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Interagency initiative identifies “core” strategies to prevent and reduce use of coercive behavior management techniques

In response to growing concern about restraint and seclusion use in child-serving settings, the Commonwealth has organized a cross-secretariat effort to reduce and prevent their use: the Massachusetts Interagency Restraint and Seclusion Prevention Initiative. The Initiative brings together leaders from the state Departments of Children and Families (DCF), Mental Health (DMH), Youth Services (DYS), Early Education and Care (EEC), Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) and Developmental Services (DDS) to work in partnership with parents, youth, providers, schools, community advocates and the Office of the Child Advocate to focus on preventing and reducing the use of behavior restrictions that can be re-traumatizing.

A key element of the Initiative is encouraging state agency partners, schools and residential service providers to develop and implement organizational culture/practice change efforts to reduce and prevent the use of restraint and seclusion that are aligned with and include the following Six Core Strategies[®]:

- 1. Leadership Toward Organizational Change:** To reduce and prevent the use of restraint and seclusion by defining and articulating a mission, philosophy of care, guiding values, and assuring the development of a reduction plan and follow through of plan implementation.
- 2. Use Data to Inform Practices:** To reduce and prevent the use of restraint and seclusion by using data in an empirical, non-punitive, manner. This includes identifying “baseline” data for each facility or program, setting improvement goals and comparatively monitoring over time at all levels of the system.

- 3. Workforce Development:** To create a treatment environment whose policy, procedures, and practices are grounded in and directed by a thorough understanding of the neurological, biological, psychological and social effects of trauma and violence on humans.
- 4. Use Restraint and Seclusion Prevention Tools:** To reduce and prevent the use of restraint and seclusion through the use of a variety of tools and strategies which are individualized and integrated into each consumer’s treatment/care plan.
- 5. Actively Recruit and Include Families and Youth:** This strategy involves the full and formal inclusion of consumers, children, families and external advocates in various roles and at all levels in the organization to assist in the reduction and prevention of restraint and seclusion.
- 6. Make Debriefing Rigorous:** To reduce and prevent the use of restraint and seclusion through knowledge gained from a rigorous analysis of events and use this knowledge to inform policy, procedures, and practices to avoid repeats in the future.

Excerpted from: Huckhorn, Kevin Ann, “Six Core Strategies to Reduce the Use of Seclusion and Restraint Planning Tool,” October 2005. The development of the Six Core Strategies model was funded by the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and created by National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), Office of Technical Assistance.

More information about the Massachusetts Interagency Restraint and Seclusion Prevention Initiative can be found on the **Initiatives** page of the DCF website (www.mass.gov/dcf) or on the Department of Mental Health (DMH) website (www.mass.gov/dmh). [\[top\]](#)

DCF restructures field leadership

As a result of a \$4.8 million reduction in the Department's administrative account for FY'2011, the Department needed to reduce our spending in personnel as well as non-personnel. The Department has reduced non-personnel spending by \$2.2 million, and \$2.6 million in personnel costs. To achieve a reduction of this magnitude, on top of reductions we experienced over the past few years in administrative staffing, we must reform our organizational field management structure.

After reviewing a number of different alternatives that would ensure the least disruption to families and clinical staff, we designed a model that maintains clinical integrity, achieves cost efficiency, positions the agency for FY'2012 and can be sustained over time.

The features of the new field management model include:

- Maintaining 29 area offices;
- Restructuring regional boundaries, and reducing the number of regions from six to four; and
- Creating 15 Area Management Teams to oversee the 29 area offices.

For more information and a complete organizational chart, please visit mass.gov/dcf and click on 'DCF Field Management Restructure' under the Initiatives section. [[top](#)]

New England Foster Parent Conference a success in Massachusetts

The 2010 New England Foster Care Conference was held in Sturbridge, MA on October 1, 2, and 3, 2010. The theme of the 2010 conference was *Are We There Yet? Following the Road to Permanency*. The conference began on Friday, October 1 with two training institutes for DCF foster parents and staff. The first institute was led by Gerald P. Mallon, DSW and was entitled: *Unpacking the "No!" of Permanency for Youth*. The second institute was led by Bill Corbett, President and Founder of Cooperative Kids and was entitled: *No I Won't and You Can't Make Me! Handling Children's Power Struggles with Success*.

On Saturday, October 2, Linda T. Sanford, the keynote speaker, opened the day followed by the offering of twenty different workshops in three sessions throughout the day. Sunday, October 3 concluded the conference with breakfast and a speech featuring Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao.

The NEFCA conference was a great success that provided the opportunity for MA DCF staff and foster parents to interact, learn and meet with foster parents and staff from other New England states. [[top](#)]



DCF youth wins national contest sparked by First Lady's initiative

Congratulations, Pauline Lake! Pauline and a fellow classmate at Trinity College in Hartford, CT participated in an awards ceremony held at the White House on September 30 for winning one of two student prizes in a competition (part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative) designed to promote nutritious food choices and physical activity for children. After the awards ceremony, the two were given a tour of the White House and taken on a tour throughout the city of Washington, D.C.

Pauline, a double major in computer science and educational studies, called the chance to participate in the national competition "a very wonderful opportunity" and said the results were unexpected.

Along with the recognition of the award, the team took home \$10,000 from General Electric, some of which will go to the students, and the balance will be used to develop the product and make it available free of charge.

The following are additional excerpts taken from Trinity College's press release about the award:

The competition called *Apps For Healthy Kids*, included categories for tools and games. Trinity was the winning student team in the tool category. To see the "Work It Off!" application in action, visit: <http://vimeo.com/12987346>

Work it Off! is an open source tool for Android phones that demonstrates to children, in a fun and interactive way, the correlation between the calorie content of the food they eat and the calories that they burn. Using voice recognition, a child can say the name of a food, whereupon the number of calories it contains is displayed. The child can also find out what types of activities he or she can engage in to work off the calories.

The two students and their mentors journeyed to the nation's capital for the announcement of the contest winners, whose identities were kept under wraps until the ceremony in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building." [[top](#)]

ICPM: Looking back, looking forward

Implementation of DCF's new Integrated Casework Practice Model (ICPM), which is expected to be a multi-year process, officially began in July 2009. During the first year the focus has primarily been on practice change at the "front door," or the processes for screening, assigning and conducting a Child Protective Services (CPS) Response (e.g., an *Investigation or Initial Assessment*) to a report of abuse and/or neglect (a "51A" report). Over the course of the coming year, it is anticipated that ICPM implementation will include a focus on recommended practice changes to comprehensive assessment, service planning and case closing.

Over the long term, the multiple strategies and practice changes embedded in the ICPM, are designed to improve outcomes for children and families, by:

- Safely stabilizing families so that children can safely remain at home;
- Focusing on strengthening parenting capacities and helping families to connect to natural supports and resources in their own communities;
- Better engaging and empowering families in decision-making and planning for their present and future; and
- Reducing repeat maltreatment of children.

The ICPM is also expected to help more effectively target DCF resources, by:

- Focusing on the highest risk families; and
- Increasing the timeliness of access to DCF interventions and supports.

As DCF moves into **Year Two** of Implementation, we are taking some time to assess our progress-to-date and also look ahead to further strengthen our efforts. Over the next several months, DCF Area Offices will be engaged, along with their area boards, in a formal process to reflect on the successes, potential benefits and on-going challenges of implementing ICPM.

The purpose of this process is to identify: 1) what has been learned in the first year of ICPM implementation that can be helpful in moving forward; and 2) priorities and continued supports needed (e.g., training/coaching, etc.) going forward. The assessment process will be underway during the fall and early winter of 2010/2011 with the results to be used to help inform communication and implementation efforts – at the area, regional and state levels – in the coming year. [[top](#)]

2010 Rodman Ride for Kids supports children and youth in DCF care

Congratulations to the DCF riders and volunteers for joining the Kids Fund in The Ride For Kids! Saturday, September 25 was the 20th Annual Rodman Ride For Kids and the 7th year the DCF Kids Fund participated! A special highlight of the day was the eloquent singing of the national anthem by foster youth Sokah, age 16, who performed as the riders took off for the 50 mile and two 25 mile stretches. We are especially grateful to Sokah for her beautiful performance and inspiration!

The Kids Fund was honored to be one of the many charities to benefit from this wonderful annual fundraiser. The Kids Fund will receive a 10 percent match from the Ride organization on what we raise. So far, we have raised \$135,000 and have until mid-November to continueraising additional funds.

We want to thank the following staff for riding on our DCF Kids Fund team and volunteering to make the Ride day a successful one. Thanks for getting up early and staying late! Marty Kenney,

Anna Bulat, Jennifer Curran, Sarah Lee, Amy Nolan, Michael Burke and his wife, Joe Jewett (foster dad), Brian Labelle, Charles Callaway, Kelly Craven, Stuart Figueroa, Matthew Mitchell, Lisa Bacon, Rita Tully, Mary Ward, Donald Mitchell, Jacquelyn Vecchi, Heather Mullen, Alesia Johnson, Jared Bruun, Sharon Castellina, Roxbury Youthworks Executive Director Mia Alvarado, DCF Kids Fund Board member Abby Horan and her daughter Nicole. [[top](#)]

DCF Monthly Update

 MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
Children & Families
Supporting Children • Strengthening Families



What do you think about the DCF Monthly Update? Are there things you'd like to see? Please send your comments to:
dcfcommissioner@state.ma.us

Announcements and Upcoming Events

October 23

Walk for a child!

On Saturday, October 23 at the Plymouth Waterfront there will be a 5K called **Walk for a child** to benefit foster children who reside in the nineteen towns of Plymouth County. Donations will go directly to the DCF Kids Fund. For more information, please call: **774-454-7962**.

November 5

DCF to receive award

On Friday, November 5, DCF will be receiving the Department of Corrections' *Innovations in Public Safety Award* for the agency's commitment, dedication and tireless efforts to ensure incarcerated fathers stay connected and involved in their children's lives.

Commissioner McClain will be accepting the award at DOC's Beyond Excellence Awards Banquet to be held in Wrentham.

October 24



The Adoption Option

At Jordan's Furniture
50 Walkers Brook Drive, Reading, MA
Sunday, October 24, 2010
9 am to 11 am

Jordan's Furniture and Eliot Tatelman will host the Adoption Option statewide adoption party and recruitment event for waiting children, youth and sibling groups from foster care. The event will be held in Beantown at Jordan's Furniture Store, Reading, MA. Prospective adoptive parents at all stages of the adoption process will have the opportunity to learn more about foster care adoption; meet waiting children, youth and sibling groups ages 6 and older and their social workers; attend workshops on starting the adoption process; hear about post adoption services; and talk with experienced adoptive families and foster parents.

To learn more about the event or to volunteer, please contact Debbie Sullivan at: debor.sullivan@state.ma.us or at **617-748-2239**.

November 19

National Adoption Day
November 19, 2010
Save the Date to Celebrate!
Six courthouses across Massachusetts will celebrate National Adoption Day on Friday, November 19, 2010. On this special day many children will be adopted from foster care into loving families. Join the Fun!
★ Boston ★ Brockton ★ Hadley ★ Worcester ★ Salem ★ Springfield
Help us celebrate! For more information visit WWW.MAREINC.ORG

Save the Date to Celebrate National Adoption Day

Six courthouses across Massachusetts will celebrate National Adoption Day on **Friday, November 19, 2010**.

On this special day, many children will be adopted from foster care into loving families. Boston will be this year's highlighted media site. For details visit: www.mareinc.org

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