

**Joint Subcommittee Studying the  
Comprehensive Services Program for At-Risk  
Youth and Families  
SJR96(2006)**

The second meeting of the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Comprehensive Services Program for At-Risk Youth and Families was held on October 9, 2007 at the Elk Hill Farm, Goochland, Virginia. Following opening remarks by Chairman Sen. Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., a brief review of the joint subcommittee's activities during the 2006 and 2007 interims, and a welcome and introduction from Mr. Mike Farley, Executive Director of Elk Hill Farm, the joint subcommittee received presentations.

**For Keeps Initiative**

First Lady of Virginia Anne Holton presented information on her For Keeps initiative, focused on achieving permanency for older foster children. She began by describing the For Keeps Initiative's partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's consulting group, and offered data, gathered and analyzed by the Foundation, on Virginia's permanency efforts and the Commonwealth's standing in relation to other states in the area of permanency placement for foster children. The First Lady then described a number of factors limiting the Commonwealth's ability to establish permanent placements for foster children, and identified several actions that could be taken to address these problems, including working to identify foster families, increasing financial assistance to foster families, and providing other supports to foster families.

**Review of the Comprehensive Services Program and Update on Recent Activities**

Ms. Kim McGaughey of the Office of Comprehensive Services gave a brief presentation on the intent and purpose of the Comprehensive Services Program and recent activities and developments that have affected the Comprehensive Services program. Ms. McGaughey noted that CSA expenditures have continued to increase as the number of children served through the CSA and the number of children in restrictive residential and special educational private day placements have increased. Ms. McGaughey also noted that CSA costs are no longer reimbursed by the federal government, due to changes in Medicaid brought about by the Federal Deficit Reduction Act and decreased eligibility for federal Title IV-E funds. She then highlighted recent efforts to shift from a categorical system of funding toward a system of care which includes collaborative teams, earlier assessment and intervention, pooling of resources, and a greater emphasis on family and community services, with the child served in the home or the community. This measure, Ms. McGaughey noted, would like control costs while providing a better quality of care for the Commonwealth's children. Ms. McGaughey also discussed development of child and family outcome tracking methods, actions to revise the CSA data set to ensure better data, and efforts to reduce the number of youth in residential and special educational day placements, reduce the length of stay in the placements and increase the use of community services through data analysis and incentives.

## **Status of Mental Health Initiatives in Virginia**

Ms. Heidi Dix of the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources gave a brief presentation on efforts within the agencies of the Health and Human Resources Secretariat to address children's mental health requirements, and assured the joint subcommittee that the Office of the Secretary will continue to work to address issues related to children's mental health.

## **Discussion of Preliminary Recommendations**

Following presentations, the joint subcommittee decided to review preliminary recommendations for the 2008 General Assembly Session at the third meeting of the joint subcommittee.

## **Next Meeting**

The third meeting of the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Comprehensive Services Program for At-Risk Youth and Families will be held in Richmond, Virginia, date and time to be announced.