

Children who enter the state's child welfare system are at-risk and in need of care related to the effects of neglect and/or abuse. Because of this, these children need a more comprehensive and coordinated health care delivery model that can promote better access and improved health outcomes. The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) and the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) recognized this and began working on a collaborative plan.

On Nov. 1, 2012, SCDHHS and SCDSS introduced the Foster Care Health Initiative. The goal for this collaboration was to provide the best care possible for our state's most vulnerable children by improving interaction with primary care physicians, increasing access to preventive care and encouraging early intervention and more appropriate treatment.

First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina was one of the Medicaid managed care organizations (MCO) contracted by SCDHHS in November 2012 for this initiative. Since that time, First Choice has become the primary MCO for the state's foster care children. Having one health care plan for this population not only ensures better care for the state's children but also increases access for caseworkers, foster parents and caregivers.

To enhance the initiative further, First Choice hired Foster Child Welfare Liaison Diane Rowan to help facilitate and coordinate this health care delivery model. As the first point of contact for all children in foster care, Diane collaborates with caseworkers and foster parents/caregivers for the benefit of these children. She can explain all of the advantages of being enrolled in an MCO, such as the many free and voluntary case management programs with prenatal, NCIU, pediatric nurses and behavior specialists. Diane can also offer additional information, resources and assistance. She can be reached at **843-414-2681**.

First Choice is committed to helping to create safe and healthy environments for our state's foster care children. Helping to maintain their health and well-being and improving health outcomes play a crucial role in promoting family reunification, adoption or other positive permanency outcomes.

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