

Policy Priorities: 2025-2026

Seneca's policy priorities are grounded in our mission, our foundational promise of providing Unconditional Care, and our commitment to promoting equity and justice within the public systems that serve children and families. Our policy priorities are established annually by soliciting input from our direct care and administrative staff, conducting listening sessions with programs across the agency, and maintaining an understanding of the local, state, and federal policy initiatives on the horizon. Through this information-gathering process, our policy team works to identify key policy priority areas and policy initiatives that will positively impact the youth and families we serve, our staff, and our sector as a whole.

Each of Seneca's current priorities is listed below, with examples of types of initiatives we may engage with to advance each priority area.

Expanding Prevention and Early Intervention Services for Youth and Families

- Expand the range of services that can be provided to all members of a family system
- Advance policies that address social determinants of health and the root causes of racial and ethnic disparities in behavioral health and child welfare system involvement
- Support managed care service expansion in schools to serve youth with mild/moderate behavioral health needs
- Inform CalAIM implementation, promoting more equitable, accessible, and effective Medi-Cal behavioral health services for youth, including expanding access to youth who have experienced trauma, regardless of whether they have a diagnosis

Ensuring Schools are Safe, Healthy, and Inclusive

- Advocate for increased behavioral health and wellness resources for teachers and school administrators
- Advocate for the implementation and enforcement of anti-discrimination laws that explicitly protect LGBTQ+ students in all educational settings
- Promote policies that support and appropriately fund community schools, integrated-tiered mental health services, healing-centered education, positive behavioral responses, and restorative justice approaches in schools
- Promote policies and approaches that support the inclusion of students with disabilities in the mainstream setting
- Inform the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative fee schedule and ensure students have access to high-quality mental health services on school campuses

Investing in and Improving Workforce Pathways

- Expand loan repayment and grant programs for those who provide services to children and families

Investing in and Improving Workforce Pathways (continued)

- Promote the expansion of career pathways into the public service workforce, especially for BIPOC individuals and individuals with lived experience with public systems
- Track and provide feedback as the Wellness Coach role is implemented and strengthen the pathway to the Peer Support Specialist role
- Advocate for enhanced funding for recruitment and retention incentives for staff at all levels

Expanding Intensive Services for Youth with Complex Needs

- Support the development of multi-tiered crisis services for youth (for example, crisis stabilization, crisis residential, and inpatient hospital alternatives)
- Advocate for increased access to enhanced care programs for foster youth
- Inform the statewide rollout of mobile crisis response and integration with 988 in both CA and WA
- Promote policies that increase education access and continuity of services for students with intensive mental health needs

Reducing Administrative Barriers to Services

- Advocate for policies that reduce and standardize Medicaid documentation requirements
- Promote streamlined behavioral health credentialing processes across county and managed care systems
- Strengthen the implementation of the semi-universal Electronic Health Records system development in California

Enhancing Family-Centered Permanency Solutions

- Support policies that help families remain together without child welfare involvement (for example, shifting the child welfare system from Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting and strengthening Family First Prevention Services implementation)
- Advocate for the expansion of wraparound services to serve more families at risk of child welfare involvement, as well as families who are newly reunified
- Support the activities of California's Center for Excellence in Family Finding and Support
- Inform and support policies that reduce barriers to reunification

For more information, contact:

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