

October 2, 2014

The Honorable Nikki Haley  
Governor of South Carolina  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley:

I am writing to express my interest in serving you and the citizens of South Carolina as Director of the Department of Social Services during your next term. As a physician and expert on children's mental health, I have been devoted for years to protecting the safety and well-being of children. It was therefore my pleasure to provide consultation for the department beginning in 2012, and serve as its part-time Medical Director from April 2013 through August 2014.

I am proud of our significant success reducing the state's reliance on long-term inpatient psychiatric institutions to care for our children, particularly since this means a decreased dependence on psychotropic medications for some of South Carolina's most vulnerable children. The department is now also home to more licensed mental health professionals, all working to ensure that children in foster care receive appropriate mental health services. Though I am pleased with this recent progress, I am confident that I could do even more to improve the safety and well-being of South Carolina's children in the position of Department Director.

As you may know, the Administration for Children and Families, the federal agency directing the work of state social service agencies, has issued a number of requirements for care coordination that have guided our policy changes here in South Carolina. Through my work as a professional expert in children's mental health, I have developed valuable relationships with others around the country invested in observing these requirements. I have had the privilege of addressing large groups of stakeholders through my professional connections with the American Bar Association, the National Association of Counsel for Children, and most recently, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. I have also helped develop training curricula in Alabama, Georgia, Missouri and South Carolina. Thanks to these training modules, case managers and other state agency and community partners now feel more equipped to advocate for appropriate mental health services.

Working collaboratively in this way has led me to believe that the models for care we established in South Carolina could serve nationally. Though every state is required to make changes similar to those we have been implementing, South Carolina has made substantial progress in a short time. In the brief period I served the department, we made strides that other states are still unable to achieve.

I feel certain that, as the Department Director, I could continue working to overcome the resistance of senior management to the speed at which those changes took place, and effectively implement additional reforms necessary to improve the lives of children in foster care. As director, I would moreover focus visibility on the department's significant successes, turning the public eye toward the benefits of our rapid policy improvements. It has been a pleasure working in an environment so supportive of decreasing reliance on institutional care, and it would be a privilege to use my national recognition as a platform for marketing our work.

I would be honored to combine my professional training as a child psychiatrist with my experience in administrative leadership as the director of your agency. Thank you for your time and consideration. It would be a pleasure to speak with you further about this opportunity to serve the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brent Wilson", with a stylized, cursive script.

Brent Wilson, M.D.