

## DCF E-Newsletter



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



## MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to share with you the launch of our new DCF E-newsletter. The Department created this newsletter in an effort to increase our communication and help us keep all of our internal and external stakeholders better informed about our work in protecting New Jersey's children and strengthening our most vulnerable families.

The DCF E-newsletter will be distributed on a quarterly basis and will provide you with updates on the many strides being made across all of our divisions. The DCF E-newsletter also will provide you with information around some of our initiatives and upcoming events. Of course, I still plan to send out my regular DCF Commissioner updates directly to you when the need arises.

And while we are on the subject of "communicating" I would like to inform you of where we are with the Department's Strategic Planning Process. As you may recall, earlier this summer I shared with you that DCF was embarking on a new project: a Strategic Planning Process. The purpose of the Strategic Planning Process is to help chart DCF's path over the next few years and assist us in meeting our goals. Clarus Consulting Group is the organization spearheading the project which is already underway.

The Strategic Planning Process will consist of six different phases until completion. I am pleased to share that we have recently completed the "data collection phase." This phase consisted of interviews, on-line surveys, and community conversations where a wide range of both internal and external stakeholders were invited to participate. I must say that the participation of each individual cannot be underscored enough - as each one of us has a stake in the overall process.

I want to personally thank everyone who participated and helped us make this important phase a successful one.

While we are only in the initial stages of our Strategic Planning Process, we know there is much more to do. As we move forward in the process, I will be sure to keep you informed of our progress. In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about Clarus Consulting Group I invite you to visit their web site at [www.clarugroup.net](http://www.clarugroup.net)

Best Regards,

Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W.  
Commissioner

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

ALLISON BLAKE, PH.D., L.S.W.  
Commissioner

## Upcoming Events

- October 13, 2011  
*Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Coalition for Battered Women Rutgers University*
- October 21, 2011  
*New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect Conference - Opening Doors: Partnerships for Prevention and Healing*
- October 26, 2011  
*DCBHS Annual Conference on Children's Mental Health*
- October 26, 2011  
*RX for NJ Commissioner's Forum sponsored by the Health Care Institute of New Jersey*
- November 19, 2011  
*National Adoption Day*

[www.nj.gov/dcf](http://www.nj.gov/dcf)

## DCF E-Newsletter

### Office of Advocacy Assists Families

The Office of Advocacy (OOA), established in September 2010, serves as a central point of communication for constituents and the Department. It offers information and resources, addresses problems and provides advocacy services when needed to all who request this assistance. Through its interaction with governmental leaders and agencies, community partners, families receiving services and the public at large, the OOA, in conjunction with the DCF Office of Continuous Quality Improvement, will gather feedback and identify issues and trends that will help DCF and its partner agencies work in collaboration to improve services to children and families.

With a total of eight staff, the OOA handled over 4,000 requests for assistance in the first 12 months of operation. Requests for assistance were received from state and federal legislators, community stakeholders, the Governor's Office of Constituent Relations and the public at large regarding families involved with DCF.

The Office of Advocacy can be reached by calling the toll free number 1-877-543-7864, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or by emailing [askdcf@dcf.state.nj.us](mailto:askdcf@dcf.state.nj.us). Brochures may be ordered through DCF's website and clicking on the publications link – [www.nj.gov/dcf](http://www.nj.gov/dcf).



### Child Behavioral Health System of Care Marks 10 Years

2011 marks the 10 year anniversary of the implementation of New Jersey's statewide Child Behavioral Health System of Care. Since its implementation, the system of care has effected significant change in the delivery of emotional and behavioral health care to children, youth, young adults, and their families. The overall percentage of children receiving residential care has decreased from nearly 35% in 2002 to around 10% presently as more and more community alternatives are made available. There has also been a significant reduction from 327 in 2006 to less than 10 presently in the number of children receiving residential treatment in out-of-state programs. This success is attributed to our ability to develop a wide array of community-based residential treatment programs to meet the needs of New Jersey children. In addition, as of 2010, approximately 60% of newly enrolled children were younger than 14 compared to only 40% of newly enrolled children in 2003, indicating a system of care that is becoming more and more preventative. While there is still more work to be done to continue to develop and improve the system, New Jersey should be proud of its children's behavioral health system of care, the most comprehensive one of its kind in the country.

For more data concerning the system of care and the children it serves, please follow the link to DCF data on the DCF Web site at [www.nj.gov/dcf](http://www.nj.gov/dcf). For questions about or to access services for children and youth, call the 24-hour, toll-free Access Line at 1-877-652-7624.

## DCF E-Newsletter

### National Adoption Day

Each November for the past 10 years, DYFS has joined with many New Jersey courts to celebrate National Adoption Day. Since 2000, more than 30,000 children nationally have had their adoptions finalized on National Adoption Day. During the various Adoption Day events held last November, New Jersey alone finalized approximately 225 adoptions.

By taking part in National Adoption Day events, DYFS is able to bring much needed attention to and raise awareness of the many waiting children in foster care who are eligible and waiting for adoption. There are children of every age throughout the state who are available for adoption. These children are in need of a forever family because they were not able to be safely reunited with their parents. Many of these children live in foster and group homes, but all of these children are in need of a loving, caring, permanent home.

While the number of children in foster care has significantly decreased over the past number of years, the rate of adoptions has remained high. On average, children wait in foster care for just under three years before securing a permanent home. This is part of our success story. However, for siblings, children with special needs and adolescents, the wait can be longer. We need your help in urging more families

to open their hearts and homes by becoming an adoptive parent to New Jersey's waiting children.



DYFS will again take part in this year's National Adoption Day with events being scheduled throughout the month of November in the various counties. The largest event in New Jersey will once again be held in Essex County on Saturday, November 19, 2011.



### DPCP Helps Strengthen Communities

The Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships (DPCP) is committed to helping communities keep children safe and supporting family success. As a building block in that work, the division staff met together through the spring and summer to draft a revised strategic plan that will inform and direct the activities of its four offices: Early Childhood Services, School-Linked Services, Family Support Services and Domestic Violence Services.

The foundation of the plan is to focus on sustaining and building networks of family and community support, promoting proven and effective programs and services, and educating the public and policy-makers while working in partnership to prevent child abuse and neglect.

In an effort to keep in touch with the communities we serve, DPCP has a new e-mail address - [dpcp@dcf.state.nj.us](mailto:dpcp@dcf.state.nj.us) - where you can send suggestions and comments about how the division can better support children and families throughout the state.

## Improving Services for Adolescents

The Office of Adolescent Services (OAS) is finishing a strategic plan that identifies priorities for initiatives and services regarding adolescents and young adults. This planning process involved DCF staff and external stakeholders including other state department staff, provider staff, parents, and youth. OAS is taking a critical look at services for adolescents and young adults to ensure best practice, quality of services, and positive outcomes. This analysis of services will focus on identifying and developing necessary partnerships within the public and private sectors to increase adequacy, accessibility, and appropriateness of resources for adolescents and young adults in New Jersey.



## Commissioner Allison Blake Praises Artistic Talents of Trenton Young People Participating in DCF Funded Program

The Department of Children and Families' Commissioner Allison Blake, along with Isles and Where Peace Lives, recently recognized a group of adolescents involved in the Isles YouthBuild Extended Evening Program during an unveiling of a mural they created temporarily being displayed in the lobby of the Mary G. Roebling Building in Trenton.

Funded by DCF, the Isles YouthBuild Extended Evening Program is designed to keep Trenton youth off the streets during high-risk evening hours. Young people receive academic assistance, life skills development, and job skills development, among other services.



The mural was created in collaboration with Where Peace Lives, a non-profit organization based in Red Bank, with a mission of promoting peace around the world. The organization implemented the International Peace Mural Exchange program to provide young people an opportunity to create and exchange murals depicting peace and to teach them to build bridges of cultural understanding and mutual respect through art and media projects.



The mural which represents topics such as "what peace means to me" and depicts their life stories will ultimately be exchanged with a mural painted by other young people in a similar community overseas.



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### DCBHS Medicaid Training

The Division of Child Behavioral Health Services (DCBHS) conducted a training session at Quakerbridge Plaza on August 25, 2011, designed specifically to support DCBHS Out-Of-Home service providers with critical Medicaid billing and eligibility information. The training was a refresher for some and provided an opportunity for Out-of-Home (OOH) service providers to hear directly from key individuals and agencies involved in the authorization, eligibility and billing processes. A majority of the OOH providers were able to attend.

Presenters were Molina Medicaid Solutions, PerformCare (CSA), and Constance Thomas of DCBHS who graciously lent their time and expertise to assure that an effective and meaningful training was provided as part of the Department's ongoing support to the business operations of our community stakeholders. Ruby Goyal-Carkeek, Fiscal Manager for DCBHS, coordinated and facilitated the event.

Understanding Medicaid billing, eligibility and authorization processes is critical to increase billing efficiencies for the provider. Continuing collaboration and communication with system partners were emphasized at the training as integral parts of facilitating eligibility and prompt reimbursement for services rendered.

DCF looks forward to continuing this relationship. Many providers approached staff following the training to express their appreciation as well as to provide some critical feedback such as, "the partnership between your team and providers really does work" and "...learned a lot and gained a lot of helpful resources that I didn't know existed."

### Regulations Update

As part of DCF's ongoing efforts to ensure that regulations under its purview are up to date and responsive to changes in the regulated fields, the process is underway of revising and updating N.J.A.C. 10:122, the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers, and N.J.A.C. 10:191, which governs Children's Partial Care Programs.

Proposed revisions to the Children's Partial Care regulation would allow Advanced Practice Nurses to perform many day to day functions that are currently done by psychiatrists, and eliminate the requirement that program psychiatrists have two years experience working with youth.

Revisions to the Child Care Center requirements aim to ensure that New Jersey's child care centers remain among the best in the nation. Included are measures that would strengthen safety and physical facility requirements and address childhood obesity.

Before revisions take effect, final proposals will be published in the New Jersey Register and made available for public comment.

In other regulatory news, the revised Manual of Requirements for Adoption Agencies, N.J.A.C. 10:121A, will take effect upon its publication in the New Jersey Register on October 3, 2011. Among the updates is a provision formalizing a 2009 statutory requirement for criminal history and child abuse record background checks for staff members working for adoption agencies.

### A Sample of Upcoming DCF Training Academy Courses

- Family Dynamics in Addiction
- Attachment Disorders
- Assessing older adults as caregivers
- Understanding Gender Identity
- Gang Identification
- Infant Trauma
- Mental Health Screening Tool
- Post Partum Depression (New)
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (New)
- Making Visits matter with Developmentally Delayed Children (New)
- Human Trafficking (New)
- Special Education Law (New)



## Thank You to Our Partners

### First Lady Mary Pat Christie and DCF Commissioner Allison Blake Applaud Advocacy of Bergen County Youth Advisory Board to Improve the Lives of their Peers

During an event at Children's Aid and Family Services in Paramus this summer, First Lady Mary Pat Christie and DCF Commissioner Allison Blake recognized a group of young people who have been part of New Jersey's child welfare system, for their advocacy to improve the lives of other adolescents, and for inspiring Walmart to donate 7,000 wheeled duffel bags to be given to children to use when they are removed from the home, placed in foster care or are moved between placements. As a result of a petition presented by members of the Bergen County Youth Advisory Board, DYFS also communicated with staff that the use of garbage bags is never appropriate to move a child's personal belongings. The Bergen County Youth Advisory Board is one of 12 boards throughout the state. Through the boards, teens and young adults have an opportunity to provide input and feedback on programming and policy to DYFS management and staff. The forum strives to empower foster and homeless youth to successfully transition from being dependent on the child welfare system to being self-sufficient and responsible adults.



*First Lady Mary Pat Christie and DCF Commissioner Blake thank youth.*

### News Flash

Thanks to a generous grant provided by Verizon Foundation, the 2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline -1-888-222-2228 - recently expanded its service to Spanish-language callers. The 2NDFLOOR helpline is New Jersey's only 24/7 statewide helpline to assist youth dealing with life's daily challenges. Callers are assisted by professional staff and trained volunteers. All calls are maintained anonymous and confidential except in life-threatening situations. The hotline is funded by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.