



February 21, 2008

Joint Program Review and Investigations & Select Committee on Children
Public Hearing on Monitoring and Evaluation of DCF

Good Morning members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee and Select Committee on Children. My name is Alyssa Rose and I am a Public Policy Specialist with the Connecticut Community Providers Association. CCPA represents agencies that contract with DCF to provide behavioral health, prevention and juvenile justice services.

CCPA met with the PRI study staff to help inform them of the provider perspective while they were conducting research and gave testimony before the PRI committee back in September when the initial findings of this report were presented. We are here today to support SB 174 and SB 177 as well as applaud many of the administrative recommendations made by the PRI staff.

Community providers welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with DCF to insure that the best possible services are available to Connecticut's children and families. We appreciate that SB 174 includes providers on the macro-level in the development of DCF's comprehensive strategic plan, and that administrative recommendation number 15 specifically directs DCF to develop a protocol for provider feedback.

We also support the measures included in both SB 174 and SB 177 to encourage greater efficiency and accountability within DCF. The investment that SB 177 makes in the DCF

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technology infrastructure is clearly needed, however, if it is not accompanied by the changes in data policy suggested in administrative recommendations 3-5, which address data collection and evaluation within DCF, such an investment will not impact the lives of the children we serve. We provide a large amount of data, but to be useful the data need to be reliable and generalizable, with a feedback mechanism in place. There is no point in producing data that cannot be used. We also contend that similar infrastructure investments must be made in community-based providers in order for providers to take advantage of technological advancements in service delivery and data collection and reporting. (See end of testimony for administrative recommendations.)

We also support the administrative recommendations pertaining to DCF's contracting process (see appendix for recommendations 10, 13, 14 and 15). We are in complete agreement that OPM and the Attorney General need to work together to provide greater clarification of the guidelines regarding the contracting process. Even in the recent report pursuant to Public Act 07-195 regarding "Principles and Procedures for the Competitive Procurement of Human Services," there remains confusion about to what extent providers can work with DCF to develop programs. Community providers are the experts in children's behavioral health and can provide DCF with considerable input regarding program design and service restructuring if we are afforded that opportunity. Without our input, services will be designed in a vacuum.

Program development and restructuring is an area where DCF should look to utilize their provider experts to define and procure the most effective services possible. We hope that with improved collaboration, more attention can be paid to core services as opposed to crisis-driven, reactionary budgeting. With greater clarification around contracting guidelines and more collaborative feedback mechanisms in place, providers and DCF can share resources and respond to the needs to Connecticut's children and families.

I want to thank the committee members and PRI committee staff for their time and attention to these important issues. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information you deem necessary.