



May 5, 2023

Secretary Kody Kinsley
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
Delivered Via Email

Dear Secretary Kinsley,

We write to you first acknowledging our shared commitment that every child grows up in a safe, nurturing family and community with the opportunity to achieve their full potential. We further appreciate your reiteration of the Department's goal to improve the way children and families are supported when a crisis brings them to the attention of child welfare services. We agree that more is needed to shore up our overstressed and underfunded child welfare system.

The leadership of the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services and the leaders of NC's LME/MCOs have been meeting since December 2022 to identify shared challenges within the intersecting foster care and healthcare systems and discuss how we can collaborate to better serve children, families, and adults in our state. We are tackling the toughest of topics in our transparent conversations and being solution oriented. We are discussing barriers to placement, increased severity in levels of acuity of children coming into care and contributing factors that we may be able to affect, including our respective workforce challenges. We are talking about how we can work together to build a strong network for kinship care and reduce institutional placements. We set the agenda and each of us does our due diligence to bring forth the information and data needed to have a robust conversation about how to move the system forward and have a positive impact now and in the coming years to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

Most recently, we have discussed the need to address the challenges that center on the regulatory and licensure work performed by the Division of Health Service Regulation. Specifically, we are hearing providers cite licensure suspension and revocation concerns as a primary reason for their refusal to accept certain referrals. In addition, many of us have experienced situations where out-of-state providers have decided not to expand services into North Carolina, citing the regulatory environment as a primary reason. Additional concerns include construction issues and facility closures that have decreased statewide bed capacity for timely and appropriate placements.





A Future Oriented Source of Leadership

We request that you convene an initial meeting including NC DHHS and DHSR officials, NCACDSS, and the LME/MCOs which we hope will result in a series of meetings. Our goal is to work collaboratively to address the aforementioned and other complex issues that impact outcomes for the children, families, and adults who we collectively serve. We would like to offer our standing meeting time of 8-9 am on the first Thursday of the month, as a possibility for scheduling this virtual meeting. Thank you for your consideration of this request. Sharnese Ransome (sransome@ncacdss.org), Executive Director of NCACDSS and Jamie Bazemore (jbazemore@ccr-email.com) will serve as points of contact for scheduling the meeting.

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