



November 7, 2008

From:

Stakeholders: Children, youth and families receiving or in need of Mental Health Supports.

TO:

**Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
For Commissioners 11-20-08 Meeting Question and Answer Agenda**

The Family & Youth Roundtable would like to acknowledge the work and dedication of the ***Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission*** in striving to provide excellence in mental health services. We applaud the diligent work that everyone has poured into the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). However, when one digs deep into each of the MHSA components and guidelines, it is evident that we have not entirely established guidelines that would realistically support the needs of children and their families. Now is a time when we can make a difference in the approach to services provided to children and their families. Funding for and focus on children have been and continue to be major barriers in providing Mental Health Supports for children, youth and their families. Children should not grow up in communities where having an illness prevents them from achieving their highest potential. Many childhood mental illnesses can be prevented and/or supported in order to not cause long-term damage; however, this will only happen when systems of support recognize there are fundamental cultural differences in providing children mental health services. The MHSA gives us the opportunity to finally work in concert with Adult Mental Health while giving support to a different system approach that would support a culturally relevant Children's Mental Health System.

The Roundtable believes that comprehensive, individualized and coordinated Mental Health System for young children, youth and their families can be achieved; if the MHSOAC begins by looking at every component and state initiative of MHSA. Ask questions such as:

What is the relevance to childhood development?

How does this support healthy transition into Adulthood?

Does this support the family's ability to care for the child?

Unfortunately, we will not be able to send a representative to the November 20th meeting; funding, daycare and transportation are a few of our barriers. However, please feel free to call our office if you have questions, comments or would like more information.

Respectfully,

Donna Ewing Marto, CEO

Family Partner

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