



Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Meeting July 25, 2013 Agency Highlights



Agency for Health Care Administration –

- The Agency for Health Care Administration has created a system of enhanced care coordination for medically complex and medically fragile children who currently reside in nursing facilities or receive personal duty-nursing services in their home. These enhanced care coordination efforts have created the following successes since the beginning of this year:
 - 29 children have been discharged from nursing facilities to their family, adoptive placements, group homes, or medical foster care;
 - 6 children being discharged after hospitalizations were discharged to their family homes instead of nursing facilities due to the care coordinator's assistance in coordinating private duty nursing and other services; and
 - 3 children were diverted from nursing facility placements and reside in medical foster care homes.
- The Agency for Health Care Administration just renewed our agreement with USF's Covering Kids and Families program to provide Florida KidCare outreach activities for another year. USF has created 19 coalitions around the state made up of local organizations (including Medicaid Area Offices) focused on effective outreach to get children enrolled in health insurance programs. In addition, the program was just awarded a two year, \$1 million grant aimed at increasing enrollment and retention in the Florida KidCare program, which includes Title XIX Medicaid and Title XXI in the State of Florida as part of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2009.
- Recently, the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health presented the Agency for Health Care Administration an award for its progressive policies related to infant mental health. With the help, support and progressive thinking of AHCA, Florida took the lead in the nation since 2000 to address the mental health needs of infants, young children and their families. Florida's Medicaid program through AHCA is still the only one in the country that specifically addresses this population's unique mental health needs.
- The number of dentists who will serve children in the Medicaid program has increased since the Prepaid Dental Health Program was implemented statewide. As of June 2013, there are approximately 2,000 fee-for-service dental providers (unduplicated count) and there are approximately 2,700 dental providers in the Prepaid Dental Health Program plan networks (unduplicated count).

Agency for Persons with Disabilities –

- The Agency for Persons with Disabilities will be offering waiver enrollment for 190 children in foster care this year who are scheduled to be adopted or reunified with their families. This is possible due to an additional \$36 million to provide waiver services to individuals on the APD waiting list for community services.
- Of the 754 other people who have also been offered APD waiver enrollment this year, 498 are children.

Department of Children and Families –

- 2013 will be remembered in Florida as a historic year for improving our foster care system and improving the lives of Floridians who need our help the most. These landmark changes would not have been possible without the dedication and work of countless child welfare professionals and advocates working closely together to focus on needed improvements to foster care in Florida, and successfully communicating those needs to our lawmakers.
- Let Kids Be Kids. Florida gained national attention this year with the "Let Kids be Kids" legislation which allows our dedicated foster parents to make reasonable and prudent parenting decisions for children in their care, just as they would for their own children. The new law allows foster parents to give foster children permission to do daily, age appropriate activities such as joining a school athletic team, getting a driver's license or going to the beach with friends.
- Foster Care Independent Living Redesign. On January 1st, 2014 we will usher in historic changes to foster care by allowing teens to remain in foster care until age 21 to complete high school, earn a GED, pursue post-secondary education or begin a career. The bill strengthens the role of foster parents, restructures the Road-to-Independence Program and empowers caregivers to provide high quality, nurturing parenting for



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children in foster care. As a result of this legislation, our teens will now have access to better opportunities, choices and support as they ease into adulthood.

- Electronic Benefit Transfer Cards. House Bill 701 prohibits the use of EBT cards at certain establishments such as liquor stores, adult entertainment sites and gaming facilities. This provision will help ensure that public benefits and taxpayer dollars are helping families who truly need them.
- Budget. Virtually all of the Governor's priorities from the DCF budget were funded. This will allow us to continue our mission of helping those most in need and transforming the agency into a world class social services organization. In this year's budget we received increases in funding for almost all of our service areas—\$4.16 million more for substance abuse and mental health services, \$54.7 million more that will go toward protecting our youngest Floridians, \$32 million more to implement efficiencies in the ACCESS program, and nearly \$5.1 million toward our new fraud fighting initiatives which will provide a significant return on investment. In addition, the budget supports the Guardian ad Litem program with \$3.8 million to increase volunteers to represent dependent children through court proceedings and \$323,000 to provide attorneys ad litem for dependent, disabled children in nursing homes.

Department of Education –

THE VISION

Florida will have an efficient world-class education system that engages and prepares all students to be globally competitive for college and careers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Florida students are our first priority.
2. Human capital is essential to success; therefore we must invest in our teachers and leaders.
3. The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) must set high expectations, stress accountability, and honor local control; in doing so, we will be a national model for state education agencies.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1. Ensure Florida students graduate college and/or career ready (CCR)
 - a. Create and promote a statewide culture of academic excellence, in which at least:
 - 90% of students are grade level proficient;
 - 60% of graduates receive a score of 3, 4, or 5 on at least one Advanced Placement exam, a 4 or higher on an International Baccalaureate exam, a C or higher in a dual enrollment course, or receive a rigorous industry certification;
 - 90% of students graduate from high school in four years or less; and
 - 90% of recent high school graduates are successful in post-secondary education or employed in a productive career.
 - b. Reduce the achievement gap in all four categories (i.e. 90-60-90-90) by 50%
 - c. Implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as scheduled and adopt appropriate assessments for CCSS and CCR
2. Recruit, retain, recognize, and reward great teachers and school leaders in Florida
 - a. Implement the Student Success Act (736) with fidelity and in coordination with districts
 - b. Incorporate CCSS into program standards for pre-service teachers, in cooperation with educator preparation programs
 - c. Align teacher and school accountability with respect to the 90-60-90-90 goals
3. Organize the FDOE to drive strategic initiatives
 - a. Improve departmental efficiency, operational, and communication efforts
 - b. Promote a positive and dynamic work environment that owns the 90-60-90-90 goals
 - c. Integrate technology and model innovation in the department as a model for districts



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Department of Health –

- Florida's infant mortality rate decreased from 6.4 in 2011 to 6.0 in 2012 per 1,000 live births, which included a decrease from 12.0 to 10.7 in the Black infant mortality rate and a decrease 5.2 to 5.1 in the Hispanic infant mortality rate.
- The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program began the transition to an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system to provide access to healthy food for 500,000 of Florida's most vulnerable mothers and children at more than 2,000 locations around the state.
- The Department launched the Healthiest Weight statewide initiative to help Florida's children, one third of whom are now considered overweight or obese, to make good choices about healthy eating and active living.
- During the 15th Annual Family Café in Orlando, State Surgeon General Dr. John Armstrong and childhood health experts from the Department provided information about the resources and services available for families with children facing special health care needs in Florida.
- Severe Combined Immunodeficiency Disorder (SCID) was added to the newborn screening panel in October 2012 and to date 164,782 babies have been screened.
- The Child Protection Team staff within the Department's Children's Medical Services provided developmental screenings for 3,614 children and 721 were referred to their local Early Steps program.
- The Afterschool Meals Program saw a 25% increase in the number of meals and snacks served when compared to the prior fiscal year.

Department of Juvenile Justice –

- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has experienced much success during fiscal year 2012-2013. A comparison with the previous fiscal year (2011-2012) determined reductions in the following areas:
 - 10% reduction in admissions to secure detention facilities
 - 29% reduction in residential commitments for low and moderate-risk youth
 - 12% reduction in delinquency arrests
 - 16% reduction in first-time misdemeanors entering the juvenile justice system
 - 13% reduction in the number of youth arrested for an offense on school grounds

Guardian ad Litem –

- The Guardian ad Litem Program increased its volunteer base by 1,200 individuals, from 8,251 to 9,451, an increase of 14.5 percent over the past year. These volunteers serve as advocates, mentors and a source of stability in the lives of children who have been abused, neglected or abandoned.
- During the past year, the number of children who have a volunteer as their advocate has increased by more than 1,000 (from 15,319 to 16,386). Children who have volunteer advocates get more services, spend less time in foster care, do better in school and return safely to their families more often than children who do not.
- The Guardian ad Litem Program has set a goal to increase the number of volunteers who are trained as Educational Advocates, to assist children with complex needs in the educational system. Over the past year, the percent of all volunteers who are trained as educational advocates has increased more than 290 percent, from 8.4 percent to 32.8 percent of all volunteers.
- The Guardian ad Litem Program has a statutory mandate to represent all children in the child welfare system. The Program increased its reach over the past year using new resources, and raising the percentage of children served from 68.8 percent to 72.5 percent.
- During the past year, volunteers have been encouraged to transport the children they represent as a means of gaining their confidence and spending one-on-one time with them. The number of volunteers certified to transport children has grown by almost 700 percent, from 2.2 percent of all volunteers, to 16.9 percent of all volunteers.



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Office of Early Learning –

- VPK Participation: In Florida, 80 percent of all four-year olds attended the state’s Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program. That participation placed the state first in the nation for pre-K access in the annual report from the National Institute for Early Education Research.
- VPK Participants and Kindergarten Readiness: Results from testing in kindergarten show that VPK works. In 2011-12, 79 percent of children who completed the VPK program were ready for kindergarten while only 55 percent of children who did not attend VPK were kindergarten ready.
- VPK Assessment: Beginning in the 2012-13 school year, VPK assessment was implemented statewide with more than 90 percent of all VPK providers actively participating. The assessment drives instruction in the classroom to ensure children are prepared to start kindergarten in the fall.
- Raising Standards for VPK: Florida has dramatically raised the bar for VPK providers who receive public dollars in terms of what is expected academically of the programs, demanding that 70 percent of children who attend are ready for kindergarten. In 2011-12, the percentage of VPK programs that met the state’s increased standards rose to 72 percent from 68 percent in 2010-11.
- HB 7165: After listening to early learning advocates, visiting early learning coalitions and considering how to provide high-quality early learning opportunities to families in Florida, the Florida Legislature passed important new early learning legislation during the 2013 session that Governor Rick Scott signed into law. Designed to improve quality and bring more accountability and transparency to the state’s early learning programs, the law, which took effect July 1, moved the Office of Early Learning into the Florida Department of Education, consolidating current department duties and responsibilities for VPK within early learning and implementing a number of changes to the current system.
- Additional Funding: The Florida Legislature passed the governor’s Florida Families First Budget and included funding for early learning of more than \$1 billion with an additional amount of \$5.045 million for school readiness—the first increase in funds for early learning coalitions in ten years.