

From: Pisarik, Holly
To: Mark Cruise <mcruiase@pafcaf.org>
CC: Baker, Josh <JoshBaker@gov.sc.gov>
Date: 7/6/2016 4:31:34 PM
Subject: RE: Meeting Request

Do you have some time the week of July 18th to meet?

From: Mark Cruise [mailto:mcruiase@pafcaf.org]
Sent: Friday, June 24, 2016 2:58 PM
To: Pisarik, Holly
Cc: jshackelford@scypa.com; bvause@lscarolinas.net
Subject: Meeting Request

Dear Ms. Pisarik,

I am writing to request a meeting with you to discuss an imminent threat to the viability of therapeutic foster care and foster families in our state. The Palmetto Association for Children and Families, established in 1986, is a statewide membership organization that supports and represents private providers licensed by DSS, DHEC, or DOE to provide services to vulnerable children and families. Our 49 members include therapeutic foster care agencies, children's homes, and psychiatric residential treatment facilities, as well as providers of community-based services (e.g. family preservation, behavioral health, etc.).

In March DHHS announced that it would carve in all Rehabilitative Behavioral Health Services (RBHS) to managed care, effective July 1st. This change affects the RBHS portion of the state's funding of therapeutic foster care. While we understand the agency's need to rein in cost over-runs in the RBHS budget as a whole, we believe neither DHHS nor the MCOs have adequately prepared for or taken into consideration the unique needs and obligations of the state as it pertains to therapeutic foster children. The lack of sufficient time and planning for all parties involved to prepare for the transition has resulted in the likely unintended consequence of de-stabilizing long-established, law-abiding, and respected therapeutic foster care agencies in our state, and reducing overall therapeutic foster care capacity. Three meetings (April 14, May 31, and June 13) thus far between our TFC providers and DSS, DHHS, and Select Health (the primary MCO for foster children) to negotiate work-arounds have not yielded any acceptable solutions. As the Final Settlement Agreement to the Children's Rights lawsuit requires a substantial shift of children away from group homes into foster families, this situation comes at a very inopportune time. We support the Governor's Champions for Children's initiative to recruit additional foster families in our state, but this regulatory action, initiated by DHHS and agreed to by DSS, threatens to reverse those gains and will put therapeutic foster care families and agencies in a very difficult position.

I would like to set up a time to meet and brief you further on this matter, and to explore options for a resolution. Joining me will be representatives of two of our TFC agencies: Bethany Vause, Executive Director of Lutheran Services Carolinas, and John Shackelford, Director of Government Relations for SC Youth Advocate Program. With the July 1st transition date looming, we hope there will be an opportunity to meet with you very soon, next week if at all possible.

Thank you for your time and attention. Feel free to contact me at mcruiase@pafcaf.org or (803) 609-2059 (mobile).

Sincerely,
Mark



Palmetto Association
for Children & Families
Helping Children. Serving Families.

Mark R. Cruise, MDiv
Chief Executive Officer

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