

Agenda for Abraham Bergman, M.D. and Paul DiLorenzo (Casey  
Foundation) visit to Tallahassee  
February 5, 2009

**Reaching the Next Horizon**

**Improving Health and Mental Health Outcomes for Children and Young Adults  
In or At-Risk for Involvement in Florida's Foster Care System**

**Participating Agencies**

Department of Children and Families, Department of Health, Children's Medical  
Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Agency for Health Care Administration,  
Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Education, Judiciary

**Tallahassee, Florida**

February 5, 2009

Betty Easley Center,

Room 152

The Capital Circle Office Complex

**Introduction**

Children come into the foster care system with multiple challenging health and mental health conditions. Sixty-percent (60%) have medical and/or dental problems, 60% developmental delays, 85% mental health concerns and 45% have educational deficiencies. Almost all children experience some degree of an adjustment disorder upon entry into the system. With respect to mental health, if access to mental health services is provided, a significant number of children receive formal diagnoses of attachment and conduct disorders (30-52%), oppositional defiant disorder (17-35%), ADHD/ADD (18-32%), anxiety disorders (8-20%), and depression (3-5%).

Health and mental health providers are severely challenged in their efforts to care for these children. Though all children entering foster care are eligible for Medicaid, there are delays in activating Medicaid coverage, inadequate reimbursement for services, a lack of practitioners willing to accept Medicaid and challenges related to dealing with Medicaid managed care. The system itself establishes barriers related to communication among system stakeholders, fragmented care coordination and a lack of clarity about the role of foster parents versus those of caseworkers.

Of particular importance to health providers, health information is often lacking due to the unavailability of birth parents, lack of knowledge of caregivers and even lack of appropriate consents for information sharing and treatment. This often is complicated by a system that results in multiple placements, and subsequently care of children by multiple providers. Once in the system children have few advocates and are faced with

confidentiality and consent issues. Also, many children are homeless and live in otherwise transient families.

Given these challenges, specialized, holistic and culturally relevant physical, mental and behavioral health services that include the continuum of care from prevention through screening, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation are required to effect the outcomes we all seek for children in or at-risk for involvement in the foster care system. This will require the development of systems-of-care that recognize and respond to the high prevalence of both physical, mental health, behavioral and developmental issues in these children.

Toward this end, we thank you for participating in an initial meeting to discuss the opportunity to build a system of health and mental health care for children in or at-risk for entry into the child welfare/foster care system. The success of this endeavor will be measured in the currency of improved health and mental health for these children, fewer children in foster care, fewer children and young adults entering into the juvenile justice system, an increased number of adoptions, better outcomes and fewer placements for children in the system, improved outcomes post transition, and improved efficiencies and decreased costs.

## **Agenda**

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|----------------------|---|---|
| <b>9:00 – 9:15</b>   | <b>Welcome and Introductions</b><br>Joseph Chiaro, M.D.<br>Deputy Secretary of Health<br>Children’s Medical Services    | To Be Determined<br><hr/> Department of Children and Families |
| <b>9:15 – 9:30</b>   | <b>Special Needs of Children in Foster Care</b><br>Jeff Goldhagen, M.D.<br>University of Florida-Jacksonville           |   |
| <b>9:30 – 9:45</b>   | <b>State of Foster Care in Florida</b><br>Department of Children and Families   |   |
| <b>9:45 – 10:30</b>  | <b>National Perspectives on Health and Mental Health of Children in the Foster Care System</b><br>Abraham Bergman, M.D. |   |
| <b>10:30 – 10:45</b> | <b>Break</b>  |   |
| <b>10:45 – 11:00</b> | <b>Casey Foundation’s Work in Florida</b><br>Paul DiLorenzo<br>Casey Foundation   |   |
| <b>11:00 – 12:00</b> | <b>Dialog and Discussion: Strategic Directions for Florida</b>  |   |

Moderators: Joseph Chiaro, M.D., CMS  
TBD DCF

### **Thursday Afternoon Schedule**

**12:00 – 1:00**      **Lunch**

**1:00 – 3:00**      **Joint Meeting: Developing a Strategic Vision**  
DCF, CMS, DOH, JJ, AHCA, APD, DOE  
Leadership Group  
Children's Medical Services Office

**3:00**              **Depart for the Airport**