

Healthy Families ❖ Thriving Communities Collaborative Council

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Testimony of Spencer Wilder
On Behalf of the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaborative
Council
before the
Committee on Human Services, DC Council
Concerning the
The Child and Family Services Agency's FY2010 Budget
April 3, 2009

Good morning, my name is Spencer Wilder and I currently serve as the Data Administrator for the Healthy Families Thriving Communities (HFTC) Collaborative Council. My purpose in appearing before you today is to provide an overview of how quality assurance and evaluation are being addressed by the Collaboratives, with support from the Collaborative Council, through three key activities: (1) our Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database system, (2) our current internal self-evaluation measures, and (3) our participation in evaluating the implementation of the Partnership for Community-Based Services model.

Since January 2005, all of the Collaboratives have used the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database system as the primary method for collecting data on those that receive community-based services. (Role of the Council in development of ETO) Aside from being web-based, the system is unique in that it requires workers to link direct interactions with families and indirect activities performed on the behalf of families directly to larger, programmatic outcomes. By tracking this information at the worker level, each Collaborative can access data such as services requested by the family, the frequency of staff contact, the types of staff contact, and any assessed change in the family's condition resulting from providing services. This information has also been extremely useful in providing CFSA with more relevant information about families referred to the Collaboratives.

Utilizing ETO, the Collaborative Council provides all Collaboratives with regular feedback and coordinate analysis of the data collected. These include data quality reports which ensure that data is entered correctly and accurately and analysis of assessment level data, such as the Family Assessment Form, to determine if families receiving services for extended periods demonstrate improvement in family functioning. The information gained through this process has led to a revision of our joint the practice standards manual to ensure uniformity across Collaboratives, and the recent implementation of the Family Basic Needs Assessment to provide some indication if families who engage with the Collaboratives on a short term basis are better able to meet their basic needs after services are received.

Our most recent endeavor has been to participate in the evaluation process for the newly implemented Partnership for Community Based Services. A joint CFSA/Collaborative/Collaborative Council accountability subcommittee has been formed and is charged with developing and conducting the evaluation framework for this initiative. The first stage of that plan was conducted in March through a pre-survey administered to all staff prior to the actual relocating into the community. This survey was focused on measuring four crucial areas: (1) basic knowledge of the PCBS model, (2) perceived benefits and challenges of implementation, (3) management of logical issues associated with co-location, and (4) perceived outcomes for families. The results of the assessments were used to inform staff orientation and identify any need for additional trainings. The committee is currently in the process of finalizing the post-survey and intends to administer it by mid-April. The results from this survey will allow for a comparative analysis of how the perceptions and understandings of CFSA and Collaborative staff have changed since implementation of the PCBS model (September 2008). As the partnership continues, our committee intends to conduct additional evaluation techniques such as: focus groups, interviews and data analyses using ETO and FACES data.

These activities represent our strategy to assure that our practice is data driven; increasing accountability and improving the provision of services to families. By continuously using data to improve the quality of our services and strengthen our relationship with CFSA, we are assuring that the residents of the District of Columbia receive the most effective, accessible, and comprehensive services available. Thank you for affording me this opportunity to present our work to you.