

MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY VOICES

@ Federation for Children with Special Needs
Announces:

A Family-to-Family Health Care Information & Education Center

Massachusetts Family Voices @ Federation for Children with Special Needs has been awarded a Real Choice Systems Change Grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This three-year grant will be used to create a statewide, parent-run **Family-to-Family Health Care Information and Education Center**. The Family-to-Family Center grant was one of nine categories of Real Choice System Change Grants. The purpose of all the Systems Change Grants is to help states build infrastructures that support the President's "New Freedom Initiative." This initiative, begun in 2001, promotes opportunities for individuals with disabilities and long-term illnesses to live at home, have meaningful work, and participate as fully as possible in community life.

The Massachusetts Family-to-Family Health Care Information and Education Center will offer health care information and support to families of children and youth with special health needs, and others, as they navigate various health care systems to ensure their children can live at home, can be active participants in their communities, and have an active "voice" in the decision making process.

The Center will work collaboratively with other parent organizations and Federation projects. One goal of the Center will be to expand the capacity of the Federation to be able to offer the same types of advocacy training that is available through their special education projects, and extend that to the health care arena.

- ❑ Center staff will collaborate with state agencies and other projects and organizations to develop family-friendly training materials and then meet with parents throughout the state to provide detailed training about public benefits, eligibility, the application process, how to support other families through the application process, and what to do if they are denied.
- ❑ Using a parent-helping-parent model, the Center will mentor parents to work in different regions of the state to help other parents just beginning the process of navigating these complex health benefit's systems.
- ❑ The Center will help families advocate for the quality health care services their children need.

For more information about this grant, and to learn how your family or organization can participate in the training opportunities and activities that will be offered by the Center, leave a message for Beth Dworetzky at 1-800-331-0688, ext. 210 (your call will be returned) or e-mail massfv@fcsn.org. Information about the Center and materials will also be posted to the Mass Family Voices website at www.massfamilyvoices.org.