

Wisconsin Council on Children's Long-Term Support

September 5, 2006

Dear Secretary Nelson,

Following the Council meeting, which you attended in April 2006, the members of the Wisconsin Council on Children's Long-Term Support have worked diligently in response to your charge and comments regarding the next steps in children's redesign. This included a thorough examination of the benefits and concerns related to: expanding the current system; creating a Cash and Counseling Program; and developing managed care options for children with long-term support needs. The Council unanimously passed several recommendations for your consideration at our August meeting (see attached). The first recommendation relates to managed care and the second recommendation relates to access to information, assistance, referral and eligibility determination.

Recommendation related to Managed Care: The Council considered a variety of managed care options available to Wisconsin, including Cash and Counseling. After thoughtful discussion and fact-finding related to various options, the Children's Council recommends that DHFS move forward with using managed care as a tool to expand services to a greater number of children. This option should also provide increased flexibility in the type of services and choice of providers available to families, and create greater capacity to coordinate services within Medicaid. The Council identified the Medicaid fee-for-service state plan and waiver services they would recommend including in a managed care model. Most of the typical long-term support services would be included in a managed care package and most of the acute, primary care services would remain as separate benefits.

Although Cash and Counseling offered greater flexibility, and in particular provided an option for payments to parents of minor children for specific services, in the end it would create a new program for a few services and could potentially increase the complexity and challenges with coordination rather than reduce fragmentation and complexity.

Given the experience of many of the committee members with private, for-profit, managed care agencies through their private insurance, the recommendation to pursue managed care assumes the involvement of a mission driven organization whose values reflect principles and outcomes outlined in the Foundations paper for children. Although risky, the committee is comfortable moving forward with this understanding.

Recommendation related to Access: The Council is interested in ensuring access to timely and comprehensive information, assistance, advocacy, and eligibility determination for families and is in the process of describing this component of long-term support in more detail. This will be an essential element of a coordinated system and will increase the effectiveness of other resources such as schools and private insurance.

We hope that our recommendations will help guide you in the development of budget initiatives related to children with long-term support needs and their families in the coming biennial budget process. The Council is committed to offering our continued best thinking and efforts to support you in this effort. We appreciate the opportunity to offer our recommendations and to work with you to improve our supports to children and youth with disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Hecht". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical red line.

Liz Hecht
Council Chair

CLTS Council
Recommendations to Secretary Nelson
August 2006

1. Utilize managed care as a tool to advance the values and concepts related to designing an improved system of long-term supports as developed in the report, *A Foundation for A System of Long-Term Support For Wisconsin Children and Families* and the subsequent work by Children's Long-Term Support Council. Any managed care option should include an increase in flexibility, choice and resources; a decrease in costs to the system; and an expansion in the availability of services to eligible children and families.
2. Develop and implement an infrastructure that will provide information, assistance, advocacy, and access to supports and services that are responsive to the unique needs of children and families with long-term support needs. This infrastructure should be consistent with the concepts developed by the Children's Long-Term Support Council and the report, *A Foundation for A System of Long-Term Support For Wisconsin Children and Families*.

