



Family Care Council Florida

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

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November 27, 2006

Dear Ms. McGarrity,

Family Care Council Florida (FCCF) held their bi monthly meeting in Orlando on November 18, 2006. The Foster Care Children issue was an agenda item and was discussed in great detailed. We are very concerned that Foster Care Children have been unilaterally moved to the top of the waitlist and feel this decision was made by the legislature without appropriate informational background.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) services and funding are always the payee of last resort. The children in foster care have a rich array of supports that are obviously not being properly used or this funding source would not have been tapped. Medicaid has really good services for children especially under EPSDT. These children have access to Durable Medical Equipment, all therapies, medical doctors and any medically necessary health care service, even if the service is not available under the State's Medicaid plan to the rest of the Medicaid population. These children are in school and the school has responsibility to meet the needs of these children, including behavior therapies. Then of course they have the foster care system itself. Is the Medicaid program being looked at as the payer of last resort?

We would hate to think that parents would select to have their child in foster care just to receive the Medicaid Waiver. Opening this door to funding by the Foster Care system will encourage families, desperate for APD services, to use the Foster Care system. Parents could very well look at putting the child in foster care as a way to get waiver services for their child

The mission of the Family Care Council Florida is to advocate, educate, and empower individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, partnering with the Department, to bring quality services to individuals for dignity and choice.

FCCF does not dispute the fact that the children in foster care with

Sadly, there are 14,000 individuals on the APD wait list receiving no services. There are individuals that have been on the waitlist for several years that are in their 50's and 60's and beyond whose family have cared for them all these years with no assistance from the developmental disability program and now because of aging the parents need some support. However these families have been pushed down on the waitlist because of the prioritizing of children in foster care and their wait time has been extended and FCCF finds this very troublesome.

FCCF does not dispute the fact that the children in foster care with developmental disabilities have the right to receive services through the HCBW or the FSLW as is appropriate. FCCF does have concerns with the entire list of Foster Care Children with developmental disabilities being placed at the top of the waitlist.

FCCF does not believe that any group of individual based on disability, living situation, age or what have should be given priority over everyone else on the waitlist. If a child in Foster Care is in crisis there is a process for receiving Crisis consideration.

FCCF understands this legislation was passed without the expertise or assistance from the professionals involved. Anything of this magnitude should not be pushed through the legislature without open dialogue.

Thank you for allowing us to express our concerns.

Sincerely,

Patty Houghland
FCCF Chair