



Governor's Office for Children and Families

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Governor's Office for Children and Families (GOCF)- **A System of Care Approach to Supporting Georgia's Communities**

The Governor's Office for Children and Families (GOCF) was developed to ensure effective coordination and communication between providers of prevention and early intervention services for families. Through a community-based continuum of services, the agency offers prevention and intervention targeted to different populations and phases of the family cycle- the general population, at-risk families, and families in the child welfare and juvenile justice system. GOCF is working to build capacity in communities to ensure sustainability of programs and strengthen the use of needs assessment and evaluation tools to ensure that we are using Georgia's child welfare resources- funding, policy, and personnel- in a way that is properly targeted, consistent, and effective.

The Caring Communities System of Care approach incorporates a number of important, guiding core values and principles for practice, service delivery, and community engagement. This approach is:

Strengths-based, outcome-focused
Comprehensive, community-driven
Coordination at both the system and service delivery levels
Involvement of family and youth as full partners
Early identification and intervention

| <i>FROM</i> | <i>TO</i> |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Fragmented service delivery | Continuum of services to address the "whole child" |
| Centralized authority | Community-based ownership |
| Reactive, crisis-oriented approach | Focus on prevention/early intervention |
| Funding tied to programs | Funding tied to populations |

From *Building Systems of Care, A Primer*, Published by the Human Service Collaborative for the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health Center for Child Health and Mental Health Policy, Georgetown University Child Development Center.

For more information on the Governor's Office for Children and Families, visit
www.children.georgia.gov.

Children's Mental Health Observations from GOCF

1. Georgia needs a coordinated system of care to serve our most at-risk children and youth.
 - Need local systems of care (for target population in most need, KidsNet Georgia, or LIPTs) that are supported by a state level policy oversight body.
 - Encourage communities to consider the free regional system of care trainings and grant opportunities that GOCF will offer again in early 2009

2. Must ensure that as we promote this increase in community-based care, we ensure our budget and policy decisions do not destabilize the work.
 - Communities must truly integrate service delivery, not simply collaborate.
 - Health and Human Services Agency Head Alliance- recommendation of the DHR reorganization to better coordinate health and human service delivery agencies;
 - Share input in crafting rules and regulations, legislative and budget proposals and shifting budget priorities with existing funds to help support and meet the goals of the alliance
 - Ensure “no wrong door” entry mechanisms for those seeking health and human services
 - Align budget proposals to ensure clients are being appropriately served across agencies and budgets
 - Coordinate with other policy collaboratives on common initiatives
 - Behavioral Health Coordinating Council will also coordinate mental health policies to better serve customers with mental health or substance abuse needs
 - Implement and maintain the continuity of care across agencies
 - Coordinate services and resources
 - Identify opportunities for improvement in the delivery and treatment of mental and addictive diseases¹

¹ State of Georgia Health and Human Services Task Force Interim Report, August 26, 2008.