

TRANSITION: TEAMS IN ACTION



The Newsletter of the Youth Transition Action Teams Initiative

Volume 2 October 2005

INSIDE

- [Philadelphia Establishes Liaison for LGBTQ Foster Youth](#)
- [Foster Youth Identify Challenges, Propose Policy solutions](#)
- [Planning for Implementation of MHS is Currently Underway](#)

Off and Running

- [YTAT Teams' Corner](#)
- [Foothill WIB Receives DOL Grant](#)

On The Ground

- [Fostering the Future](#)
- [San Luis Obispo County Uses Effective Information Sharing](#)

News from the CYC

- [Foster Youth Gather at Capitol](#)

Hurricane Relief and Rebuilding

- [Relief and Rebuilding Resources](#)

Resource Roundup

- [Publications & Materials](#)

Upcoming Conferences & Events

- [New Connections](#)
- [Useful Web Addresses](#)

Capitol Steps

- [Pending Foster Care Legislation](#)
- [Federal Update](#)

YTAT SITES

Youth Transition Action Teams are convening or will convene soon in the following counties:

- Alameda**
- Colusa**
- Glenn**
- Humboldt**
- Los Angeles**
- Placer**
- Sacramento**
- San Diego**
- San Luis Obispo**
- San Mateo**
- Tehama**
- Ventura**

COMPARING TRANSITION OUTCOMES: 19-YEAR-OLD YOUTH NEVER IN CARE, OUT OF CARE, AND STILL IN CARE

A group of Chapin Hall researchers have concluded that the youth they are studying - 603 19-year-old youth transitioning out of foster care - are generally faring worse than others who are not in the child welfare system. They discovered differences in success rates in nearly every domain measured, including education, employment and earnings, health and health care, and parenting. Despite these challenges, many youth in the study described their relationships with family members as strong, and they perceived the level of social support they were receiving to be good.

The study also focused on a comparison of the youth who left foster care at age 18 with those who remained in foster care past their 18th birthday. (All but two of those still in care lived in Illinois where the courts allow youth to remain in care until their 21st birthday.) The out-of-care youth generally were exhibiting poorer outcomes than those who were still in care, particularly in the areas of education and health. To read more about outcomes in education, independent living services, employment and earnings, disconnection, health and health care, parenting, and involvement with the criminal justice system as well as a look at positive outcomes and the researchers' conclusions and suggestions, please [click here](#). (<http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/comparingtransitionoutcomes.pdf>)

In the Chapin Hall report, called "Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 19," (Midwest Study) the researchers suggest that extending foster care past age 18 may support youth in making successful transitions to adulthood. While they say it is still too early in their analyses to ascertain why extended care may assist transitioning youth, they hypothesize that access to stable housing may make it easier for youth to cope with other responsibilities and that working with child welfare services professionals may also increase their access to needed services and supports. To access the Midwest Study report, please [click here](#). (http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=130)

The researcher's suggestion to extend support to youth beyond age 18 is in keeping with the idea that it currently takes longer for young adults to attain a family-sustaining career and therefore to be ready to take on the full spectrum of adult responsibilities. It also parallels a study of young adults between the ages of 18 and 34 who have not been in the child welfare system; the National Poverty Center study, reported in "Material Assistance Received from Families During the Transition to Adulthood," (2004) shows that young adults from families with low as well as middle and high incomes receive financial and other support from their parents and/or extended family members throughout that entire 17-year period. The report on material assistance is available for downloading at the [National Poverty Center](#) website. (http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/policy_briefs/brief3/index.shtml)

PHILADELPHIA ESTABLISHES LIAISON FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUESTIONING FOSTER YOUTH

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in foster care face challenges that their heterosexual peers do not. They may end up in the child welfare system because of their orientation, may experience misunderstanding in their foster care placements as well as at school, in the workplace, or their neighborhoods. In addition, they may be at greater risk than other youth in foster care for assault and other health-threatening situations.

The City of Philadelphia's Department of Human Services has developed a Liaison position to address the dangers facing

LGBTQ youth in their city's foster care system. The Liaison will serve in a variety of ways: maintain contact with the LGBTQ communities, offer consultation and assistance to case workers and service providers, assess and improve training on sexual orientation and gender identity, and review policies and protocols.

To read more about the new Liaison position, visit www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/lgbtqliaison.pdf or contact Ted Qually, Communications Director, at ted.qualli@phila.gov or (215) 683-6012.

FOSTER YOUTH IDENTIFY CHALLENGES, PROPOSE POLICY SOLUTIONS

The California Youth Connection (CYC) held their Annual Policy and Leadership Conference on August 13 – 15. CYC is a California foster youth advocacy organization whose members are youth either in foster care or who have emancipated from care. The Policy Conference provides an opportunity for CYC members statewide to gather specifically to discuss current issues in foster care, and to propose policy solutions to address those issues.



This year's conference focused on four issues critical to the lives of foster youth: Family; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Foster Youth Issues; Higher Education; and Post Emancipation Services. The participants identified challenges in each of these areas and made recommendations for policy changes to address those challenges. To read about specific challenges and recommendations, please [click here](#).

(<http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/fosteryouthidchallenges.pdf>)

PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

Counties around California are currently developing service plans under the Community Program Planning component of Mental Health Services Act. The MHSA, passed by California voters in November 2004, provides an ongoing source of funding for counties to extend and even to reinvent their systems of care for those citizens in need of mental health services. The Act specifically names transition age youth in the foster care system as one of the populations to be served by monies from the bill. It also expressly identifies integrated delivery of services as one of the five criteria that each county plan is to incorporate.

The Community Program Planning component provides a structure and process whereby counties can develop a plan, using MHSA Community Services and Supports funds.

Counties are to submit their proposals to their Board of Supervisors by their October meeting.

The Community Program Planning convenings represent a significant opportunity for Youth Transition Action Teams to take part in this major rethinking and expansion of mental health services for youth in foster care who are experiencing severe mental illness.

Trainings and public meetings on the MHSA as well as resource materials are available, and are listed on page 3 of this newsletter. In addition, the California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH) will be hosting a conference and a summit later this fall, also listed on page 3.

(Planning for Implementation is continued on page 3)

(Planning for Implementation, continued from page 2)

MHSA Information Is Available from the California Alliance of Child and Family Services

The California Alliance of Child and Family Services has created a document with information about MHSA, called *Everything You Wanted to Know about the MHSA, and Then Some* that answers a wide range of questions. To access the document, [click here](#).
(<http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/mhsaeverythingcacfs.pdf>)

MHSA Trainings Offered by the California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH)

The training, “Laying the Cornerstones of Transformation: Wellness, Recovery, Resilience, Cultural Competence, Housing, and Employment,” will focus on moving from planning to implementation. It will be offered in the following locations:

MHSA Regional Trainings Round II – Small Counties

October 6 - 7, 2005 (*Sacramento, CA*)
To register, visit www.cimh.org/training/login.cfm?conferenceid=81.

MHSA Regional Trainings Round II – Southern Counties

October 27 - 28, 2005 (*Glendale, CA*)
To register, visit www.cimh.org/training/login.cfm?conferenceid=83.

MHSA Regional Trainings Round II – Bay Area / Central Valley Counties

November 9 - 10, 2005 (*San Mateo, CA*)
To register, visit www.cimh.org/training/login.cfm?conferenceid=84.

For more information, please visit the CIMH website: www.cimh.org/training/conferences.cfm.

MHSA Public Meetings Sponsored by the California Department of Mental Health

The Department of Mental Health invites the public to participate in stakeholder meetings and in the Mental Health Services Act Oversight Committee (MHSOAC) meetings. The Department recommends visiting their website to access updated schedules and other new information. To visit their web site, go to www.dmh.ca.gov.

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholders are invited to share their comments and suggestions. Registration is required and may be done online. The cutoff time for online registration is 11:00 AM on the day prior to the meeting. To register online, [click here](#). (<http://www.cce.csus.edu/cts/cdmh/registration.cfm>). To view the stakeholder input process guidelines, [click here](#). (<http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/docs/DMH%20Stakeholder%20Input%20Process.pdf>).

The activities of the past few months have been primarily related to implementation of the Community Services and Support Three-Year Program and Expenditure Plan Requirements. The purpose of the October 25th and 26th Stakeholders Meetings will be to provide updates on this process. The date and location of the two upcoming meetings are listed below:

Stakeholders Meeting – North

October 25, 2005 (*Location to be determined*)
To register online, visit www.cce.csus.edu/cts/cdmh/registration.cfm.

Stakeholders Meeting – South

October 26, 2005 (*Los Angeles Airport, CA*)
To register online, visit www.cce.csus.edu/cts/cdmh/registration.cfm.

PLEASE NOTE: The Education and Training conference call scheduled for October 5 and Workgroup meeting scheduled for October 14 have been canceled and will be rescheduled once the draft Education and Training materials have been created.

Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Committee Meetings

The public is encouraged to take part in the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Committee (MHSOAC) Meetings. The next public hearing will be held after the Stakeholders Meeting – South (see listing above). Details will be provided on the [Oversight and Accountability Committee website](#) (<http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSOAC/default.asp>).

Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Committee Public Hearing

October 26, 2005 (*Los Angeles Airport, CA*)
For more information, visit the [Oversight and Accountability Committee website](#) (<http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSOAC/default.asp>).

OFF AND RUNNING

Latest News on the YTAT Initiative

Teams' Corner

News from YTATs around the State

The Youth Transition Action Teams submitted the following updates about the activities in their communities:

Alameda County

Two planning discussions have resulted in an agreement to engage in YTAT as a way to continue the interagency work begun between county and city representatives, coalitions of service providers, and individual service providers, as well as to seek deeper collaboration.

Colusa County

Colusa County recognizes the fact that very few resources are available for youth in their community. With this in mind, the YTAT team will focus on community engagement with youth in foster care and will provide access to Job Corps, post secondary education, and employment for all youth as they transition from the child welfare system.

Glenn County

The YTAT has held two facilitated meetings to date, and is scheduled to host their first solo meeting on September 21. The TAT has narrowed its focus to emphasize the role of mentoring in Glenn County and to support Resource Family recruitment. The TAT consists of members from law enforcement, education, health services, human services, workforce investment, Tribal TANF, community college, ILP, former foster youth, and probation among others.

Humboldt County

Humboldt is in the beginning phases of assembling its YTAT. Representatives of Child Welfare Services, Workforce Investment Board, and others are planning next steps. The group agreed that Humboldt's integrated services approach positions them well for transforming the way they work with youth. Youth are active participants on the team.

YOUTH SPEAK

Amir Edwards, Emancipated Foster Youth Member of Placer County's Youth Transition Action Team

"Let's stop nodding our heads and all get on the same page. We need to make something happen and make a change for the better so that youth in care and youth who emancipate from the foster care system don't feel like a child who has been left by the wayside."

Los Angeles City and County

The Los Angeles team and key non-profit organizations have taken several significant steps towards comprehensive and coordinated youth transition policy. Youth officials from three Workforce Boards have joined ILP coordinators, probation, education, and housing leaders in two discussions about present and future joint and collaborative actions through the YTAT. Representatives from the Foothill Workforce Investment Board and Community Build -- collaborators on the DOL-funded demonstration program for foster youth transition -- have joined the TAT. The group as a whole has agreed to focus some of its efforts towards assuring the successful implementation of this initiative as a way to learn lessons for the larger system.

Placer County

Placer held its launch site visit on August 29. Representatives from child welfare, ILP, and the foster youth community were in full agreement that the AYOS model for connecting systems will support successful outcomes for transition age foster youth in Placer County.

San Diego County

San Diego is taking significant steps to integrate the work and focus of the YTAT into the existing ILS Tiger Team. This workgroup has been in operation for several years. The ILS Tiger Team's purpose is to provide oversight to the coordination and development of a more cohesive and effective system of services that will guide and assist foster youth to make a transition from the dependency system to lives as productive and successful citizens. This team is chaired by the Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, with representation from key leadership from Health and Human Services Agency - Children's Services; the Commission for Children, Youth and Families; County Counsel; and Casey Family Programs. By integrating the YTAT framework, they expect that the work of the Tiger Team will be enriched and strengthened by bringing forth additional representation from other entities such as the Workforce Partnership as well as youth/alumni and other service providers.

(Teams' Corner continued on page 5)

(Teams' Corner continued from page 4)

San Luis Obispo (SLO) County

SLO has created a Transition Action Team comprised of community leaders who are committed to creating solutions that address youth access to programs/services and successful transitions into adulthood. They are working collaboratively to maximize current community programs and services and to identify opportunities for growth. They have made it a priority to engaging youth in the development of a sustainable safety net for all youth within the county. Their third site visit will take place on September 13 to define their community plan further and put it into action.

San Mateo County

In San Mateo County, the Youth Transition Action Team initiative is supporting the implementation of Fostering the Future as the partnership seeks to catalyze more effective and comprehensive ways for the county's youth - serving governmental and nonprofit agencies to interact with each other and work together.

Fostering the Future, sponsored by the Peninsula Community Foundation's Center for Venture Philanthropy, plans to effect this change while also investing directly in improving outcomes for young people who are either living in foster or kin care in Redwood City or East Palo Alto, or those who have "aged out" of the foster care system in the last two years.

Tehama County

Tehama County held the Youth Transition Action Team launch meeting in early June, followed by a goal-setting meeting in early August. The TAT has identified its first year goals and will meet in September to draft a timeline for the action plan. The Tehama County YTAT has committed to improving the quality of foster homes in their communities, which will encourage a more supportive system for youth in a variety of areas. They also are seeking to improve the number and quality of therapists available to foster youth.

Ventura County

The Ventura TAT met for the second time on August 9th to establish priorities, define YTAT role and composition, map related local initiatives, align the work of the YTAT with parallel efforts under way in the county, and to assess progress since the last meeting. The TAT is focused on aligning the efforts of Community Commission of Ventura County (high level Supervisor appointed policy body), the Transition Age Youth Workgroup (County Mental Health and MHSA implementation planning), the Youth Transition Advisory Committee (Child Welfare Services ILP Contract and the ITOP), the Youth Council (All Youth-One System adopters, sub-committee of the WIB), the Children's Oversight Committee, ITCC (Under the SELPA - Special ED Transitions, and BASIC (Basico). The YTAT initiative in Ventura is hosted by the local Youth Council under the auspices of the Workforce Investment Board.

Foothill WIB Receives US DOL Grant to Support Transition Age Youth

The Foothill WIB and community Build, Inc. recently received a DOL grant to provide access to services for 100 transitioning and former foster youth in Los Angeles County. Representatives from the Foothill Workforce Investment Board have joined the Los Angeles County Youth Transition Action Team. The Team has decided to make the implementation of the Foothill/DOL initiative a focus of its efforts. The Team views this project as not only valuable in itself but also an opportunity to learn lessons that can be applied to developing the larger system.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To read more about the program, please visit www.doleta.gov/youth_services/Project_Briefings/CA-project-7-14-05.cfm.

According to California's Employment Development Department (EDD), the focus of the project is "to provide a single service access point in each of two service planning areas within Los Angeles County for 100 eligible current and former foster youth." A comprehensive approach is being adopted. The EDD says, "This model is built around a comprehensive employment strategy that draws upon the collective social services, education and workforce development resources within the community to establish a seamless service delivery model to ensure that foster youth or emancipated foster youth at risk of homelessness, ages 17-21, have the means as well as the motivation to become successful adults."

ON THE GROUND

Innovative Projects Serving Foster Youth

Fostering the Future: San Mateo YTAT and Center for Venture Philanthropy Collaborate on Innovative Initiative

In San Mateo County, the Youth Transition Action Team initiative is supporting the implementation of Fostering the Future as the partnership seeks to catalyze more effective and comprehensive ways for the county's youth-serving governmental and nonprofit agencies to interact with each other and work together. Fostering the Future, sponsored by the Peninsula Community Foundation's Center For Venture Philanthropy (CVP), plans to effect this change while also investing directly in improving outcomes for young people who are either living in foster or kin care in Redwood City or East Palo Alto, or those who have "aged out" of the foster care system in the last two years.

To read more about the Fostering the Future initiative and the Center For Venture Philanthropy's collaborative approach to helping foster care youth in San Mateo County, please [click here](http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/fosteringthefuture.pdf). (<http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/fosteringthefuture.pdf>)



San Luis Obispo County Uses Effective Information Sharing Model

San Luis Obispo County's size has historically allowed for close connections to county and private organizations and services. There is also a history of working with families and children at whatever level of need exists. About eight years ago, San Luis Obispo County (SLO) realized there was a need to share client information in order to be more effective, yet they also knew they were bound by the laws and regulations of confidentiality and must respect and honor the rights of their clients.

In 1997 San Luis Obispo County began to explore ways in which SLO could have community partners work more effectively in a collaborative and still ensure the confidentiality of individuals.

The agencies involved reached an agreement to develop a training curriculum for staff of both government and private agencies working in the human services field.



Case workers from the different agencies take the training, receive certification, and work together on Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT). Clients sign release forms authorizing the sharing of their information among members of their MDT.

This procedure has proven to be highly successful for San Luis Obispo County. It allows for organizations to quickly receive and assess information that previously would have taken multiple steps and many months

to complete. It also allows the organization to move forward with the client.

To read more about the San Luis Obispo Information Sharing model, please [click here](http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/sanluisobispo.pdf). (<http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/sanluisobispo.pdf>)

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on Multi Disciplinary Teams, contact Mary Solis, San Luis Obispo County, at (805)781-1825.

NEWS FROM THE CALIFORNIA YOUTH CONNECTION

Foster Youth Gather at State Capitol to Urge Governor's Support

Current and former foster youth gathered at the State Capitol on September 19, 2005 to urge the governor's signature on AB 1633 and AB 1412. Foster youth delivered more than 300 postcards signed by foster youth across the state to the governor's office, asking that he approve the legislation.

AB 1633 (Evans) allows foster youth to remain in foster care beyond age 18 if they are pursuing their GED, and also helps disabled youth get SSI and Social Security benefits so they

have a source of income when leaving care. AB 1412 (Leno) gives foster youth the right to be involved in decisions made on their individual case plans and permanent placement.

For further information, contact Sean MacNeil of Assemblymember Noreen Evans' office (916) 319-2007, Curt Child of National Center for Youth Law (916) 444-2290, or Tiffany Johnson of California Youth Connection (415) 442-5060 x 13.

HURRICANE RELIEF AND REBUILDING Resources and Links

Rebuilding after the Hurricanes: Resources & Projects Supporting Youth in Foster Care

Many national organizations are offering resources to those involved in supporting foster youth who have been affected by Hurricane Katrina or Rita:

Hurricane Relief Information and Resources

Connect for Kids has been collecting information about emergency guidelines for federal agencies involved in assistance, websites designed to help people get or give help, and resources on how to help children and youth cope. To access any of these resources, visit www.connectforkids.org/node/3372?tn=hp/1b.

Trauma Assistance Resources

Prevention Researcher has listed the following links to resources they deem to be very helpful.

- [American Psychological Association: Disasters & Terrorism](#)
- [The National Center for PTSD](#)
- [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
- [Boys & Girls Clubs of America](#)
- [Big Brother Big Sisters](#)

Additionally, they have temporarily made available for free their article, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Youth, in hopes that it may help better serve youth effected by the hurricane. To download the article, visit www.tpronline.org/articles.cfm?articleID=25.

Rebuilding Guidelines

The Campaign for Youth has issued a five-point set of recommendations for supporting youth during rebuilding efforts. The first recommendation is to involve youth in

rebuilding efforts so that both communities and young people are helped. To read the statement, visit <http://www.nyec.org/CFY-katrina.pdf>.

Rebuilding Alert

The 9/11 Reconstruction Watchdogs organizations have issued an open letter to Congress, entitled "Warning About Hurricane Katrina." They advise Congress to make sure aid packages and rebuilding work are distributed equitably by establishing accountability measures to ensure that low- and moderate-income people, dislocated and unemployed workers, and small businesses have access to federal and state rebuilding subsidies. To read the letter and access other related resources, visit www.reconstructionwatch.net/openletterpage.htm.

Financial Support for Displaced Students

The U.S. Department of Education announced that it will cover 90 percent of costs incurred by postsecondary students forced to relocate after Katrina and Rita, which means providing as much as \$7500 per student to schools that have enrolled more than 10 displaced children. For information on the program, visit ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/katrina.html.

Clothing Drive and Relief Fund

The National Foster Parent Association has launched a clothing drive and relief fund to support foster families displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Americans are being asked to donate good, usable clothing that will be distributed to foster families. To access a list of most-needed items and donation instructions, visit www.nfpainc.org/.

RESOURCE ROUNDUP

Publications & Materials

Policy Brief on Differential Response

The Foundation Consortium has issued a brief entitled "Choosing the Path Less Traveled: Strengthening California Families Through Differential Response" by Patricia Schene and Stuart Oppenheim. The brief defines differential response, explains its significance to California communities, and describes "three paths of differential response in California's Child Welfare Services." For a hard copy of the brief, please contact Michael Kressner at mkressner@consortium.net or (916) 646-3646 ext. 3008.

2005 Kids Count Databook

The Annie E. Casey Foundation released the 16th Annual Kids Count Databook, which features national and state-by-state measures of child well-being in America and a close look at families with the most difficulty connecting to and staying in the workforce. For more information, please visit www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/databook.jsp.

California Youth Connection Policy Conference Report

The report, titled, "One Recommendation at a Time," presents recommendations and action items that the organization developed at their fall 2003 and fall 2004 conferences. To view the materials, please visit www.calyouthconn.org/files/cyc/PDF/2003_2004%20Fall%20Policy%20Conference%20Report.pdf.

Analysis of Trends in Poverty, Household Income, and Health Insurance Coverage

The Democratic staff of the Joint Economic Committee has issued three briefs that analyze national and state-by-state trends in poverty, household income, and health insurance coverage since 2000 (based on new 2004 data released by the Census Bureau).

Poverty Brief: <http://jec.senate.gov/democrats/Documents/Reports/poverty7sep2005.pdf>

Household Income Brief: <http://jec.senate.gov/democrats/Documents/Reports/income7sep2005.pdf>

Health Insurance Brief:

<http://jec.senate.gov/democrats/Documents/Reports/healthinsurance7sep2005.pdf>

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Youth Courts: An Implementation Training Seminar

October 17-19, 2005 (Cincinnati, OH)

The National Youth Court Center is conducting an implementation training seminar for communities interested in establishing youth courts. For information, please [click here](#).

Introduction to Youth Development

October 20-21, 2005 (San Francisco, CA)

Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) presents a 2-day course that provides youth programming staff with an overview of research-based youth development principles and practices. For more information, visit www.cnyd.org/home/index.php.

Healthy Communities – Healthy Families Conference

November 3 - 5, 2005 (Dallas, TX)

The conference, titled *Creating Intergenerational Community*, will showcase the ways youth and adults are building bridges across generations and across differences within communities to create healthy communities. "Intergenerational" asset building work is youth and adults, older youth and children and elders taking new roles in the asset movement - each generation collaborating with another. For more information, please visit www.search-institute.org/hchy/.

NEW CONNECTIONS Timely Sources of Information

Youth Transition Action Team Web Site

www.nww.org/initiatives/ytat.html

New Ways to Work Redesigned web site

www.nww.org

California Permanency Youth Project web site

<http://www.cpy.org/>

Family to Family web site

www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily

Connected by 25 publication

<http://www.hewlett.org/Archives/Publications/connectedBy25.htm>

A Guide to Health Care Transitions

<http://hctransitions.ichp.edu/resources.html>

National Foster Care Coalition Updated FAQ on Chafee

www.natl-fostercare.org/



CAPITOL STEPS

News about Pending California Foster Care Legislation & News about Federal Budget & Legislation

Pending Foster Care Legislation in California

Permanency for All Foster Youth (AB 1412)

AB 1412 addresses the fact that a basic need of every foster youth, is a consistent, secure, permanent relationship with at least one adult is often not being met. AB1412 was introduced in February 2005. It expands AB 408 by requiring social workers to ask foster youth in every type of placement about adult relationships that are important to them, take actions to support and maintain those relationships, and explore them as potential permanency options. Additionally, social workers will be required to allow youth to be involved in their case plan, particularly their permanency plan, immediately when youth enter foster care. Youth will also be involved in convening a team of adults that will focus on achieving and maintaining permanence. The goal is to have every youth in foster care connected to at least one caring adult on a permanent basis.

Child Welfare Council (AB863)

AB863 addresses the siloing of support services for youth in foster care. The bill would create a Child Welfare Council that would bring together leaders from judicial, child welfare, health, education and mental-health agencies as well as people most affected by foster care to identify and resolve the barriers within the system. The goal is to develop a cross-system council that can help create a more effective, seamless system. The bill has been held over for next year.

Improving Foster Youth Educational Outcomes (AB 1261)

AB 1261 addresses the fact that appropriate school placements are not always made for foster youth. This bill, which makes technical corrections to 2003 legislation, requires an organized process for school placements and requires that local educational agencies provide explanations regarding placements if they are disputed. The goal is for foster youth to be placed in the appropriate setting. The bill was passed by the Legislature on September 8; the governor must now decide to approve or veto it.

Permanency for All Foster Youth (AB 1412)

AB 1412 addresses the fact that a basic need of every foster youth is a consistent, secure, permanent relationship with at least one adult is often not being met. It expands AB 408 by requiring social workers to ask foster youth in every type of placement about adult relationships that are important to them, take actions to support and maintain those relationships, and explore them as potential permanency options. Additionally, social workers will be required to allow youth to be involved in their case plan, particularly their permanency plan, immediately when youth enter foster care. Youth will also be

involved in convening a team of adults that will focus on achieving and maintaining permanence. The goal is to have every youth in foster care connected to at least one caring adult on a permanent basis. AB1412 was passed September 8; the governor must now decide to approve or veto it.

Foster Children: Social Security Assistance (AB 1633)

AB 1633 acknowledges that not all blind and disabled children in foster care who are eligible for Social Security survivorship- and supplemental-security-income benefits receive them because the State does not have a program in place to manage those benefits. AB 1633 would require the State Department of Social Services to appoint a representative payee for each foster care beneficiary who cannot manage or direct the management of his or her benefits. The goal is to make sure that the eligible children and youth receive their benefits and have them managed reliably. The bill was passed by the Legislature on September 2; the governor must now decide to approve or veto it.

Foster Care: Transitional Housing (SB436)

SB436 acknowledges the fact that current transition housing for pregnant or parenting youth emancipating from foster care is not sufficient to meet need. This bill would require the county department of social services in a county that provides transitional housing placement services to include in its annual Independent Living Program report a description of currently available transitional housing resources in relation to the number of emancipating pregnant or parenting foster youth in the county, and a plan for meeting any unmet transitional housing needs of the emancipating pregnant or parenting foster youth. The goal is to make sure that all pregnant or parenting transitioning youth have adequate housing. The bill was passed by the Legislature on September; the governor must now decide to approve or veto it.

Updates on Federal Budget and Legislation

FY 2006 Budget

Congress has delayed the final round of the federal budget reconciliation – which would have included deep cuts to mandatory programs and the passage of more tax cuts – until mid-October.

(Federal Update continued on page 10)

(Federal Update continued from page 9)

Youth Program Coordination

The U.S. House Subcommittee on Select Education, chaired by Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-OH), held a hearing on July 12 to examine federal youth development programs that help disadvantaged youth develop the academic, social, and citizenship skills needed for a successful future. To read witness testimony, please click here.

Federal Foster Care Financing

The House Subcommittee on Human Resources held a hearing on federal foster care financing on June 9. To read testimony, please [click here](#).

YTAT Highlights Now Available



A Youth Transition Action Team Initiative Highlights, updated September 13, 2005, is now available. The sheet describes the initiative and the work of the teams, lists participating counties, names the types of supports the initiative provides participating counties, and outlines the current status of YTAT.

To view the YTAT Highlights, [click here](http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/YouthTransitionActionTeamInitiativeHighlights.pdf). (<http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/YouthTransitionActionTeamInitiativeHighlights.pdf>)

YTAT New Website!



New Ways to Work has launched a new website for YTAT that features information about the initiative, tools for communities and teams, and information about current events and activities.

Check it out at <http://www.nww.org/initiatives/ytat.html>.

To access tools and resources for serving special populations and to support quality work-based learning, youth leadership, and strategic planning, go to the New Ways online library at <http://www.nww.org/libraryform.html>.

ABOUT YTAT

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative focuses on bringing together the resources of the workforce, education and child welfare systems to better prepare adolescents who are current or former foster youth to achieve economic, educational and employment success as they transition into the adult world.

Transition Action Teams are made up of leaders from the child welfare, education, workforce development and other local systems, working together to improve transition outcomes for youth touched by the child welfare system. Teams are also charged with assisting their county in achieving their child welfare system enhancement goals, particularly in the area of youth permanency.

For more information about the YTAT initiative, please contact

New Ways to Work

103 A Morris Street
Sebastopol CA 95472
(707) 824-4000 phone
(707) 824-4410 fax

The Thoreau Center
1016 Lincoln Boulevard Suite 221
San Francisco, CA 94129
(415) 995-9860 phone

www.nww.org

TRANSITION: TEAMS IN ACTION



Comparing Transition Outcomes: 19-Year-Old Youth Never in Care, Out of Care, and Still in Care

The Chapin Hall Center for Children recently released a report on the second wave findings of their longitudinal study of 603 youth who have been in or who still are in foster care in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. These youth, now 19, answered questions about their experiences since the first interviews when they were 17. The Report is called “Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 19” (Midwest Study), and is available at the [Chapin Hall website](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=130). (http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=130)

The researchers asked participants questions about their life experiences in several domains: education, independent living services, living arrangements, employment, economic security, receipt of government benefits, health, sexual behavior, pregnancy history, and involvement with the criminal justice system. The researchers then compared the participants’ answers with the responses of young people who participated in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), a nationally representative study of American youth, designed to examine “how social contexts influence the health-related behaviors of adolescents.” They also compared the answers of those still in care with those who were no longer in care.

The researchers found that, generally speaking, the Midwest Study participants were faring worse than those who have not been in the child welfare system. They typically lagged behind in their education, employment rates, wages, health status; they have had more encounters with the criminal justice system and higher incidences of homelessness. However, of the two groups of youth

who have been in or are currently in foster care, those who left care generally have been doing worse than those who have remained in care.

Education

A Casey National Alumni Study (2003) of youth who had emancipated from foster care shows that education, for the participants in that study, was the single most important factor in positive transition outcomes. Furthermore, according to a 2003 study of 262 youth in foster care in St. Louis County, MO, conducted by the George Warren Brown (GWB) School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, 70% of the youth had a desire to attend college. If the Casey and Brown results show a need and a desire for education among youth in foster care, the Midwest Study of educational experience highlights the ways in which the youth in the Midwest Study are not accessing education at the same level as youth not in foster care, and youth who left care at age 18 are involved in education even less than those who remained in care.

Nineteen-year-olds in the national sample were further along in their educations than were the Midwest youth. Fewer than 10% of the participants in the national sample had not yet completed their high school diploma or a GED, compared with more than 33% of the Midwest Study youth. Among the foster youth or former foster youth who were in school, 39% were involved in catching up through high school or GED programs. In the national sample, fewer than 2% were enrolled in such programs. Furthermore, the Midwest Study revealed that nearly twice as many out-of-care youth were not in school (62.9%) as in-care youth (33.3%). For the in-care youth, the educational focus was more likely to be academic than

vocational: 26.6% were enrolled in two-year college, 20.9% in high school or GED programs, 10.6% were in four-year colleges, and 8.5% were in vocational training. The out-of-care youth in school were more likely to be involved in vocational training than their in-care peers: 10.1% were in high school or GED programs, 9.1% were doing vocational training, 7.9% were in two-year colleges, and 3.8% were in four-year colleges.

Independent Living Services

If education appears to be the most important factor in successful transitions, the experiences of youth in the Midwest Study with Independent Living Services (ILS) reflect this importance. However, this emphasis on education emerged in part because fewer youth accessed services in the other domains—employment services or training, budget and financial management services, health education services, help finding and maintaining housing, and youth development support services. According to the authors of the Midwest study, “Just over one-half of our study participants received some form of educational support, but fewer than one-half received any service in the remaining domains.” Those still in care were “significantly more likely to report receiving the service than their peers who had left . . . care,” according to the report.

Employment and Earnings

Participants in the Midwest Study also lagged behind those in the national sample in terms of employment and earnings. Only 40% of the Midwest Study youth were employed; 58.2% of the Add Health participants had jobs. The number of out-of-care youth who had jobs was greater than the number of in-care youth, making it the only domain in which emancipated youth were faring better than in-care youth. The researchers speculated that the in-care youth were more likely to be focused on their educations than on finding work.

While the Midwest Study youth and the Add Health youth were working the same number of hours per

week and earning the same hourly wages, when their wages were compared on an annual basis, the Midwest youth earned considerably less than their Add Health peers. Ninety percent of the Midwest youth earned less than \$10,000 and 75% earned less than \$5,000. Significantly more of the Add Health youth earned more than \$10,000.

These low earnings led many out-of-care youth to experience economic hardships and to use government assistance. More than 48% of the female participants and 24.5% of the male had received one or more government benefits.

Disconnected Youth

The term disconnected youth generally refers to youth who are neither in school nor working. Drawing upon the information for education and employment, the Midwest Study shows that their participants were more than twice as likely to be disconnected as their peers in the Add Health study. Ten percent of the Add Health youth were disconnected compared with 28% of the out-of-care youth and 20% of the in-care youth.

Health and Health Care

While 75% of the youth in the Midwest study reported that they were in good or excellent health, they nevertheless reported more health problems than did the Add Health participants and they reported more emergency room visits and hospitalizations in the previous five years. The Midwest Study youths’ most recent hospitalization visits were more likely than the Add Health youths’ visits to be for “drug use or emotional problems.” The researchers also noted that those youth who remained in care were more likely to receive the “medical, dental, and psychological care” they thought they needed. For those who were no longer in care, the barriers to receiving care were “the perceived cost of care and being uninsured.”

One-third of the Midwest youth were found to suffer from a mental health disorder or alcohol or substance abuse. The Midwest youth were more

than twice as likely to have received counseling or to have participated in a substance abuse treatment program as the Add Health youth. In keeping with results in other domains, the self-reported substance dependence or abuse was higher among out-of-care youth than in-care youth. Significantly, the researchers note that “much of the difference [in these rates] . . . appears to be due to relatively recent problems among the [out-of-care youth].”

Parenting

The youth in the Midwest Study were more than twice as likely to be parents as those in the Add Health study; nearly 25% of the Midwest participants had children while fewer than 12% of the Add Health participants did. However, there was no difference between the percentage of Midwest and Add Health youth who were living with their children; roughly 73% of both groups were.

Involvement with the Criminal Justice System

Involvement with the criminal justice system was not one of the domains included in the Add Health study, so no comparison was made. However, participants in the Midwest Study reported “a high level” of involvement, and those out of care were significantly more likely than those in care to have been involved. Nearly 34% of the out-of-care youth had been arrested since their first interview; almost 22% of the in-care youth had been. Close to 24% of the out-of-care youth had spent at least one night in a correctional facility, and 14.4% of the in-care youth had done so.

To access the Chapin Hall Center for Children Midwest Study, please [click here](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=130).
(http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=130)

Positive Results: Connections to Family Members and/or Other Adults

The researchers report that “Most of the young adults in the Midwest Study continue to have strong ties to family.” They see evidence of these ties in youths’ attitudes towards their families and in the fact that 34.6% of the youth were living with either their biological parents or other relatives after care. An additional 10% were living with non-relative foster parents. They also report that many of the youth perceive the social support they receive to be generally at a high level.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The researchers concluded that the current and former foster care youth they studied faced many challenges, including “educational deficits, mental health problems, economic insecurity, victimization, and early child-bearing.” These youth were faring worse than their same-age peers in many domains, and were “much more likely to have been involved in the criminal justice system.” However, they also noted that the youth were maintaining strong ties to their families and “perceive relatively high levels of social support.” They suggest that allowing youth to remain in foster care beyond their 18th birthday may help them make the transition to adulthood more successfully. While their longitudinal study results had not yet permitted them to make correlations between extended care and more positive outcomes, the researchers noted that those who had remained in care had more opportunities to access support. They stated “Those still in care were more likely to have received services to prepare them for independent living, to be continuing their education, and to have access to health and mental health care services. They were also more likely to be working or in school.”

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

TO: All DHS Employees

DATE: August 10, 2005

FROM: Cheryl Ransom-Garner, Commissioner

SUBJECT: Liaison to LGBTQ Community

Studies have shown that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) clients are more likely to become involved in the child welfare system yet less likely to be noticed and adequately served by that same system. Due to the misunderstanding, fear and hostility that they often face in their homes, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, they are also at greater risk of assault, truancy, delinquent activity, drug use, unemployment, and homelessness.

As the agency mandated to enable families to safely meet the needs of their children and to intervene in times of crisis, as relatives, friends, and neighbors of LGBTQ people, and as LGBTQ people ourselves in some cases, it is incumbent upon us all to make sure that this vulnerable population get no less than the best services we are able to provide.

I'm pleased to announce that we have created a new position within the Behavioral Health and Wellness Center to better assist workers serving LGBTQ youth. Richard Moreau will serve as the Department's Liaison to LGBTQ Communities. He will be available for consultation regarding cases serving this population, for participation in unit meetings if requested, and to provider agencies and staff to assist them in meeting the needs of LGBTQ clients.

Additionally, he will gather information about community-based services already available for LGBTQ clients and their families available on the DHS Discussion Boards and through the future publication of a comprehensive brochure. Conversely, the liaison will serve as a resource directly to members of the LGBTQ communities and the other agencies that serve them as their gateway to information about the Department, our mandates, and the services we offer.

The LGBTQ liaison will be involved in efforts to assess and improve our training regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, and reviewing current and draft policies, protocols, forms, brochures and agency culture for subliminal messages we convey in order to ensure that they are welcoming and affirming.

While all of our services, whether provided by us directly or via contracted providers, are expected to be able to sensitively meet the needs of our LGBTQ clients, Richard will also be our liaison to the group home that DHS is working with Lutheran Children and Family Services to establish specifically for LGBTQ clients requiring such a setting, as well as serving as the case manager for the residents of this home.

For more information, please contact Ted Qually, Communications Director, at ted.qualli@phila.gov or (215) 683-6012.

TRANSITION: TEAMS IN ACTION



Foster Youth Identify Challenges, Propose Policy Solutions



On August 13-15 the California Youth Connection (CYC) held their Annual Policy and Leadership Conference to address issues affecting youth in and emancipating from the child welfare system. This three-day leadership conference, attended by current and former foster youth who are members of CYC, was held in Redding, California and

hosted by the Shasta CYC chapter.

The Policy Conference provides an opportunity for CYC members statewide to gather specifically to discuss current issues in foster care, and to propose policy solutions to address those issues. The last day of the Fall Policy Conference is spent presenting issues and recommendations to a distinguished panel that has included California State legislators, local policy makers, various directors of child welfare programs and other decision makers within the child welfare system.

This year's conference focused on four issues critical to the lives of foster youth: Family; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Foster Youth Issues; Higher Education; and Post Emancipation Services. The following summarizes the policy recommendations CYC members presented to the audience on August 15th:

Family

CYC members presented the following challenges they experience with maintaining connections to extended family: (1) separation from siblings and (2) parenting foster youth losing rights to their children. Currently only 42 percent of foster youth are placed with their siblings and once youth are adopted, they lose the right to remain in contact with their siblings. For foster youth who have children, often their children are taken away and they themselves become wards of the court and are frequently placed in different homes. CYC members made the following recommendations to address these issues:

Recommendations

- Legislation should allow youth in foster care and their adopted relatives to maintain contact and guarantee the right to permanency in sibling relationships.
- All foster youth should be placed in homes with their siblings.
- Youth in foster care who have children should be provided opportunities to live in the same home as their children.
- When children of foster youth are taken away and thus become wards of the court, the foster youth parent should maintain her/his right to stay connected to the child.
- Foster youth deserve the same rights and equal opportunity to parent as other parents.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Foster Youth Issues

CYC members discussed the following challenges that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) foster youth experience: (1) discrimination from biological families, often directly linked to the youth entering social services; (2) discrimination in the foster homes youth are placed in. Currently 75 percent of LGBT foster youth report discrimination in their foster homes by their peers and foster parents, sometimes resulting in violence. CYC members made the following recommendations to address these issues:

Recommendations

- Local communities should develop resource centers for LGBT foster youth.
- A statewide LGBT resource agency should be developed to provide resources and support for social services, child welfare, and local community centers providing services for foster youth.
- Foster homes that are sensitive to, and house only, LGBT foster youth should be developed and made available.
- All foster parents should be educated on issues affecting LGBT foster youth and provided with resources to support them.
- Foster youth should have the right to interview their foster parents and decide whether they feel the home and potential foster parents are suitable to their needs.
- School faculty should be trained in issues affecting LGBT youth.
- Current laws and regulations should establish zero tolerance for violence perpetrated against LGBT youth.



Higher Education

CYC members identified the following challenges they experience with entering and completing higher education: (1) unequal opportunities to complete required coursework and take advanced classes; (2) lack of guidance with the application process for higher education, including admissions and student aid; and (3) lack of permanent living accommodations once entering college. Currently 70 percent of foster youth express a desire to attend college, but only 10 percent begin college, and only 2 percent graduate. Unlike youth with extended families they can return to, foster youth who live in campus residence halls often lose their home during campus breaks and over the summer. CYC members made the following recommendations to address these issues:

Recommendations

- Foster youth need opportunities to take honors and advanced placement courses in high school, so they can compete with other students in receiving the best options for higher education.
- Foster youth should have the opportunity to remain at one high school and be able to attend extracurricular activities like other students.
- Former foster youth who attended college should be supported in mentoring current foster youth about how to apply, attend, and graduate from higher education.
- Counties should train their social workers in supporting foster youth in the application process for admission and for student aid to colleges.
- Social workers need to have on file all the paperwork necessary for foster youth to apply for college and be aware of the goals of individual youth.
- All state colleges should be required to offer year-round dorms for students who want to stay and who are willing to pay for the additional time.
- Federal income needs for college students should be raised from a 9-month to a 12-month calendar.

Post Emancipation

CYC members identified the following challenges they experience when emancipating from the foster care system: (1) lack of medical and mental health care; (2) fewer services provided post-emancipation, during a time when they are needed the most; (3) lack of preparation for, or support with, opportunities to support a successful transition to adulthood; and (4) lack of tracking post emancipation. Currently, youth who have emancipated only receive medical coverage until the age of 21 while a majority of young adults receive care until age 24 under their parents' policies. When foster youth emancipate from the child welfare system, they are in need of more extended support, not less because they no longer have foster families to support them. Currently 46 percent of foster youth don't complete high school, and there is a huge problem with records not following youth once they emancipate, thus compromising their opportunities to return to school or find employment. Without a system in place to track emancipated youth, foster youth fall through the cracks and lose opportunities for support where it may exist. CYC members made the following recommendations to address these issues:

Recommendations

- Medical and mental health care should be extended to age 24 for former foster youth, with a co-payment after the age of 21.
- After they age-out, foster youth should have opportunities to choose to stay in extended care up to the age of 24.
- Foster youth should receive non-monetary services until the age of 26.
- Foster youth need support in workforce and career development, and support for finding paid work and be provided job placement opportunities upon emancipation.
- Foster youth need long-term relationships with caring adults and peers to extend beyond their years in care.
- Important personal records should follow foster youth and be given to them in a complete package when they emancipate.
- Foster youth should have opportunities for tutoring while in school, so they are supported in completing their education, especially when they frequently move from school to school.
- The state should develop a database to track foster youth who have emancipated from the system in order to track additional services they may need.

The CYC recently published a Policy Report from their 2003 and 2004 Fall Policy Conferences. To access the report, please [click here](http://www.cal youthconn.org/site/cyc/section.php?id=103).
(<http://www.cal youthconn.org/site/cyc/section.php?id=103>)

California Youth Connection (CYC) is an organization for current and former foster youth. CYC is founded on the belief that no one knows the foster care system better than the people who live in it. CYC is dedicated to improving the foster care system by helping current and former foster care youth insert their voice into the dialogue about social work and child welfare practice. To learn more, please visit www.cal youthconn.org.

POLICY

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About MHSA Implementation, And Then Some

The state Department of Mental Health (DMH) has been busily planning implementation of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and, during the last few months, has almost completed planning for the Community Services and Supports component and has started planning for the Performance Measurement, Education and Training, and Capital Facilities/Information Technology components.

In addition, all of the Oversight and Accountability Commission members have been appointed and the Commission has held its first two meetings. Early Intervention and Prevention, and Innovation implementation planning has not yet begun.

Community Program Planning

The purpose of the Community Program Planning (CPP) component of the MHSA is to provide a structure and process counties can apply with their stakeholders to determine how best to use the MHSA Community Services and Supports funds. Each county was required to submit a request to DMH to receive funding to develop and carry out its local planning process.

Having now received and acted on those requests, due March 15, DMH has either approved or conditionally approved the CPP funding requests, or notified counties that DMH needs more information. Stakeholders can log onto the DMH website at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/ComPlanProc.asp>, select any county, and see: a) whether that county's funding request was approved, conditionally approved or notified that more information was needed; b) the amount of planning money approved for the county; and c) DMH's written response to the county's funding request.

Counties are now in various stages of the community planning process; some counties have almost completed their process while others have not yet begun. Information about each county's planning is available from the county mental health department.

Community Services and Supports

The purpose of the Community Services and Supports component of the MHSA is to define the requirements of service delivery to children, transition age youth, adults, and older adults.

After several months of feedback from stakeholders including the Alliance, DMH in May released the second draft of the MHSA Community Services and Supports Three Year Program and Expenditure Requirements. Much of the Alliance's feedback was incorporated into the revised document that included, among other changes, clarified and simplified requirements and improved and expanded sections on children and youth.

DMH released the final version of the requirements in early August as DMH Letter No: 05-05. Again, Alliance feedback was incorporated into the final document including a recommendation to eliminate the indicator "decrease in non-public school placements" as a desired outcome for children. An educational outcome that is more comprehensive and more consistent with the intent of the MHSA will be developed as part of the performance measurement discussions.

The final document is available on the DMH website at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/CSS-Requirements.asp>. Also available on that page are several documents designed to help stakeholders understand the requirements and to assist counties and stakeholders as they develop county plans.

The 60-page long final document specifies three distinct types of funding for Community Services and Supports:

- Full Service Partnership Funds to provide "whatever it takes" for identified priority populations;
- General System Development Funds to improve services and infrastructure for the identified initial full service populations and for other clients with emphasis on reducing ethnic disparities in service delivery;
- Outreach and Engagement Funding for outreach and engagement of those populations that are currently receiving little or no service, with particular emphasis on eliminating ethnic disparities in service delivery.

The county plan requirements also continue to be based on a logic model that guides counties and their stakeholders through a process that links a) community issues resulting from untreated mental illness and a lack of services and supports, b) mental health needs within the community, c) the identification of specific populations to be served based on the issues and needs identified, d) the strategies and activities to be implemented, and e) the desired outcomes to be achieved.

There is no DMH submission deadline for county Community Services and Supports Program and Expenditure Plans.

Community Services and Supports Funding

DMH Letter No: 05-02, released June 1, 2005, provides a list of counties and the estimated amount of funding each county can request for its Community Services and Supports component. Additionally, the letter outlines the methodology used to arrive at these "planning estimates." Some counties are objecting to the methodology DMH used and to resulting funding estimates. A major objection is that DMH did not use a measure of homelessness in its methodology, and given the prevalence of homelessness among the mentally ill, this seems a fairly serious oversight.

The letter also states that 10% of the Community Services and Supports funding has been set aside to be used for: a) a contingency reserve in the event that tax receipts are less than the amount projected, b) expansion of enrollment and services in counties where there is demonstrated capacity to expand and achieve outcomes, c) statewide or regional strategies to meet the needs of low incidence populations with multiple disabilities or other populations with very high needs, and d) other critical needs consistent with the MHSA.

Statewide or regional strategies may be of particular interest to providers that serve the kinds of clients described in "c" above. It is unclear at this point whether proposals to DMH for this funding may only come from counties.

DMH Letter 05-02 is available on the DMH website at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/CSS-Requirements.asp>.

Community Services and Supports One-Time Funding

Counties that begin providing Community Services and Supports some time after the beginning of the 2005-2006 fiscal year will have their funding for that fiscal year prorated. Counties may request to utilize the remainder of their prorated funding for one-time expenditures. Because most counties will not begin providing services and supports until January 1, 2006 or later - half way through the fiscal year - substantial funds will be available to counties for these one-time expenditures.

DMH has also released a draft discussion of the kinds of things for which counties may request funding for one-time expenditures including: a) extension of Community Program Planning funding, b) pre-implementation of Community Services and Supports funding, and c) other one-time Community Services and Supports funding.

While these funding requests to DMH must be made by counties, providers may propose uses for this funding to their counties and may be the recipients of the funding.

The Draft Community Services and Supports One-Time Requests for Funding document is available on the DMH website at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/CSS-Requirements.asp>. DMH plans to release the final document in August.

County Non-Supplantation Policy

The text of the MHSA states "The funding established pursuant to this act shall be utilized to expand mental health services. These funds shall not be used to supplant existing state or county funds utilized to provide mental health services..."

In mid-July DMH released DMH Letter No: 05-04 which contains the state's non-supplantation policy for the MHSA. The policy consists of three requirements, all of which must be met in order for an expenditure to be eligible for reimbursement under the MHSA.

According to DMH policy, funds a) must be used for programs authorized by the MHSA, b) may not be used to replace other state or county funds that must be used to provide mental health services in fiscal year 2004-2005 (the time of enactment of the MHSA), and c) must be used to fund new programs - those that were not in existence in the county at the time of enactment of the MHSA - or to expand the capacity of existing services that were being provided at the time of enactment of the MHSA.

Counties may stop funding unneeded non-required programs and services but they may not substitute MHSA funding for other funding for those non-required programs.

The Alliance has provided feedback to DMH regarding the need to clarify and simplify the non-supplantation policy language so there is no confusion regarding the use of the word "required."

Performance Measurement and Information Technology

This spring and early summer DMH completed two statewide conference calls and two statewide meetings to discuss with stakeholders its vision for a MHSA performance measurement system and supporting information technology.

The desired outcomes stipulated for Community Services and Supports will inform the selection of indicators and measures. Those outcomes include a) meaningful use of time and capabilities, b) safe and adequate housing, c) a network of supportive relationships, d) timely access to needed help, e) reduction in incarceration in jails and juvenile halls, and e) reduction in involuntary services, institutionalization, and out of home placements.

DMH proposes to measure outcomes at three levels, the individual client level, the mental health program/system accountability level, and the public/community impact level.

The Departmental vision is very ambitious with many indicators and measures. The initial set of indicators included those that had been used in California previously and those derived from the adult recovery model. The Alliance, with members of CMHDA, suggested that the indicators and measures be developed in a more systematic and research based manner. The DMH lead staff member for this component is Stephanie Oprendeck who will work with consultant Tom Trabin on development of the performance measurement system. Dr. Trabin spoke briefly at the last stakeholder meeting and appears to be in agreement with our approach.

Written summaries of the stakeholder meetings are available on the DMH website at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/meetings.asp> under "prior meetings."

The Alliance has provided substantial initial feedback to DMH on performance measurement and information technology and has proposed Dr. Karyn Dresser of STARS Behavioral Health for the DMH MHSA Performance Measurement Committee. The members of that Committee have not yet been announced. Carol Hood has just informed the Alliance that the Department will also form an Information Technology Committee. The Alliance will propose a representative from one of our member agencies for that Committee as well.

Education and Training

The MHSA requires a statewide needs assessment of the workforce in each county and the development and approval of a statewide five year plan to address the identified needs. DMH has completed one statewide conference call and one statewide stakeholder meeting and is proposing early implementation of at least some strategies before the needs assessment and five year plan are completed.

The short and long term strategies in the five year plan can include: a) expansion of post-secondary education, b) loan forgiveness and scholarships, stipend programs, c) regional partnerships, d) high school career development and regional occupational centers, e) training and retraining of staff, f) promotion of consumers and family members, g) inclusion of consumers and family members, and h) cultural competency.

Early implementation proposals being considered include promotion of successful strategies for the employment of consumers and family members and post-graduate stipend programs to increase the workforce. The California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) has made a stipend proposal that could make social work school graduates available in one or two years. The Alliance has been told that DMH will fund this proposal immediately, beginning with funds that do not require a stakeholder process for expenditure.

Although publicly funded stipend programs usually require employment in the public mental health system for a period of time following graduation, the MHSA states that "employment in California's public mental health system includes employment in private organizations providing publicly funded mental health services." CalSWEC funded graduates, and others later on, will be able to fulfill their employment obligations, not only in public agencies as is the case for the current IV-E stipend program, but also in publicly funded private agencies.

Education and training documents and a written summary of the stakeholder meeting is available on the DMH website at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/meetings.asp> under "prior meetings."

DMH lead staff member for this component is Robert Garcia who is currently forming an Education and Training Advisory Group to assist with implementation. The Alliance, working with the California Council of Community Mental Health Agencies (CCCMHA), proposed Steve Elson of Casa Pacifica for membership. Our proposal was accepted and the aging Dr. Elson is now a member of the Advisory Group.

Capital Facilities

Approximately \$325 million will be available for capital facilities and information technology through the MHSA. In anticipation of the required stakeholder process, DMH contracted with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) to develop a draft document to 1) identify a range of appropriate uses for MHSA capital facilities funds, 2) establish some principles to guide the use of MHSA capital funds, 3) provide some definitions and important information to help guide the use of MHSA capital funds to expand housing options for consumers, and 4) stimulate discussion and obtain feedback from stakeholders.

CSH, in turn, asked the Alliance for ideas on capital funds projects, other than housing, that would be appropriate for children, youth and their families. The Alliance provided CSH with a range of ideas, all of which were included in the document.

The draft document does not describe how much money will go to capital facilities and how much to information technology (IT) and it does not describe how funds will be allocated among the counties. The draft does propose that capital facilities funds may be used for purchasing land or buildings, construction or rehabilitation of current facilities, providing adequate reserves for projects to cover gaps in operating costs in future years, and related "soft" costs for development including strategies to build community acceptance for projects.

The capital facilities needs most frequently identified by stakeholders during development of the document were purchase, construction, acquisition, and/or rehabilitation costs for community-based facilities that house consumer/peer operated wellness and recovery centers, family resource centers, crisis stabilization and residential care as an alternative to hospitalization, mental health services co-located with community-based services including schools and primary care clinics, and affordable and supportive housing.

DMH completed one conference call and one stakeholder meeting on capital facilities this spring and, as is the case for all MHSA components, draft documents and meeting summaries are available at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/meetings.asp> under "prior meetings."

Upcoming Stakeholder Meetings

The next round of stakeholder conference calls and meetings for performance measurement, education and training, and capital facilities is scheduled for September and October. These meetings were originally scheduled for summer but were delayed to allow DMH to review and incorporate stakeholder feedback into new drafts and to plan meeting agenda that effectively elicit specific and useful stakeholder feedback.

A great deal of information is available on the DMH MHSA home page at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/default.asp>. Check the website often for new information about DMH MHSA implementation.

More specifically, information about conference call and meeting dates and locations is available on the DMH website at <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSA/meetings.asp> under "save the dates." Draft documents and meeting agendas are available at the same location under "meetings and conference calls" and the specific date of the meeting or call.

You can register online for the meetings at the same location under "online registration." Meeting summaries will also continue to be available several days after each meeting under the date of the meeting.

Oversight and Accountability Commission

All members of the MHSA Oversight and Accountability Commission have now been appointed. Jerry Doyle (also known as Frank), CEO of Alliance member agency EMQ, was appointed to the Commission by the Governor in the "mental health professional" position. At the first meeting Commission members selected former Assemblymember Darrell Steinberg Chair of the Commission. The Commission has already met twice. Members will attend a retreat in August to continue their work. Information about each of the Commission members is available at http://www.dmh.ca.gov/press/docs/2005/MHSOAC_bios_members_07-07-05.pdf.

Information

Alliance staff will continue to provide implementation information to member agencies in "Monday Morning." Mental Health Committee members will receive additional information by email and those members that have expressed particular interest in specific components of the MHSA may receive even more detailed information.

The Alliance has put together special interest email lists for performance measurement/information technology, education and training, and capital facilities. For more information, or to add your name to a special interest list, contact Fran Edelstein at fedelstein@cacfs.org.

TRANSITION: TEAMS IN ACTION



ON THE GROUND

Innovative Projects Serving Foster Youth

Fostering the Future:

San Mateo YTAT and Center for Venture Philanthropy Collaborate on Innovative Initiative to Help Youth Transition to Independence

YTAT Connection

At the first YTAT meeting in San Mateo County, the Center for Venture Philanthropy's (CVP) program manager and the New Ways to Work staff who were facilitating the meeting saw the possibility for CVP's new initiative, Fostering the Future (FTF), to be linked to the YTAT efforts in the county.

Venture Philanthropy Model

CVP's model is well suited to the collaborative approach that YTAT supports. A branch of the Peninsula Community Foundation, CVP has developed a model of venture philanthropy based upon selected principles effectively used by venture capitalists. It is defined by a spirit of opportunity and by the willingness to seek out and support new solutions to long-standing challenges. While CVP's social venture funds focus on large issues affecting the communities in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, the Center is well-positioned to draw upon national cutting edge approaches, focus on system change, use long-established connections with other community players, monitor the progress of any project closely, and build a strategy for sustainability.

Fostering the Future

In 2003 two events drew attention to foster care issues in San Mateo: the death of a child while in foster care, and the federal mandate for repair of the nation's foster care system. The events created what Carol Gray, CVP's executive director, calls, "a burning

platform - a collision of events precipitating immediate and concentrated corrective action. The convergence just kind of got things happening - quickly."

In January of 2004 the CVP met with the San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA) leadership "to see how we could best work together" said Gray. "We saw a place where our kind of philanthropy could be helpful and *they* were very excited to see philanthropy at the table. As a community foundation, we know all the players and the leadership - both in government agencies and local nonprofits. It seemed that we could effectively help the County move forward as they worked on their System Improvement Plan." This and subsequent meetings helped the CVP staff see where the County was concentrating its efforts, and where CVP might fill a gap. "During the first few years of their improvement plan, HSA needs to focus on safety. We all saw that. We decided we would concentrate our efforts on helping young people transition well when they 'age out' of the 'system at around age 18," said Gray.

After these and hundreds of hours of other discussions, CVP launched its six-year social venture fund, *Fostering the Future: Successful Transitions for Youth in Foster and Kin Care*. Fostering the Future is a pooled investment fund with dollars supplied by the Peninsula Community Foundation endowment fund, individual donors and grants from other foundations. Its primary goal is to create a model that will not only help young people in foster and kin care become

successful adults but also effect changes in the current youth-serving systems that will support transitioning youth for many years to come. These goals will be met by a partnership of nonprofit and government agencies working together with a cadre of youth in foster and kin care to

1. improve the youths' academic performance,
2. develop their self-advocacy skills and those of their caregivers,
3. enhance their caregivers' parenting skills,
4. create permanent bonded relationships with at least one caring adult, and
5. strengthen their independent living skills.

At the core of the fund, is an asset coach model. Three new staff members will join partner nonprofits to work with youth who are in either foster or kinship care (or who have already emancipated from the foster care system) in Redwood City or East Palo Alto. These coaches will not be case workers, but will focus on helping each young person develop his or her personal plan for forward movement over the next period of time in that youth's life. Emphasis will be placed on each young person's developmental assets and strengths rather than deficits and weaknesses.

Assets are defined as the elements needed for full, healthy youth development. According to the Search Institute, these elements "address support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity." The Search Institute refers to research that shows "every child needs between 31-40 assets before there is a significant drop in at-risk behavior." The FTF collaborative partners, CVP staff and the participating funders support the goal of developing self-sufficiency, and have confidence in the asset concept as a vehicle for reaching that goal.

The young people who decide to join the program will form a youth network and will work together to plan activities and educational opportunities that they deem to be of value. The groups will be age-specific (11-13, 14-17, and 18-25) and will meet on a regular basis in both gender-specific and mixed-gender groups. As a

natural outgrowth of the work, the asset coaches will support permanency planning, helping particularly the older youth develop a sense of belonging to a community and having a lifelong relationship with at least one caring adult.

Collaboration with Other Organizations

Fostering the Future is a partnership that proposes to weave together the strengths and vision for change of several community-based organizations and government agencies. Eight organizations are involved in the partnership: Youth and Family Enrichment Services, Edgewood Center for Children and Families, Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, San Mateo County Office of Education, Human Services Agency of San Mateo County (Adolescent Services and Workforce Development divisions), San Mateo County Community College District, San Mateo County Health Department (Mental Health Services), and Child Advocates of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

Monitoring Effectiveness

Another distinctive feature of the Center for Venture Philanthropy's approach is the close monitoring of the program. Instead of looking at results on an annual basis, CVP reviews data quarterly. They have found that the more frequent assessments help them to make course corrections more effectively and provide investors with accountability. Gray explains, "A quarterly report will be sent out to the partnering nonprofits and investors. We will pull the data, put it in a graphic format, and analyze it, comparing it to the targets and milestones that we all agree to in our annual memorandum of understanding."

YTAT Connections

Staff at CVP and San Mateo County's Human Services Agency saw Fostering the Future as the natural "home" for YTAT. Not only did they see that a strong collaboration of youth-serving agencies was already in place and working to effect better transitions, but they also recognized that YTAT would provide the collaborative with the opportunity to share

information and learn from the other YTAT counties as well as take advantage of statewide resources in arenas such as evaluation and database design.

For more information on the Center for Venture Philanthropy, visit www.pcf.org/venture_philanthropy/

TRANSITION: TEAMS IN ACTION



ON THE GROUND

Innovative Projects Serving Foster Youth

San Luis Obispo County Uses Effective Information Sharing Model

San Luis Obispo County's size has historically allowed for close connections between county and private organizations and services. There also has been a commitment to work with families and children at whatever level of need exists. About eight years ago, San Luis Obispo County (SLO) realized a need existed to share client information in order to be more effective, yet they also knew they were bound by the laws and regulations of confidentiality and must respect and honor the rights of their clients. With this in mind, government and private agencies recognized they had to develop rules that allowed for the sharing of confidential information in a manner that was both lawful and respectful of the rights of the clients.

In 1997 San Luis Obispo County began to explore ways in which they could have community partners work more effectively in a collaborative and still ensure the confidentiality of individuals. To that end, a dialogue was held with the court system and County Counsel. The agencies involved reached an agreement to develop a training curriculum for staff of both government and private agencies working in the Human Services field.

The training curriculum and a protocol for sharing information were established. First, individuals take the training. County Counsel and attorneys conduct the training and go through all of the legalities of information sharing. Upon completion individuals are given certification and a card. If one does not have the card they cannot share the information. Training is provided several times throughout the year along with updated videos for staff to review to continually be

upgraded on confidentiality laws, client rights, and responsibilities to clients. Meanwhile, each client must provide consent for the release of his or her information before it can be shared. When all staff members involved with a given client have certification and when the client has given his or her approval, a release of information is allowed. The members of the team working with the individual can then readily share information with one another regarding the client. These teams are known as Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT). The hope and goal are that the client can move more quickly through each agency to have their needs identified and receive consistent, recommended services to meet their needs.

Even with this plan, agencies are still required to be mindful of any special circumstances of the individual and/or family being served that would not allow for the immediate sharing of information. An example where this situation occurs would be a notation in a person's records that a serious criminal issue is involved and this information is not to be shared. Another instance happens when individuals who want services are members of a particular organization that states the individual and/or family must be treated confidentially in every way. This restriction must be honored. Additionally, the only information that can be shared is for a given client, not for other family members. For example, if Mental Health is being called to share information about a particular mother, this information may be shared, but the agency may not share information about the mother's partner or other members of the family. In other words, each individual must have signed a release prior before his or her information may be shared.

This has been highly successful as a way to provide integrated services, and San Luis Obispo County has achieved positive results. It allows for organizations to quickly receive and assess information that previously would have taken multiple steps and many months to complete. It also allows the organization to move forward with the client.

For more information about the Multi Disciplinary Teams, contact Mary Solis, San Luis Obispo County, at (805)781-1825.



Youth Transition Action Teams

Leveraging Community Resources to Ensure Successful Transitions for Foster Youth

Initiative Highlights

The Youth Transition Action Team initiative supports community teams (Transition Action Teams) of leaders from child welfare, education, workforce development, and other systems in their efforts to leverage local resources and programs to provide an integrated continuum of services and opportunities for foster youth that will ensure successful transitions to adulthood.

The strategy is designed to support counties statewide in meeting their systems improvement objectives and to support inter-agency collaboration at the local and state levels.

Transition Action Teams work with existing efforts to create a comprehensive, integrated, and sequenced set of services and supports to improve the likelihood that youth touched by the child welfare system will be successful adults.

Transition Action Teams:

- Convene Leaders and Promote Policy
- Build Awareness; Market and Share Information
- Create Linkages and Connect Systems
- Measure Effectiveness
- Improve Program Practice

Initiative Status

- Complementary efforts in the child welfare and workforce development systems aligned.
- Tools and frameworks developed, based on the All Youth-One System approach, integrated with multiple existing frameworks for foster youth transition and permanence.
- Transition Action Teams formed or forming in all participating counties.
- Orientation and technical assistance site visits conducted in all participating counties.
- Implementation workplans, outcomes, and benchmarks by county in development.
- Project Website launched (www.nww.org/initiatives/ytat.html)
- List Serve launched (over 1,000 subscribers)
- First content call conducted (Evaluation and Data collection)
- Two issues of the project newsletter, *Transition: Teams In Action*, produced and distributed
- Current partners include Casey Family Programs (Initiative Sponsor), California Department of Social Services, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, Jewish Community Foundation, Foundation Consortium for California's Children and Youth, and Peninsula Community Foundation.

Initiative Supports

- ⇒ Community of Practice provides shared peer learning opportunities.
- ⇒ Tools, resources, and common frameworks
- ⇒ Orientation and action planning support
- ⇒ Tailored on-site technical assistance
- ⇒ Themed conference calls and training
- ⇒ Sharing identified effective practices
- ⇒ Connections to related workforce development and education initiatives

Participating and Pending Counties

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ventura | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tehama |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> San Luis Obispo | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Colusa |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Glenn | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Placer |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sacramento | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humboldt |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> San Diego | <input type="checkbox"/> Trinity |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> San Mateo | <i>Interested Counties</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alameda | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Los Angeles | <input type="checkbox"/> Sonoma County |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco |

NEW WAYS TO WORK

103 MORRIS STREET, SUITE A, SEBASTOPOL, CA. 95472
1016 LINCOLN, BLVD., SUITE #221, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94129
(707) 824-4000 PHONE • (415) 995-9860 PHONE • (707) 824-4410 FAX