



February 28, 2008

To: Select Committee on Children

From: Terry Edelstein, President/CEO

Re: CCPA Testimony – February 28, 2008 Public Hearing

**S.B. 303 AA Creating a Comprehensive System for Children and Families from Birth to Age Five**

**SB 340 AA Establishing an Early Childhood Integrated System of Care**

Please accept these comments for the record.

The Connecticut Community Providers Association represents organizations that provide services and supports for people with disabilities and significant needs including children and adults with substance use disorders, mental illness, developmental, and physical disabilities.

We work closely with DCF and other state agencies regarding policies and treatment that affect children and youth. We work with the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council and we work with DDS on Birth to Three programs and services.

**S.B. 303 AA Creating a Comprehensive System for Children and Families from Birth to Age Five**

The interagency relationship outlined in Section 1 includes DSS, Education, Public Health, DCF and the Children’s Trust Fund but makes no reference to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) as part of the group charged with promoting improved children’s outcomes and integration of services.

DDS administers Connecticut’s Birth to Three Program. Unless there are prohibitions in federal law relating to the administration of the Birth to Three Program, *we ask that you include DDS in any group charged with looking at outcomes relating to children in the birth to five age range.*

For example, section 1(c) (5) requires a coordinated system to achieve “early screening intervention services.” These are part of the charge of the Birth to Three Program. It doesn’t seem reasonable to create yet another entity charged with implementing the same outcomes.

Alternatively, the master contract among the state agencies should indicate a linkage to DDS for oversight of the provision of Birth to Three Services if the legislation does not include DDS directly in the contract.

**CCPA**

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**SB 340      AA Establishing an Early Childhood Integrated System of Care**

The Early Childhood System of Care outlined in Section 1 includes DSS, the Behavioral Health Partnership and DMHAS but makes no reference to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

DDS administers Connecticut's Birth to Three Program. Unless there are prohibitions in federal law relating to the administration of the Birth to Three Program, we ask that you include DDS in any group charged with developing an Early Childhood System of Care. Section 1 (c) of the bill includes the Birth to Three Program as one of the services that might be coordinated. *The agency administering the Birth to Three Program should be included as one of the implementing state agencies.*

**Does this System of Care Duplicate Others?**

As you review the charge of the Early Childhood System of Care, we ask that you clarify the distinction between this proposed System of Care and the systems of care currently funded by DCF. It would appear that the charges of the current and proposed systems of care overlap and are duplicative of each other.

**Staffing Model**

We also question the staffing model proposed in the bill. Section 1(b) (5) speaks to "providing intensive, home-based work directly with the families *that is conducted by a child development and mental health clinician and care coordinator who are staff of the Early Childhood Integrated System of Care...*"

These home-based services are currently provided by community provider agencies working under contract with DCF or providing services under the Behavioral Health Partnership. The bill would seem to create an entirely new administrative structure for service provision.

**Behavioral Health Partnership Role**

The bill creates an entirely new charge and series of tasks for the BHP. The Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council is charged with making recommendations about the functioning and roles of the BHP. Any program redesign of this nature should be referred to the Oversight Council so that it is done in coordination with other Oversight Council strategic direction.

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting on legislation before the Committee.