



**Brevard Family Partnership**  
A Community Based Care Agency  
760 North Drive Suite E  
Melbourne, FL 32934  
(321)752-4650  
(321)752-3188  
[www.brevardfp.org](http://www.brevardfp.org)

Dear Governor-elect Scott and Transition Team Members;

In 1998 the state legislature mandated the **privatization of child welfare** and related services through the institution of the “community based” initiative. It was the intent of the Legislature to localize the care and protection of Florida’s vulnerable children to more effectively address the needs of each community’s citizens and to forge public-private partnerships and community ownership of its children.

Since that time, the **privatization** of child welfare has demonstrated **impressive outcomes** for Florida’s children and families, both in terms of improved quality of care and improved fiscal management. The result: more children living in less restrictive and less expensive settings, with more money available for the prevention of child abuse and achievement of permanency through adoption.

Caseworker retention has greatly improved, resulting in improved continuity of care for children and families, and caseloads have decreased substantially, enabling CBC agencies to better attend to and care for the needs of the children entrusted to their care. More children have been returned to their home communities and are remaining in their local schools. Aggressive, front-end prevention and diversion efforts have resulted in improved child safety and the reduction of children entering the system.

Since the transition to privatization of child welfare in 2004, Brevard Family Partnership (BFP) has ranked among the top performing Lead Agencies in the state. Through our strong community partnerships, we have successfully transformed the child welfare system into a community-driven system of care. Of note, BFP has:

- Reduced out of home care by **42%** percent keeping children safely in their homes;
- Reduced out of home care costs by reinvesting funding into front-end prevention and diversion efforts that, to date has diverted over **8,000** children from entering the child welfare system.
- Improved child safety by more than **50%** by reaching families before the stressors they experience reach the threshold of abuse and neglect.
- Exceeded annual adoption targets and Federal placement stability targets.
- Maintained case worker **caseloads below a ratio of 1:15** as charged by the local community, and
- Maintains a case worker **vacancy rate below 4 %** which directly impacts the quality of care of children served.
- Achieved **National accreditation** status through the National Council on Accreditation (COA).
- Has forged a strong partnership with the community and provider agencies resulting in a seamless system of care for Brevard’s children.

Given our success in privatization, BFP would like to propose the following items for your consideration (each of these items is expanded on the following page):

- 1) Amend current statutory language as outlined under Chapter 409.1671 and Chapter 287.057 to allow for multiple contract renewal terms of high performing Lead agencies that are supported by their local communities. (Exhibit 1)
- 2) Consider the development of the “Office of Innovations and System Transformation” within the Governor’s Office to serve as a clearinghouse to promote and replicate sustainable system transformation across the state. (Exhibit 2)
- 3) Pilot an integrated-blended-funding program for cross-system children and youth involved in multiple state systems using a “no wrong door” approach to care for Florida’s most complex children. (Exhibit 3)

Please feel free to contact BFP for more information regarding the proposals.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Patricia Nellius, CEO

Mr. William Ryder, Board Chair

### **Exhibit 1**

Consider amending the current statutory language as outlined under Chapter 409.1671 and Chapter 287.057 to allow for multiple contract renewal terms of high performing Lead agencies that are supported by their local communities. The current re-procurement practice is a costly and inefficient use of taxpayers' dollars, with no clear rationale to support this practice. From a cost benefit analysis perspective there are substantial costs incurred by Lead Agencies to bid on their existing contracts without evidence of benefit given that only one lead agency has ever lost their contract in 15 years. Additionally this practice requires an extraordinary amount of time and staff resources that diverts the Lead Child Welfare agency's attention away from its mission of serving the vulnerable children of Florida, potentially jeopardizing the continuity of care of the children served.

### **Exhibit 2**

Consider the development of the "Office of Innovations and System Transformation" within the Governor's Office to serve as a clearinghouse to promote and replicate sustainable system transformation across the state. Florida's Community Based Care initiative is among the most innovative and progressive in the nation; the impressive outcomes are leading the way in system changes across the U.S. Yet, there is little published about the milestones, few data-validation projects occurring, and a lack of public awareness. Additionally, there is no sustainable replication methodology or clearinghouse available to track, evaluate, and promote best and evidence-based practices across the state. The newly proposed Community Based Juvenile Justice Project (CBJJ) is an example that illustrates the breadth and depth of innovation and thought leadership existing within our state. With the extent of expertise and innovation existing across the state of Florida it would be highly beneficial to create a clearinghouse in the Governor's office to serve as the hub for innovative concepts and program designs that could not only be implemented within the state to create greater efficiencies, but also be evaluated and published, bringing recognition to Florida as a state of excellence in the care of its children and families.

### **Exhibit 3**

Pilot an integrated, blended-funding program model for cross-system children and youth using a "no wrong door" approach to care for the state's most complex and vulnerable children and youth involved in multiple state systems (e.g., Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Department of Children and Families, Department of Education, and Department of Juvenile Justice). Conduct a three-year cost analysis of the cross-system children served through APD, SAMH, DCF, DOE, and DJJ to ascertain the current costs associated with the care of the children and youth being served across systems. This approach should be cost neutral, using existing funding already being appropriated to the care of the identified children, while delivering services in a more seamless, efficient, and effective manner, thus eliminating duplication and delays in service delivery, and reducing multiple and fragmented planning processes. Once completed, it is proposed that a pilot site/s be identified to launch and test an integrated, blended-funding program using a "no wrong door" approach to care. The new system should encompass the pooling of resources, resulting in a single point of contact to coordinate services in one, well-coordinated plan of care for children with complex needs. The proposed model would enable each community to manage the care of its cross-system children through an integrated, interagency management team system comprised of each participating agencies' leadership. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of care of Florida's children while dosing so efficiently and effectively.