



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING WORKGROUP

Meeting. The [Children's Mental Health and Well-being Workgroup](#) met on Thursday, December 3, 2015, in the Supreme Court Chamber of the Statehouse. The Workgroup subcommittees met separately to discuss the components of the legislative report, which is to be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly for review by December 15, 2015. The Workgroup has been meeting since September 24, 2015.

Each group discussed integrating children's mental health and well-being needs into a systems-based approach that coordinates various specializations to create a system of care. Crisis response has been identified as the initial focus of the new framework.

Recommendations for Legislative Report. Each subcommittee chair asked members to highlight positive aspects of the draft report and provide recommendations. Several subcommittee members stated the background section of the report should provide national and/or state-level data, particularly regarding substance abuse, as there is a current need for thorough coordination of a crisis response in this area. It was also noted that the report should discuss the structure of the current well-being system and how the proposed plan differs. A Workgroup subcommittee member stated that the role of families in advocacy and support for children's well-being should be further emphasized and reiterated throughout the body of the document, as the family members of children receiving services should feel empowered by the framework and they can lend a significant level of expertise and support despite not having clinical training to address their child's needs.

To demonstrate the role of statewide implementation in the new framework, the Children's Mental Health subcommittee discussed the development of a 24-hour access hotline. The hotline will serve as a viable connection to services for clients and will also provide technical assistance to administrators and providers.

Each subcommittee highlighted the need for learning labs, or programs requesting participation in the infancy stage of the new program, to demonstrate the operating principles of the new system of care. The learning labs will receive matching funds to deliver services. An oversight committee will be appointed to review proposals and select organizations for participation, provide technical assistance, measure performance, and conduct future planning. Agencies requesting participation in learning labs must embody the guiding and operating principles from the legislative report, as demonstrated in the proposals submitted. The Children's Well-being subcommittee briefly discussed potentially serving as the designated oversight committee for children's well-being and developing smaller, specialized policy boards to assist with coordination. This subcommittee also discussed providing matching funds to each learning lab as an incentive for participation.

Next steps. The workgroup will reconvene for a brief conference call during the week of December 7, 2015, before submitting the final draft of the report for legislative review on December 15, 2015. Past meeting materials and minutes are available on the [Workgroup Webpage](#).

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