

Orange County Family, Infant, and Early Childhood Mental Health (FIECMH)

Initiative Update
Issue 2: April 2025



Thanks for joining the FIECMH Partner Community!

Do you know others who may want to stay updated? Please share this newsletter!

FIECMH stands for Family, Infant, and Early Childhood Mental Health. The initiative is focused on infants and children (and their caregivers) because the roots of lifelong mental health—and health and well-being more broadly—start at birth (or before). For everyone to be as healthy and well as possible, emphasizing early, proactive, and protective support versus reactive treatment is key.

The initiative's work is to envision what a “continuum of care” (the full range of supports for mental health and well-being) looks like for Orange County families. Our goal is to work together to create a road map for how we do this, and make sure that the continuum of care envisioned by families, community partners, and systems leaders is realized and sustained.

This newsletter is your source for what's coming, what's happening, and what progress the initiative has made so far. It's also a way to be connected and tell us what's on your mind—we want to hear from you!

Join Us!

Working Session on FIECMH Workforce: April 25, 10:00 am - 11:30 am PST

Our next topic for the road map is the workforce. Join a working session on April 25 to discuss what is happening already in FIECMH staffing and where there are opportunities to do more.

[REGISTER
HERE](#)

In-Person Community Convening: June 3, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm PST

Please join us at the FIECMH Initiative's next milestone meeting. We will be convening in person on June 3 from 9:30-12:30. We will share initiative updates, including what we learned during the working sessions about services and systems, and work together to identify priorities for the road map. This meeting is for community and agency partners working to support families with young children, including pregnant people, and parents with young children. We look forward to seeing you there!

**REGISTER
HERE**

Recent Progress Toward the Road Map

The focus of the November 20 community update was a share-out of the work that took place at the October 29 convening and an introduction to the next phase of work.

Through a series of working sessions and in partnership with existing initiatives, we've been mapping the mental and behavioral health resources in Orange County and looking at how they're being used.

At our Community Update on March 14, we shared preliminary information from the Services- and Systems-focused working sessions. Below is a brief recap. More information can be found [here](#).

Insights from information-gathering efforts will be shared at the FIECMH Initiative's in-person meeting on June 3 and, together, we will use this information to develop the road map.

Mental Health Services for Prenatal to Age 8

Community partners filled out a survey and we held three working sessions. Discussions focused on where there are gaps and what populations are underserved.

Initial learnings include:

- Gaps in awareness among community partners, particularly across services for specific age groups
- Shortages in mental health services for low- or middle-income families with private health insurance
- Few mental health services that engage fathers

Every Voice Matters

It's not too late to add your own knowledge about services for families in Orange County! Please take 10 minutes to complete this survey and share your expertise on what services currently exist and where there are gaps.

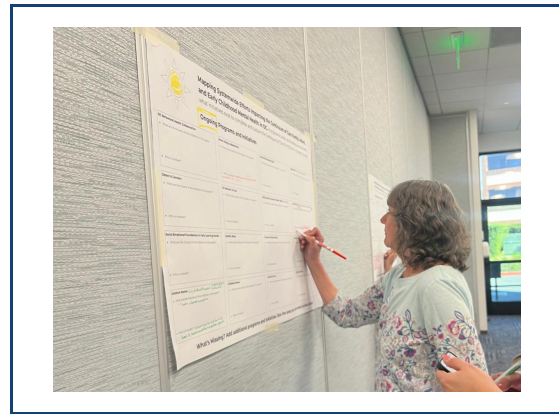
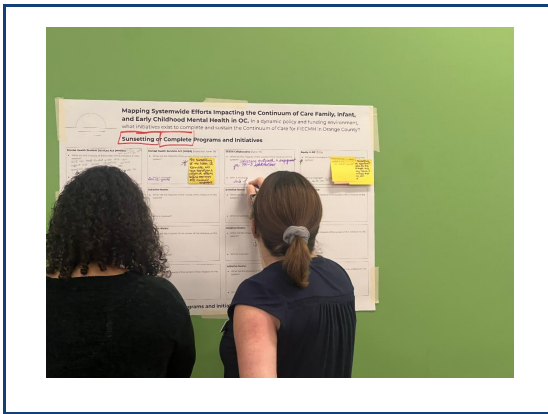
[Take the Survey](#)

OC Systems that Impact FIECMH and What's Changing

The [Orange County Network of Care](#), the FFPSA-Community Pathways Initiative Program, and other partners are working together to map initiatives that affect the delivery of mental health services and supports across the county.

In working sessions with service professionals and agency partners, participants identified emerging, ongoing, and sunsetting initiatives to better understand the interconnectedness of and funding for systems in different sectors that support FIECMH, such as health care, social services, child welfare, and public health. Participants considered:

- What are the systems-wide or cross-system initiatives that might have an impact on mental health services in the county's continuum of care?
- What's changing? Which initiatives are new, and which are sunsetting? What is the impact of closing these initiatives?



Bringing the Vision to Life

FIECMH Initiative Supports Grant Solicitation

Orange County community partners are working together on a proposal for the State of California's Commission on Behavioral Health, which is offering a \$4 million grant focused on children ages 0-5. The team is grounding the proposal in the FIECMH Initiative's community-driven vision for the Orange County continuum of care, as well as the gaps in services that have been identified.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who has participated in the initiative so far—all your hard work is helping to set Orange County up for success in identifying (and hopefully winning!) funding that aligns with the community's vision.

What's Coming Up Next

May 20 FaCT Conference

In partnership with [Start Well](#), the FIECMH Initiative is hosting a session at the [FaCT Conference](#) about how to support a whole-child, whole-family, and whole-community approach to mental health and wellness. We will explore how Start Well's work contributes to a continuum of care that provides the full range of supports for mental health and well-being for families with children prenatal

to age 8.

We look forward to learning more about availability and access to services in communities across the county from those attending the conference. If you're attending the conference, please come by!

Questions or comments? Please email us: fiemh@healthplusstudio.com

Please share this newsletter! Forward it to staff you know at Orange County public agencies, community-based organizations, and local advocates serving children and families, as well as health care providers and families interested in knowing about and participating in the initiative.

The FIEMCH Initiative is supported by funding from First 5 Orange County and Orange County Healthcare Agency.

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