



# Newsletter

April, 2005

*Linking individuals and families to resources*

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## **Welcome**

Welcome to the ConneXions Newsletter! We are pleased and excited by the intensive activity in the months following the January Steering Committee meetings. The highlights of our work include:

- Formation of an Advisory Board
- Development of a sustainability plan to ensure ConneXions will be a long-term community resource
- Identification of Lead Agencies in four counties
- Development and implementation of the shared community information system
- Presentations to potential partners and funders regarding the ConneXions program

Over the next several months, we will be continuing to engage partners and funders in conversations regarding partnership opportunities, resource and referral development. Please send us your ideas on groups or individuals who would be interested in hearing about our work and partnering with us during the final development phase and implementation of ConneXions.

Watching ConneXions develop over these last several months has made me appreciate how strong we are as a community and how together we can truly make a difference. While we still have a steep hill to climb, I am confident we will be successful and I look forward to reaching new heights each day. Thank you to all for your time and commitment to making this happen!

## **Advisory Board**

We are thrilled to announce the formation of the ConneXions Advisory Board. The Advisory Board is tasked with working closely with CHOICE Regional Health Network, the organizational home, to develop implementation and business plans to ensure we meet the goal live date of July 1, 2005. The Executive Committee identified a dedicated group of community members who represent faith-based, government, social services and health care sectors in our region, including:

- Robert Coit, Thurston County Food Bank
- Holly Detzler, CHOICE Regional Health Network
- Linda Greenly, Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Lee Johnson, United Churches of Olympia
- Jane Jones, Neighborhood Free Medical Clinic
- Kim Klint, Mason Matters
- Ronda Larson, Washington State Office of the Attorney General
- Diana Leback, Twin Harbors Pharmaceutical Assistance Network (Grays Harbor & N. Pacific Counties)

- John Masterson, Behavioral Health Resources/Crisis Clinic
- Lynn Nelson, Educational Service District #113
- Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council

The Advisory Board meets twice monthly. The time, commitment and energy each member is providing to the board are truly amazing. ConneXions is fortunate to have such a talented group of people leading this effort. To date, the Advisory Committee has assisted CHOICE Regional Health Network in creating a sustainability plan, as well as helping to develop partnerships with state and county agencies and identify ConneXions sites, roles and benefits.

### Other Accomplishments

With the help of the Advisory Board, we have made significant progress towards our goal of going live on July 1, 2005. Highlights of our work include:

- **Sustainability:** The Advisory Board approved a sustainability plan on March 19, incorporating phased-in user fees. Since we anticipate that sites will be able to serve their clients more effectively and efficiently with ConneXions in place, sites will be requested to pay a user fee to cover the costs of the central functions performed by CHOICE as the organizational home. The user fees are currently set at \$4,500 annually for comprehensive sites, \$3,000 for basic sites, and \$1,500 for referral sites. (Please go to [www.connexionsnw.org](http://www.connexionsnw.org) and click on Enrollment and Referral Site FAQ's for information about the role of ConneXions sites.) ConneXions anticipates being successful in receiving grants as a new and innovative program. To help ConneXions sites transition to user fees, we plan to subsidize the fees at the level of 75%, 50% and 25% over the first three years.
- **Fundraising:** Our fundraising efforts are in full swing, including collaborating with the United Way of Thurston County for a federal Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) grant. We have also written several smaller grants to help subsidize user fees for the first three years. In addition, CHOICE is responding to the Request For Proposal for the Washington State Basic Food Outreach contract. This will provide an opportunity to leverage local funding with federal funding.
- **Information Systems** A subcommittee to help devise the categories of access for organizations that participate in the ConneXions system is scheduled to meet on April 28, 2005, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm at CHOICE Regional Health Network. The group will be identifying the different types of categories our partners fall into (i.e. mental health, nutrition, dental, benevolence fund, and other) and then categorize them according to privacy requirements. This will start the process towards assuring that the appropriate level of privacy is maintained within the client database as well as for resource cataloging purposes. For more information or to participate, contact Marika Bertolini at (360) 493-5760 or [bertolinim@crhn.org](mailto:bertolinim@crhn.org).
- **Implementation:** The Advisory Board approved a 3-phase implementation plan for ConneXions' first year of operations. Phase One (July 1 – September 30, 2005) will focus on starting up 10 comprehensive sites, 1 basic site, and 3 referral sites. These sites will be located within hospitals, schools, a tribal clinic, and a health clinic. During Phase Two (Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2005) and Phase Three (January 1 – June 30, 2006) we will see expansion in both number and diversity of sites and geographic coverage. Also, several meetings have been held with government partners, including the Basic Food Education Outreach program, Medical Assistance Administration, Health Care Authority and the Department of Corrections to discuss how state agencies can work with ConneXions.
- **Communications:** Check it out . . . The ConneXions website located at [www.connexionsnw.org](http://www.connexionsnw.org) is in development and will be finalized in early May. We have also created two Frequently Asked Questions sections, which provide an overview of ConneXions and ConneXions sites. You can view these documents on our website by clicking on ConneXions FAQs. In addition, we are develop creative ideas for marketing the ConneXions sites to local organizations by clearly defining the opportunities, i.e. clients will be better supported, staff time will be conserved, a

powerful information system will be available, reporting will be enhanced, and other benefits. These ideas will be available soon.

- **Resource Database:** We have successfully uploaded to ACMIS the existing Crisis Clinic Database and will be working closely with Crisis Clinic to develop processes for nightly synchronization. We will also be working together to update the resource database to reflect current services and will be exploring ways to simplify the search process. We need your help in this process to ensure that the resources and information database is community and partner friendly.

### Lead Agencies Host Local Steering Committee Meetings

We have made good progress in customizing ConneXions locally in our counties, which includes identifying lead agencies in four areas. The following Lead Agencies submitted the following county reports:

- **Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties:** Twin Harbors Pharmaceutical Assistance Network (THPAN) has been identified as the Lead Agency in both counties for the first year of operations. THPAN will focus on building support for ConneXions and identifying future ConneXions sites in the two counties. Contact Mike Rand, (360) 493-5563 or [randm@crhn.org](mailto:randm@crhn.org).
- **Mason County:** The Mason ConneXions Work Group will be meeting on April 21 from noon to 1:30 pm at the Shelton Library. This local steering committee meeting will include an overview of progress in Mason County to date and discussion of how to best implement ConneXions in Mason County over the next year. Contact Kim Klint, Mason Matters at (360) 427-9670 ext 543 or [kak@co.mason.wa.us](mailto:kak@co.mason.wa.us).
- **Thurston County:** The Thurston County steering committee will meet on May 5 from 3:00 – 5:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church located at 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia. The meeting will focus on brainstorming ideas to identify locations for ConneXions sites in Thurston County and developing the resource database. Please invite anyone who you think would be interested in participating. Contact Holly Detzler at (360) 493-5566 or [detzlerh@crhn.org](mailto:detzlerh@crhn.org) for more information.

**Getting Involved:** If you, someone you know, or a local organization would like to help ConneXions become a reality in your community, there are several possibilities:

- Join the local steering committee to start customizing ConneXions in your county
- Become a ConneXions enrollment or referral site
- Share your organization's resources and information services
- Become a ConneXions volunteer to share your specific skills
- Sponsor a ConneXions site in your community

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ConneXions is dedicated to linking individuals and families to community resources. The ConneXions newsletter will be emailed periodically to keep friends of ConneXions informed and involved.

To receive this newsletter or to be removed from the list, please send an email to [simcicht@crhn.org](mailto:simcicht@crhn.org). For more information or to make suggestions please contact:

Holly Detzler, Program Director

CHOICE Regional Health Network, [detzlerh@crhn.org](mailto:detzlerh@crhn.org) or (360) 493-5566.