



Brevard Family Partnership

Protecting Children, Strengthening Families, Changing Lives.

Brevard Family Partnership
A Community Based Care Agency
2301 Eau Gallie Blvd. Suite 4
Melbourne, FL 32935
(321)752-4650
(321)752-3188
www.brevardfp.org

Brevard Family Partnership 2012 Legislative Priorities

Brevard Family Partnership as the Community Based Care Lead Agency in Brevard County respectfully requests consideration of the following issues that impact the clients entrusted to our care and the ability to provide the necessary services to prevent child abuse and neglect.

SB 2146 - Child Welfare CBC Conforming Bill – Equity

Modify language and equity allocation formula in SB 2146 which has negatively impacted several local child Welfare systems of care and the Community Based Care Agencies due to the methodology used to calculate “equity” in funding.

Permit Multiple Contract Renewals

The current re-procurement practice is a costly and inefficient use of taxpayers’ dollars. High-performing, community supported Community Based Care ***child welfare lead agencies should be exempt from the current limit of one contract renewal and be afforded opportunity for multiple renewals***, thus maintaining the stability and continuity of care for those served. There are substantial investments of money, time and staff resources incurred by lead agencies to bid on their existing contracts without any evidence of benefit in doing so. This practice also diverts the lead agency’s attention away from its mission of serving Florida’s most vulnerable children, potentially jeopardizing the continuity of care of the children served. In the fifteen years since inception of the CBC initiative no high-performing, community-supported lead agency has ever lost its contract in the process.

Independent Living for Former Foster Youth

BFP supports legislation that will adhere to the requirements of the Fostering Connections Act to draw down federal funds to improve the IL Program. Legislation needs to outline programmatic options to better support youth in a more cost effective manner. BFP supports the extension of foster care to age 21. However, it opposes language that would revert Independent Living programs and services to back to the DCF. IL youth are best served by local agencies that can provide personalized programs and services, based on youths’ best interests and unique needs. Language should include services that can be provided in a timely and successful manner – focused on outcomes.

Child Welfare Prepaid Mental Health Plan (CWPMHP) and Behavioral Health Services (BHOS)

BFP strongly encourages the continuation of these initiatives, which sunsets in 2014. The Legislature's Medicaid Reform did not include the continuation of BHOS. This is a

cost-effective and highly successful model for children and youth in the child welfare diagnosed with mental health conditions. These programs are highly effective and provide the essential level of care to children in the dependency system, in the most efficient manner possible. The loss of these programs may result in delays, denials and barriers to service approvals resulting in children languishing in care if unable to access the appropriate care at the needed time.

Include and Require the Reporting of Children Receiving Diversion Services using Child Welfare funding to be included in the Census of Children Served in the Dependency System.

All children receiving case management services whether through diversion efforts or dependency should be tracked and reported in the census of children served. If child welfare funding is being appropriated to serve at risk children and families it is imperative all children are accounted for and reported in Fsn. Particularly since the advent of SB2146 and the equity allocation methodology determines funding based on a proportion of children served.

Legal Status of Case Management

While carrying full responsibility for the safety and well being of children served in the dependency system, currently child welfare case managers have no legal standing and are therefore considered witnesses rather than a party to the case. Legislative changes are required to allow the case manager who is pivotal to the success of the case in terms of safety, permanency and well-being to have a voice and standing in the courtroom and throughout the legal process. BFP strongly recommends that lead agencies be afforded party status in chapter 39 proceedings. Under the model of representation employed by CLS, the attorneys appear on behalf of the State of Florida. Currently the CBC agencies that are responsible for providing services and monitoring the progress of the families have no voice in the court process.

Background Screening

The Governor vetoed the recent legislation in Florida statute 435 exempting certain categories from having to be background screened. This is proving costly and creating unnecessary delays in the hiring process of many licensed professionals like, Doctor's, Registered Nurses etc. It has also created difficulties in getting these professional groups to volunteer their services to children's groups.