alert appropriate internal staff
- **Response procedures** – activation of alternate data processing locations, data center vendor notifications, internal and external notification process, and team communication requirements

- **Recovery procedures** – procedures for recovery operations and monitoring alternate processing operations
- **Site restoration procedures** – initial assessment procedures and transitioning services back to the call center
- **Administrative procedures** – monitoring, reporting, and recordkeeping

We have a well-established, industry-standard business continuity plan that includes multiple redundancies for data maintenance, storage, and all call center functions. We would also work with a select group of providers on an emergency preparedness process for addressing natural disasters and other emergencies that may impact the ECSS population specifically.

Disaster recovery plan. Beacon maintains hardware, application, and data redundancy to minimize interruptions to operations in case of power failures or disasters. We offer a fully developed contingency plan to provide an immediate response to unplanned business interruptions. The plan includes requirements, strategies, and actions necessary to rapidly recover business operations, including real-time data replication of core applications, hot-site recovery, and redundant failover of systems and power.

Should Beacon's administration office(s) be destroyed in a hurricane or other natural disaster, most core services would be available immediately, either locally or remotely. Beacon would fail over instantaneously to our offsite data center, where all core applications would be up and running. Call center operations would continue as normal as our system is set up to redistribute calls to available resources or redirect calls if such action is required. Applications to other functions, such as websites, reporting, dashboards, and more, may take a bit longer as new URLs would need to propagate across the network to point users to the new data center. If such a disruption did occur, phone lines would be redirected and website URLs would be repointed within 24 hours.

Business continuity plan. Our plan encompasses telephone service recovery for all of our call centers across the country. A telephony Business Recovery Plan (BRP) can be invoked if a call center is not able to continue to provide call handling service as normal. Our geographically dispersed call centers provide backup call management services for each other. This ensures the level of service individuals will receive, even when a site may be operating under BRP conditions, is meeting our standards and client service level expectations. BRPs are activated by call centers when needed and can be accommodated within minutes of notification, 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

The activation of the BRP does not affect existing protocols for delivering appropriate and necessary services to individuals. In the event of a disaster that affects a call center, our telephony system allows for look-ahead routing and capabilities to send calls to different call centers without initiating business recovery. All call center clinicians—regardless of the call center's location—are licensed clinicians trained to quickly assess individual needs and assist in getting the individual to the nearest facility and/or appropriate level of care in a safe and timely manner. Further, Clinical Operations, through coordination with our Account Management team, is made aware of potential disasters so that they can develop a plan that may be an additional protocol when determined beneficial for individuals' safety or management.

- The organization has an effective grievance management system which operates in accordance with state and federal rules, resolves filed grievances in a timely and appropriate manner, and includes tracking and trending of grievances and quality of care concerns to identify and address issues on a systemic basis;

Beacon's grievance management system is designed to appropriately handle all customer/service delivery issues, including individual expressions of dissatisfaction (complaints). Regardless of the nature of the inquiry, Beacon's tracking system establishes an official record for each inquiry and/or complaint. A Complaint/Grievance Coordinator documents basic information, including the name of the complainant, their relationship to the individual, the Beacon staff member handling the issue, the type of issue, and the final resolution of the inquiry.

Information is stored in our database, where we generate comprehensive reports on all inquiries and parameters for response time. This information is linked with clinical information within our care management system that allows our staff to view an individual's interactions with Beacon and the system of care over time.

Our grievance, appeals, and quality improvement staff review grievance/complaint/appeals data to establish key areas of focus and quality improvement priorities. Based on their review, our experts develop action plans to improve the quality of care and the quality of our service through policy clarifications, policy changes, provider training, network development, staff training, and other activities.

Beacon upholds individual and family rights to appeal health care decisions in the behavioral health managed care programs in which we serve, and in compliance with all federal and state regulations. Strong complaints, grievances, and appeals processes are crucial to protecting the rights of individuals, and they provide valuable feedback to continuously improve the quality of publicly funded health care programs such as the ECSS. We have decades of experience resolving complaints, grievances, appeals, and State Fair Hearings in compliance with State and federal Medicaid requirements, including but not limited to the CMS Grievance System Statute found in 42 CFR Section 438, Subpart F.

- The organization has an effective utilization management and care management system which meets NCQA accreditation standards (as applicable), proactively identifies and addresses the needs of enrollees at risk of hospitalization or out-of-home placement, maintains the integrity of system of care values, addresses over and under-utilization in a timely manner, meets service authorizations timelines for expedited and routine requests, and has systems in place to inform care management and utilization management decisions.

Beacon has received accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for several programs that we operate across the country. Our commitment to high-quality, affordable health care for individuals is demonstrated through our accreditation status. NCQA has awarded Beacon Full Accreditation under the Managed Behavioral Health Organization (MBHO) standards. Accreditation is granted for three years to those plans that have excellent programs for continuous

quality improvement and meet NCQA's rigorous standards. NCQA MBHO Accreditation standards are intended to help organizations achieve the highest level of performance possible, reduce individual risk for negative outcomes, and create an environment of continuous improvement. Beacon is a quality-driven organization with the framework in place to continually assess and improve the clinical care and services we provide.

Our programs also adhere to NCQA standards for utilization management and care management, including the establishment of policies and procedures and staff training to adhere to each of the NCQA standards for MBHO programs. In addition, Beacon's subsidiary in Pennsylvania has been awarded Distinction for Multicultural Health Care for its MBHO Medicaid program. Multicultural Health Care Distinction is a nationally recognized evaluation that purchasers, regulators, and consumers can use to assess which organizations have earned distinction by meeting rigorous standards in serving a diverse population. The subsidiary is also scheduled for review for Health Equity Accreditation. NCQA awards accreditation to organizations that meet or exceed its rigorous requirements for health equity.

Proactively identifies and addresses the needs of enrollees at risk of hospitalization or out-of-home placement. Beacon has developed systems, processes, and tools to ensure that avoidable hospitalizations and out-of-home placements are minimized for the populations we serve, including the use of online portals to capture critical individual clinical and demographic information for population health and risk stratification. Based on risk scores, Beacon sends educational materials, outreaches to the individual's provider or primary care doctor, or outreaches directly to the individual and/or family/guardian.

Maintains the integrity of system-of-care values. Beacon manages child-serving systems of care in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and in other states. We have created systems to provide ongoing individual and provider supports, technical assistance, and training. We foster continuous quality improvement through our Quality Management committees and quality structures to support the strengthening of system-of-care values according to the federal Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) principles (i.e., child-centered, family-focused, community-based, multi-system, culturally competent, with the least restrictive/least intrusive care).

We facilitate greater child and family agency in making decisions about their health care treatment. We wrap around services to meet the child and family's needs by recognizing and drawing upon their strengths and working within the resources of the local providers, community partners, and other system of care stakeholders.

Addresses over and under-utilization promptly. Beacon has extensive data regarding mental health and SUD utilization that we use to develop and refine algorithms to identify over/under utilization. Beacon develops models that identify trends by diagnosis, levels of care, and age. Over- and under-utilization is monitored as part of our utilization and quality management processes. Patterns outside the norm are followed up on, with action plans developed as needed. Continual reporting within our committee structure ensures compliance and follow-through. Based on data, programs with specific interventions are developed to address these patterns of over- and under-utilization. Our clinical team uses claims and authorization data to identify trends in utilization and determine opportunities for improvement, either through the expansion of specific services, such as community-based alternatives to acute care, or additional training for our staff or providers.

Meets service authorization timelines for expedited and routine requests. Beacon is at the forefront of managed care performance standards. Our staff in each department monitors their service levels according to rigorous standards of performance. These standards encompass operational measures including, but not limited to:

- The timeliness of prior authorization review according to NCQA industry standards
- Claims adjudication and claims payment timeliness, claims volume, claims financial accuracy, claims mechanical accuracy, and claims aging reports
- Customer service levels for each of our clinical and customer support toll-free hotlines, including the average speed of answer, abandonment rates, and call volume
- Grievance and appeals timeliness, including the timeliness of regular and expedited appeals
- Provider credentialing and contracting timeliness, according to NCQA standards

We monitor these service levels closely and develop action plans to ensure that all delegated services and standards are met in the programs we are entrusted to manage on behalf of state agencies.

Has systems in place to inform care management and utilization management decisions. Through our publicly funded programs, Beacon has developed technology and processes that support behavioral health clinical management across the utilization management and care management of the populations we serve. This includes technology that supports risk stratification across the population and assignment of acuity of need rating to help provide support for individuals with rising risk or high-risk levels. In addition, Beacon has developed an electronic portal to enable the online and secure review of health risk assessments and care plans that help behavioral health Care Managers be informed of medical, pharmacy, and behavioral health history and better coordinate care for individuals and families.

- The organization shall develop and manage an adequate provider network for all covered benefits and services which ensures timely access to care for enrollees in both rural and urban parishes.

Beacon has nearly 40 years of experience in developing comprehensive behavioral health provider networks to accommodate the complex needs of publicly funded individuals and families. We have developed provide networks for Medicaid and other publicly funded programs in urban, rural, and frontier areas with expanded community-based and peer support offerings designed to provide individuals with access to the full range of covered services.

We determine network adequacy based on accessibility standards for practitioners and programs, practitioner density measures, program-to-individual ratios, and network provider availability. This will ensure that we assess the number, mix, and geographic distribution of the provider network and match it to the anticipated needs of the ECSS program children and families.

Beacon has direct experience developing behavioral health networks in Louisiana. While we currently have a wide array of behavioral health providers and facilities under contract in Louisiana, we will work collaboratively with the current local ECSS program/consortia to develop a customized network to ensure prompt access and service quality for ECSS children and families/guardians.

Our network development plan comprises four key steps:

- 1. Analysis** – We conduct a geo-mapping analysis by ZIP code and a density analysis detailing the individual/provider ratio to ensure appropriate access to a provider.
- 2. Recruitment** – We focus our recruitment efforts to address identified gaps/needs among individuals served.
- 3. Contracting and credentialing** – Once a provider has submitted a completed application, passed Beacon’s credentialing criteria, and returned a signed contract, providers are notified of their acceptance as participating in the applicable program.
- 4. Ongoing maintenance** – We regularly monitor the access and availability of all facilities and provider disciplines in our network to ensure access and ample diversity to meet the needs of individuals served through the program. The provider network composition is analyzed each quarter, and providers are actively recruited to maintain network integrity and fill any identified gaps. We use geographical analysis, ease of scheduling, scheduling audits, and individual feedback as the means of monitoring the overall appropriateness of the network.

Our network development efforts are ongoing. Once a program is implemented, we continuously monitor and evaluate the network to ensure appropriate access for individuals and families. Our targeted recruitment strategy incorporates data-identified needs, provider recommendations, and input from administrators. Our network staff identifies and establishes recruitment needs for providers in specific geographic areas, as well as expanding the network to accommodate intermediate care levels by recruiting specific or specialty providers. We continually collect cultural competency information, demographic data on individuals served, provider utilization, and provider quality performance data. We use this information to shape the network to accommodate the changing needs of the local regions and accommodate the different cultural and linguistic needs of individuals and families.

Our network development strategy goes beyond understanding adequacy. To meet the needs of those we serve, we must have an effective network ready to meet those needs. In many markets, we provide Provider Quality Management services. Provider Quality Managers are behavioral health clinicians that partner with key network providers to offer support and ensure collaboration and the sharing of best practices across the network. Further, they are charged with evaluating the effectiveness of the providers and the network, while sharing outcome data and working with providers on practice improvement.

- The organization operates an enrollee service line to provide for timely crisis response and service authorizations 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year using an automated call distribution system with a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) and/or relay system;

Beacon offers an approach to customer and provider services that emphasizes access and responsiveness. We operate customer service lines for timely crisis response and service authorizations 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year using a customizable automated call distribution system. Ensuring the quality of an individual’s experience through exceptional customer service is important in every industry, especially in behavioral health care. In keeping with Beacon’s commitment to ***help people live their lives to the fullest potential***, our customer service

philosophy stems from our promise to provide individuals and providers with the most accurate and informed benefit, eligibility, claims, and authorization information in the most effective, efficient, and compassionate manner.

When an individual or provider calls our toll-free phone number for any reason, our call management system easily matches call center personnel resources and skills to call volume and customer needs, including the use of TDD/TTY and relay systems. Individuals in crisis require immediate access to a clinician who can assist them in obtaining the necessary services. Our state-of-the-art telephone structure immediately directs crisis calls to a licensed clinician, while never placing the individual on hold. All of our contact center staff are trained to identify emergency situations and immediately transfer such calls to a licensed clinician. If this requires connecting the call with another staff member, this process is done seamlessly through our no-hold telephone conference feature. During the call transfer process, the caller remains on the line and is in contact with our staff member at all times.

Through Beacon, individuals have access to services to address their concerns through multiple access points, including telephonic and web access. Our telephone system, service applications, and portals enable us to respond to individual and provider inquiries quickly and accurately. The system provides real-time information which enables us to make immediate decisions to redistribute calls to resources or to redirect calls in the rare event it is required. By providing a comprehensive set of capabilities for call center management and reporting, we effectively manage call center resources and, as a result, better serve individuals and providers.

Crisis Line Experience. For more than 25 years, Beacon has been developing and implementing customized crisis response systems that are tailored to the needs of communities and support local differences in demographics, geography, and existing resources. As a 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we are accredited by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS), a recognized national crisis thought leader, and have contributed to the Crisis Now guidelines and conversations around the launch of 988. For example, in **New Hampshire**, we operate a statewide, 24/7 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline through phone, text, and chat for all ages, including mobile crisis dispatch. We developed the air traffic control protocols, a dispatching and referral system to access/track services, and trained all mobile crisis teams. In addition, Beacon is the **national 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline backup contact center** for text and chat services, and well as telephonic backup crisis contact services for Spanish speaking individuals.

This experience and expertise ensures we are operating at the highest standard to serve individuals and families in crisis, and remain a proven and reliable partner to health plans, states, and other government agencies across the country.

- The organization has processes and procedures in place which allow for real-time oral and signing interpretation services free of charge to enrollees while meeting timely access standards;

Beacon upholds the principle of providing equal opportunity access to behavioral health services for the individuals we serve. We have instituted policies and procedures to ensure that individuals who speak other languages or identify as Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard-of-Hearing, Limited English Proficient,

or who are immigrants are given the ability to speak to their behavioral health provider in the manner in which they prefer, and at no cost to the individual or family.

Beacon complies with all federal and state requirements for oral and signing interpretation for individuals and families. For example, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires effective communication access for all individual, including sign language interpretation for individuals and families. We ensure that individuals who request face-to-face oral and signing interpreter services receive these promptly and are satisfied with the services.

Our language line is available 24/7 and includes the ability to allow real-time oral and signing interpretation services for individuals while meeting timely access standards. Our quality monitoring staff monitors the performance and compliance of our language line vendor on an ongoing basis by following up with each individual or family who uses the service to ensure they are satisfied with the services provided. Monitoring information is collected and documented and presented to Beacon's applicable committees.