

DHHR Television Show Focuses on Safe at Home Expansion

Karen L. Bowling, Cabinet Secretary of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources



Safe at Home West Virginia was first announced in October of 2014 and implemented in October of 2015. Since then, we have made monumental changes to the way we serve children and families with a trauma-informed, team approach. While this newsletter is a great way to share stories from our staff and partners regarding the program's progress, we recently profiled Safe at Home on DHHR's television program, "The State of Health." The show is free to state agencies and helps showcase the efforts of DHHR employees as well as the services provided through the Department's many programs.

During this episode, which airs throughout the month of July, we talked with Nancy Exline, Commissioner of DHHR's Bureau for Children and Families, whose leadership has been pivotal to the success of Safe at Home. She explained how the program works and discussed its impact in the 11 phase one counties. Commissioner Exline also talked about the crucial role of our community partners and providers.

We are thankful that one of our valuable providers was able to join us to share her insight on the program and explain the role of the wraparound facilitators. Karen Yost, CEO of Pretera Center, explained how children react to trauma and provided an overview of some of the innovative techniques being employed.

The show also includes a look at how community-based treatment, a key component of Safe at Home West Virginia, helped one West Virginia family overcome tremendous obstacles. All of this has led to where Safe at Home is today. Since phase one implementation, 211 youth have been referred to Safe at Home West Virginia for wraparound services. Of those, 19 have returned to the state; 31 have moved from in-state residential placements back to their home communities; and 59 have been prevented from entering residential placement.

I look forward to the opportunity to share many more stories of success as we move into phase two, which will launch in August. These counties include Barbour, Brooke, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Mercer, Mineral, Monongalia, Monroe, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Summers, Taylor, Tucker and Upshur.

The "State of Health" airs on the West Virginia Library Television Network Fridays and Saturdays. You can catch the July show now on DHHR's YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/peq4Tli70qA> and on the Library Television Network's website at <http://www.librarycommission.wv.gov/programs/ltn/videoserver/Pages/stateofhealth.aspx>.

Safe at Home Helps Youth Become Community-Involved

Shaa Marcum, CPS and Youth Service Supervisor with DHHR's Bureau for Children and Families

Collaboration is key when it comes to the success of Safe at Home West Virginia. Staff from DHHR's Boone County office and local coordinating agency Braley and Thompson recently worked together to ensure one youth was able to attend a children's mental health awareness walk. The young man, along with several members of his team, handed out gifts and interacted with different agencies and members of the community throughout the evening.

Not only did this Safe at Home youth enjoy the event, but he also set a great example for other participants.

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Safe at Home Helps, *continued*

He was also able to manage our information booth, and hand out toys to children from the community. After the event, he said he was happy that he was able to come and help. The youth also created a beautiful piece of art that was displayed at the awareness walk and was the focus of many conversations. With the youth's approval, the art work will continue to be displayed at the Braley and Thompson office in Dunbar.

With the support of this team, this event was able to be much more than what it was planned. It was a chance to laugh, show compassion, use team work and let our youth see that they are valuable to the community.



The young man's artwork on display.

Wraparound Services Reunify Youth and Mother

Eric Davis, Social Services Worker for DHHR's Bureau for Children and Families

I am excited to be a part of Safe at Home West Virginia, an initiative that is helping youth live in a stable, loving environment. Due to truancy, one child was in and out of detention/residential placements for more than a year. While at these facilities, he was not cooperative with treatment and often ran away. During this time, he was ordered to an out-of-state placement; however, through discussions with the Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, the youth's status was changed and all agreed to an in-state placement.

Upon consideration of the benefits of the Safe at Home program, the child, still in the custody of DHHR, was not placed in a facility. Instead, he was returned to his mother, where a Safe at Home Facilitator for local coordinating agency Pressley Ridge taught her appropriate ways to help her son. The Facilitator also worked with the youth's school to develop an education plan. With the supports and services provided by the program, the child was returned back to the legal custody of his mother, to a home environment where he and his family can grow together.

Home. Hope. Heroes. Event Celebrates Safe at Home Success

Jessica Holstein, DHHR Office of Communications



Secretary Bowling was an honored guest.

On June 2, KVC West Virginia, one of Safe at Home West Virginia's local coordinating agencies, held an event to recognize the many government officials, national foundations and community organizations that play a critical role in the program.

Among the honored guests at "Home. Hope. Heroes." was DHHR Cabinet Secretary Karen L. Bowling, who thanked partners for joining the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources in its mission to change the way the state serves youth with behavioral health needs.

"While the Department is working hard to make improvements for West Virginia's children and families, I know that we are not alone. We could not do any of this without our partners," said Bowling. "Through collaboration with courts, schools, behavioral health providers, residential providers, state and local lawmakers, and community leaders, this program is revolutionizing the child

welfare system."

To learn more about Safe at Home West Virginia, visit <http://safe.wvdhhr.org>.

