

Wisconsin Council on Children's Long-Term Support

March 21, 2007

Dear Secretary Hayden,

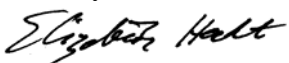
Members of the Council on Children's Long-Term Supports look forward to meeting and working with you in the coming years. We appreciate our partnership with the DHFS and look forward to moving forward with systems change for children with disabilities in Wisconsin. The Council made recommendations to Secretary Nelson in September and December of 2006 in response to her request for ideas to increase the pace of systems change and reduce waiting lists for children with disabilities (attached). We are pleased to find our recommendations to pilot managed care concepts in the Governor's budget but are very concerned that this is not coupled with funding for services. It will be very difficult to move forward with quality improvements for children in an under funded system. We will end up testing the impact of under funding on managed care rather than the potential benefits we believe managed care could offer.

Additional concerns:

- This council and previous committees have worked for 10 years with DHFS to envision and fund systems change. We have realized efficiencies with the functional screen and children's waivers that have allowed us to serve more children. It is difficult to see how we can move forward without funding for services and an infrastructure to support a quality system including staff and training.
- During this same time period, initiatives for children with autism have been funded. We support these initiatives. But we do not support the huge inequity which is becoming systemic in the children's system that prioritizes one disability over all others even when children and families have similar levels of disability, needs for support, and capacity to benefit from supports and services.
- A similar disparity has evolved between the children and adult systems of long-term care. Planning and services within the Family Care model has continued to expand each biennium. The DHFS has made a similar commitment to children with disabilities, yet has not committed more than a pittance of funding to actualizing these redesign changes.

We function as advisors to you and it is at your discretion what you move forward. At the same time, our appointment implies a commitment to long-term supports for children and to the counsel that families and professionals who support them have to offer. We look forward to a response from you and will work with you to develop a sustainable plan for bringing balance and equity to resources and systems change efforts for children with disabilities. The Council has a steering committee who would be pleased to meet in the near future to continue this discussion.

Thank you,



Elizabeth Hecht
Council Chair