



February 21, 2012

Dear stakeholder,

Governor Chris Christie's Budget Address for State Fiscal Year 2013 includes the announcement that services for adolescents with addiction disorders will be transitioned from the Department of Human Services (DHS) to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

From its inception in 2006, the DCF's Division of Child Behavioral Health Services' (DCBHS) has been developing a comprehensive system of community-based services to meet children's behavioral health needs. DCF will expand and rename this unit the Division of Child Integrated System of Care Services. This initiative advances the integration and enhancement of mental health and substance abuse services.

This new DCF division will become the single point of entry for families with children who have complex needs. The integration of these services will ensure that families of adolescents with addiction disorders will have access to a full complement of available state supports and services. Realigning these programs will end the fragmentation of services currently served by both DHS and DCF. Both departments support this reassignment of services in order to improve the delivery of care to children under 18 by placing the coordination and concentration of behavioral and addiction services within one department.

The integration was recommended by the Adolescent Substance Abuse Task Force formed in July 2009 and was part of a work plan developed last year by a joint workgroup from DHS' Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services and DCBHS. Research indicates that children and adolescents, with co-occurring disorders, have a better chance of recovery if they receive consistent and integrated treatment and support services.

In addition to improving effectiveness and outcomes, the coordination and targeting of evidenced-based practices also will improve efficiency by eliminating duplication of efforts in order to maximize resources and appropriate service provision. This service integration also has the potential to allow the state to leverage additional federal Medicaid funds.

This important reconfiguration will occur thoughtfully and planfully to ensure that the approved services currently being provided to adolescents with addiction disorders will continue seamlessly. The support and constructive input from participant families and stakeholders during this process will assist both departments in shaping this initiative's implementation.

As DCF focuses on the needs of children and DHS focuses on the needs of adults, each Department will enhance and maximize its available resources for its respective populations.

As this process unfolds, updates will be provided on our websites at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/divisions/dmhas/> and
<http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/behavioral/>.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Velez
Commissioner
DHS



Allison Blake
Commissioner
DCF