



## *Building Bridges: Planning for Residential Needs in Future Systems of Care*



### **Dear Colleagues:**



*At the March 25, 2008 Building Bridges discussion, State agency leaders provided a summary of 'Next Steps' that each of their respective agencies could take in response to the discussions and recommendations specific to the planning initiative. Outlined below is a summary of positive outcomes reflective of the Building Bridges initiative. The Steering Committee, (comprised of representatives from OMH, OCFS, OMRDD and SED) continues to meet on a monthly basis to discuss their specific role and shared purpose.*



*While there is consensus that the Steering Committee's general purpose is to continue the discussions and recommendations from the Building Bridges meetings and to advance the principles and values laid out in the preamble of the National Building Bridges effort, the specific work agenda of the Steering Committee is still in progress. Currently, the committee is working on action items to support the following common themes: Licensing, Program Innovation and Bed Planning.*



*We hope you find the information in this report of interest and will continue to advise you of any next steps related to the statewide Building Bridges initiative. For more information or if you would like to share comments on this report to the Steering Committee, please email Jackie Negri, Negri Management Resources, LLC at [jackie@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jackie@nycap.rr.com)*



## **Positive Outcomes from Building Bridges March 25, 2008 Discussion**

### **New York State Office of Children and Family Services**

#### **I. Growing an Integrated Systems Perspective**

OCFS as well as each of the other agencies serving children has been an active participant in reconstituting the work and focus of the Children's Commissioner's Group. The group developed a set of shared mission and values, committed to meeting regularly, to being the "Tier 3" solution team for high need families and has directed regional staffs to work together collaboratively to support local collaborations.

The Commissioners jointly submitted The Children's Plan: Improving the Social and Emotional Well Being of New York's Children and Their Families to the Governor and to the Legislature. As part of this plan, joint proposals have been developed across state agencies. The OMH/OCFS proposals include the development of an RTF on the grounds of one of the Juvenile Justice campuses, Expansion of the Foster Boarding Home Mental Health Initiative and the development of a mental health consultation/training initiative for early childhood providers.

OCFS participates as a full participant with the Council and the other child and family serving agencies on the restraint committee. The collaboration among OCFS, SED, OMH, and OMRDD has been positive and beneficial to the participants but has not yet yielded specific outcomes. OCFS remains committed to working with agencies with collocated licenses toward a single campus and/or agency wide approach to behavior management. The initiative to pilot a single approach with the 12 co-located agencies has admittedly stalled.

#### **II. Practice Changes: Family Driven, Youth Guided, Trauma Informed Services and Care, Family Responsive, Race and Culturally Responsive**

Family participation is strengthening its foot hold as a regular part of child welfare practice. There are two very interesting initiatives from two different parts of the state that are representative of this change. The first is "Parent to Parent" which is a parent advocate initiative operating in the Western part of the state. What is different about this is that the parents are working with parents who are in the process of being investigated by child protection investigation. This use of the parent advocate model does present some unique challenges associated with what is often described as the adversarial nature of the relationship between county government and the family who has been reported. We expect to learn a great deal from this initiative.

The second is "Improved Outcomes for Children" which is the systems reform initiative being implemented system wide within New York City. The cornerstone of this reform is the use of family team conferences at every significant decision point in services planning and intervention. The conferences include family, extended family, youth, friends, service providers, etc. and they also include community representatives. NYC ACS has completed the first year of this initiative and established the use of FTC with a number of providers. They expect to roll out the initiative during 2009 so that FTC is available to all families being served in either Preventive or Foster Care.

OCFS implemented a restraint tracking system across all licensed private providers as well as all direct operated Juvenile Justice Facilities. The implementation of the tracking system has created a spotlight on individual behavior management practices and many agencies have established individual action plans related to use of coercive techniques and are reporting significant successes. Because

the tracking system is relatively new, we are not yet sure how valid the data is but it reflecting system wide reductions consistent with anecdotal reports from agencies.

In addition to the tracking system OCFS is also in the process of implementing the Sanctuary model within four of the direct run facilities and intends to expand those numbers in the future.

Across licensed provider agencies, approximately 15 agencies are at some stage of implementation of sanctuary. OCFS has provided financial support to ten of the agencies that has allowed them to participate formally in the implementation of Sanctuary. There are at least five other agencies in NYS who have implemented Sanctuary on their own. Many other agencies are pursuing a more incremental approach to implementing trauma sensitive environments and may not be working with a particular model but are providing training and developing techniques with staff.

Disproportionate Minority Representation (DMR) initiative – OCFS has begun an agency wide effort related to DMR. At present the focus of the effort is internal. The second phase of the effort will become a part of OCFS' program improvement plan that will be developed in response to the Federal government's Child and Family Review and will focus on disproportionate minority representation and how it influences safety, permanency and well being outcomes for families and children

### **III. Threshold Decisions – Use of Structured Assessment Tools as Decision Support for Level and Intensity of Services**

A number of sites around New York State have begun or have been using structured assessments for some period of time. These include NYC, Onondaga, Erie, and Monroe Counties. The OCFS licensed provider agencies who are also licensed by OMH to run RTFs along with some other provider agencies have had some experience with the CANS instrument. OCFS anticipates organizing lessons learned from each of these experiences.

### **IV. Bed Planning as a Member of State Agency Team – Multiple Use Beds**

OCFS acts as full partner with SED, OMH, OMRDD and the Council in the effort to reduce the use of out of state resources. Significant progress has been made over the last two years both in reducing the numbers of children who are placed out of state and in terms of in state development of appropriate resources. This collaboration has been enormously effective and has built a foundation for continuing collaboration.

OCFS expects to continue this work in the following areas:

Development of a utilization data set - OCFS has begun discussions with sister agencies on developing this data set.

Targeted development of specialized beds - this work continues through specific regionally based discussions with local collaborations.

Identification of barriers to innovative program proposals – OCFS as a member of the Building Bridges group will work with regionally based cross agency teams to identify innovative program proposals that have not moved forward due to regulatory or fiscal barriers

## **New York State Office of Mental Health**

### **I. Growing Integrated Systems Perspective**

OMH as well as each of the other agencies serving children has been an active participant in the reconstituting the work and focus of the Children's Commissioner's Group. Their interest in continuing to meet as a group and to take responsibility for interagency goal setting and policy direction presents a tremendous step forward.

The newly established Task Force on Autism has a strong interagency orientation and representation.

### **II. Operational Opportunities**

Internal discussions have begun with senior leadership and local capitol operations staff on possible financing models for multiple use/multiplying licensed residential programs.

We continue to support Parson's Children's Center capitol project for a multiple use facility. If successful this can serve as a model for more generalized use.

The Building Bridges Project is one of the highlighted year one joint initiatives in the NYS Children's Plan which received broad support and strong commitment from all nine Children's Commissioners.

OMH is currently working with OMR/DD on a regional basis to identify youngsters who have needs for services from both of our systems and to develop strategies to meet those needs. This process needs to be strengthened.

## **NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities**

### **I. Practice Changes: Shared Leadership and Responsibility = Access to Services**

OMRDD participates in the Commissioners Group on Cross System Youth with all child serving agencies in the commitment to work together cooperatively to explore new models of care for children.

The Inter-Office Coordinating Council comprising the Commissioners of OMH, OMRDD and OASAS was re-established to eliminate barriers and improve coordination of services for people with disabilities.

### **II. Rebalancing Services System (Institutional vs Community)**

As the first step in a multi-year plan to downsize developmental centers OMRDD initiated the transition of most individuals residing in the Western NY developmental center to community living. This transition will occur over several years, will allow people to live in a more integrated and person centered setting in the community.

OMRDD also supports the development of residential opportunities in the community for people living in other institutional settings, such as nursing homes, OMRDD specialized behavior units and those who are dually diagnosed.

The Community Placement Process (implemented on September 1, 2007) creates a standard set of guidelines and principles that synthesize and integrate current DDSO practices for planning and development of appropriate community living arrangements. The CPP outlines expectations for person centered approaches considering individual and family member preferences, describes district planning efforts and tracks and monitors progress to ensure consistency on a statewide basis.

### **III. Generalize Successful “Enterprise” Models**

OMH/OMRDD collaborative model on dual diagnosis includes:

- Identification of persons with challenging, cross system service needs.
- Identify unique, successful, collaborative activities or services, issues or barriers to effective service.
- Identify opportunities for expansion or replicating such innovative and collaborative approaches.
- Shared leadership on interagency (OMRDD, SED, OMH, CQC, CCF, DDPC, OASAS, DOH OCFS) task force on autism.

### **IV. Bed Expansion Responsive to Need: Autism Bed Development**

OMRDD has developed an Autism Platform to address the significant needs surrounding the increase in prevalence. Including the following:

- Basic Research - OMRDDs Institute for Basic Research (IBR) is undertaking a wide range of research that examines genetic and environmental causation and the potential for developing laboratory bio-markers for early identification of autism spectrum disorders. In addition, IBR is heading the formation of a New York State Autism Spectrum Disorders Consortium. It will bring together NY’s premier researchers, practitioners, educators and scientists to undertake large scale basic and applied research projects and promote state of the art training and practice.
- RFPs for crisis intervention/behavior management services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders will be developed as part of our family support services program.
- OMRDD will seek ways to get the best available information on autism and related supports into the hands of New York families and professionals who need it.

OMRDD will continue its work with the SED to develop additional children’s residential program residences to allow more of New York’s children with challenging behaviors to live and be supported in New York State.

## The New York State Education Department

### I. Building In-state Residential Capacity

The passage of Billy's Law (Chapter 392 of the Laws of 2005) signaled the beginning of a major shift in the children's residential placement process. At the time of passage, over 1,400 New York State children were being served in out-of-state residential facilities. Approximately 1,100 of them were placed by their school district's Committee on Special Education (CSE). The Legislature's declared intent in passing Billy's Law was to decrease this high number of out-of-state placements by developing in-state residential school placement options as well as preventative residential placement strategies.

The State Education Department (SED) has worked with other State agencies, primarily The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), on the development and implementation of a multi-year plan to create beds at selected in-state facilities in order to provide quality programming to students brought back from out-of-state placement. Over two hundred and fifty such beds have been created. In addition, SED has improved its management and oversight of the CSE out-of-state residential placement process. There are no automatic reapplications for students to remain in an out-of-state facility for an additional year. Least Restrictive Environment considerations are strictly enforced. A web-based capacity notifications system updates Committee on Special Education every week on available in-state beds.

The result of these efforts has been a reduction in out-of-state placements by school districts of nearly 40% with fewer than 650 students now in such placements, compared to a 40% increase in such placements in the 5-year period preceding the passage of Billy's Law. More important than the numbers themselves is the appearance of a significant shift in placement practices by Committees on Special Education. The interagency residential workgroup will continue to implement the plans for in-state program development and program enhancement, paying particular attention to the need for beds for students with developmental disabilities, since current in-state programs for this population operate at full capacity.

### II. Links with Vocational Rehabilitation

A need was identified at the March, 2008 Building Bridges gathering for better communication among agencies regarding the services available through SED's Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID). Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors at VESID's 15 District Offices can help an eligible person with a disability, including high school seniors:

- Plan for a career
- Participate in paid work experiences
- Get training to achieve work goals
- Find a job that matches the person's abilities, interests and needs, and
- Work with employers or colleges to make sure the person receives reasonable accommodations when needed.

VESID has begun the planning process with other State agencies to ensure that local and regional staff who work with youth have access to informational sessions on eligibility, services available and the process for accessing those services.