



*PCSAO is happy to announce that Mona Reilly will join the PCSAO Board of Trustees for 2005. Mona is the Executive Director of Delaware County Department of Job and Family Services.*

## Why is the Federal Government Trying to "License Granny"?

On January 31, HHS issued a proposed rule that would fundamentally change the dynamic of positively utilizing kinship caregivers,



**By Crystal Ward Allen**

PCSAO  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

ers, such as a grandmother, when a child temporarily needs a safe, nurturing home and family.

PCSAO believes the changes this rule proposes are not good public policy.

**The proposed "Licensing Granny Rule" would force aunts, uncles and grandparents to become "licensed foster caregivers," and meet stringent ongoing licensure requirements to care for their own family members, or risk losing support and services. No longer would Ohio be allowed to view extended family as a personal resource, for a particular child, within his or her own family.** It would change the focus of family helping family, to the creation of a business relationship in caring for a child. It would encourage dependence on government financing without achieving a permanent home for a child. The rule would also prohibit federal fiscal support when we provide ongoing social work services to unlicensed kinship caregivers.

There are many reasons PCSAO is concerned with this proposed rule:

**Forcing kinship caregivers to become licensed will eliminate many kinship resource families who either cannot or will not complete the training and detailed home study requirements** to meet licensure standards. Ohio licensed foster caregivers must complete 24 hours of pre-service training, and 20 hours/year of ongoing training. Many relative caregivers do not intend to parent other children and thus, do not want or need the broad spectrum of training covered in these sessions.

Unrelated, paid foster caregivers must also meet very detailed, rigid environmental requirements such as bedrooms with doors, regular bedding, adequate and specific storage space for each child, windows with a certain measurement, etc. While these requirements are fully appropriate for a state licensed foster caregiver for unrelated children, grandma may have a basement room for her teenage grandson that is perfect for him, but has the wrong size windows, no proper door, and no built-in closet. And heaven forbid the youth sleeps on a sofa or futon vs. a bona fide bed!

**Forcing kinship caregivers to follow the exact same rules in caring for the children in their care, will be problematic.** Unrelated, paid foster caregivers must obtain agency ap-

proval with clear documentation, for a variety of activities, such as traveling out of town for the weekend, taking a summer vacation with the children in their care, and providing over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol. Kinship caregivers are allowed more flexibility in raising the children who are part of their family.

**Creating the expectation of a per diem room and board rate for kinship caregivers is a disincentive to moving to permanency.** Kinship caregivers are requested to provide temporary care while a reunification plan is pursued. Basic support, through TANF child-only grants, is provided at a higher rate than a parent would receive through TANF, but at a lower rate than foster care

(See **GRANNY**, back side of *The Insert*)

*PCSAO: Advocating for safe kids, stable families and supportive communities.*



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# Access to Better Care a Reality in Governor's Proposed Budget



PCSAO is pleased that the Governor's budget allocates \$25,800,000 in 2006 and \$26,900,000 in 2007 in funding through many resources for the ABC Initiative. We are grateful for Governor Taft's leadership and that of cabinet directors Hogan, Tester, Riley, Zelman, and staff at DYS, MRDD and Health, and the extraordinary work of Jessie Cannon from the Family & Children First Council, in advocating for this package. We hope that all of you who wrote to the Governor asking him to put this in the budget will now write and thank him for his responsiveness and commitment to these important issues.



**BY GAYLE CHANNING TENENBAUM**  
PCSAO LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

professionals working in schools to identify at-risk students and intervene early.

- \$200,000 over the biennium to expand school-based suicide prevention activities.

## Treatment

• \$4.8 million in each year of the biennium to continue FAST '05 funds dedicated to improving community behavioral health treatment and developing a parent advocacy network.

- \$5 million in FY 2006 and \$6 million in '07 to build upon FAST '05 by providing flexible local funds for effective, family-centered and behavioral health treatment and support services.

- \$3 million in each year of the biennium to support at least three demonstration projects focusing on child welfare and juvenile justice populations.

- \$5 million in each year of the biennium in continuation funding for alcohol and drug treatment services for families involved in the child welfare system.

PCSAO staff will continue to work in the House and Senate to build support for this important initiative and hope that everyone will hold meetings in the district with their elected officials to discuss the ABC Initiative. It is an excellent beginning to providing a continuum of care for behavioral health needs of children, youth and their families in our state. ♥

Investment in the ABC Initiative:

## Prevention

- \$1.5 million in each fiscal year for the expansion of the evidenced-based community-planning model and Partnerships for Success (PFS) expansion to additional counties.

- \$2.7 million each year to support Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists.

- \$225,000 over the biennium to broaden the understanding, prevention, and intervention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

## Early Intervention

- \$500,000 over the biennium to expand parent and caregiver training and education.

- \$300,000 over the biennium to fund increasing awareness of the affects of maternal depression; and a pilot through Help Me Grow that focuses on identification and linkages to services for at-risk families.

- \$192,500 over the biennium to support, in early childhood settings, the identification of children at risk for behavioral problems and link them to early intervention services.

- \$2.7 million in each year of the biennium to expand effective collaborative approaches for behavioral health

## 2005 PCSAO Legislative Breakfast Gives Ohio Lawmakers, Executive Directors Opportunity to Focus on Children



Sen. John Carey, (top, right) poses with public children services directors from the 17<sup>th</sup> District including (clockwise) Bob Gallagher, Executive Director of Ross County DJFS; Dave Boyer, Executive Director of Muskingum County CSB; and Chandra Schrader, Executive Director of Gallia County CSB.



Sen. Tom Roberts (left) converses with Dr. Rhonda Reagh, Executive Director of Greene County CSB and most recent President of PCSAO at the PCSAO Legislative Breakfast Feb. 16.



Sen. Tom Niehaus (left) speaks with Mike Trivisonno, Executive Director of Scioto County CSB at the PCSAO Legislative Breakfast. The breakfast gives legislators and children services directors the opportunity to discuss their local Factbook information and discuss issues affecting the children and families in their districts.

# PCSAO Releases Factbook, Calls for Funding Reforms

PCSAO released its 7th biennial Factbook last month, using the new information to educate the media and lawmakers about the critical needs and rising costs facing the child welfare system.



PCSAO Executive Director Crystal Ward Allen and Legislative Director Gayle Channing Tenenbaum led the call for increased funding and reforms.

“It is time for the State of Ohio to make children a

priority and increase its contribution to the costs of keeping kids safe and families stable,” said Allen. “Data in this Factbook points to key investments the state and federal government can and should make to improve the lives of Ohio’s children and families.”

Based on trends highlighted in the PCSAO Factbook, the Association made the following recommendations for the state of Ohio:

## Governor’s Budget Supports Child Welfare, Other Funding for Vulnerable Populations a Concern

By **GAYLE CHANNING TENENBAUM**  
PCSAO LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The Administration budget proposed by the Governor is generally supportive of funding for Ohio’s child welfare system. The Child Protection Line Item and Adoption Assistance have been held harmless. Funding has been included for the Access to Better Care Initiative. See *ABC, page two*.

There are other supportive budget elements: Funding for CHIP remains at 200% of poverty and coverage for pregnant women remains at 150% of poverty. Child Care eligibility will be increased to 185% of poverty. The Early Learning Initiative (formerly State Head Start) will serve 10,000 children in 2006 and 12,000 in 2007. Cash assistance grants for Ohio Works First families will be increased by 10% and there will be funding for TANF Demonstration projects.

*Allen urged juvenile judges, county commissioners, lawmakers, social workers, community members and everyone who impacts child safety to get acquainted with all the factors that can affect families and impact child abuse and neglect.*

- “Improve our ability to serve children and youth with mental health and substance abuse issues by investing in the Access to Better Care Initiative. Increasing numbers of unruly and delinquent adolescents are taxing the system, largely due to the unavailability of mental health and substance abuse treatment services. The ABC Initiative proposes critical investments in prevention, early intervention and treatment for our children, thus avoiding many of the traumatic and expensive out-of-home placements experienced by many children and families today.”

- “Use available TANF funds to support permanent kinship families for children who have been abused, neglected or dependent. Nationwide, this has shown to be an effective support for many extended families that have agreed to raise their grandchildren, nephews, and nieces. All children deserve a permanent home and family.”

PCSAO also recommends that the federal government:

- “Allow more flexibility with our child welfare federal funds, vs. only supporting paid foster placements. While that is important, it is only half the job – children deserve permanent homes, not just temporary foster care.

The 7th edition of the Factbook features information about foster care, child abuse and neglect, poverty, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, community services and more. Allen pointed out that keeping children safe is the responsibility of every person in a community, and urged juvenile judges, county commissioners, lawmakers, social workers, community members and everyone who impacts child safety to get acquainted with all the factors that can affect families and impact child abuse and neglect.

According to the Factbook, some aspects of the system are improving. Overall, there are fewer children in foster care, more relatives and kin caring for children and more children being adopted than in recent years. The report also discusses the success of an experimental funding program called ProtectOhio that allows foster care funding to be spent on supporting families.

The Factbook has been distributed to Ohio public child welfare agencies, the media, the Ohio General Assembly and other members of the community.

The Factbook is available to view or print online at <http://www.pcsao.org/factbook2005.htm>. You may also order bound Factbooks by filling out the order form online and mailing it to PCSAO with a check to cover the cost of your order. ♥

However, the Campaign to Protect Ohio’s Future must address other serious cuts being proposed for Ohio’s most vulnerable citizens.

### Cuts in Local Government Funds

Local governments, counties, cities, townships and libraries will lose \$1,112.6 million in 2006 and \$1,051.7 million in 2007. Local governments also lose dollars under the Governor’s tax reform package proposals.

### Health Care

Under Governor Taft’s proposed budget 800,000 people will lose dental and vision coverage; 25,000 working poor families will lose health insurance; and 15,000 adults receiving Disability Medical Assistance will lose services. Children with diseases such as Cerebral Palsy will lose services due to cuts funding to the Bureau for Children with Medical Handicaps. Seniors, once again, will be on waiting lists for PASSPORT slots.

(See **GOVERNOR’S BUDGET**, page 4)

# Governor's Budget (continued)

## Primary and Secondary Education

Funding for primary and secondary education is inadequate: The states share of funding for primary and secondary education will be reduced from 27.4% in 2004, to 27.3% in 2007; and over 200 districts will lose funding in 2007. In addition, 3500 teachers across the state will also lose their jobs, resulting in larger classroom sizes.

### CALL FOR PRESENTERS 2005 PCSAO Annual Conference

We want your expertise! Become a presenter at the largest statewide child protection conference in Ohio. It will be held on September 21-23, 2005, at Holiday Inn Worthington, in Columbus.

Send us your workshop proposal and help share your experience, ideas, or successful programs at this year's conference.

## Kinship Subsidy

PCSAO will continue to work with the Legislature to include a Kinship Subsidy in the '06-'07 Biennial Budget Proposal. This wise investment of TANF reserve funds would create permanent homes for 3,000 children each year, providing stability for those children and empower extended families to take care of their own, without ongoing government intervention.



**Public Children Services Association of Ohio**  
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The Administration is also proposing an extensive Tax Reform package to support the budget the Governor is proposing. The particulars of this package are presently being debated in the Ways & Means Committee of the House and Senate and include:

- A 21% decrease in the personal income tax
- Corporate Franchise Tax and Tangible Personal Property Tax Elimination and a new commercial activity tax
- Sales tax rate set at 5.5%
- Cigarette tax increase 45 cents
- Alcoholic beverage tax doubled
- Kilowatt-hour tax increased by 30%

It is important for your legislators to hear from you at home about the funding you are supporting and your concerns about other cuts. They will be home for the Easter Break March 21-28, 2005 so this would be a good time to contact them.

**Also please remember, the Campaign to Protect Ohio's Future will be holding a Statehouse Rally on April 12 at 11:30 a.m.** Please come and have your voices heard about the importance of protecting children and all other vulnerable populations in this budget. Buses will be departing from a number of communities. If you need further information, please go to [www.protectohio.org](http://www.protectohio.org) ♥

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# Heart Beat

## THE INSERT

PUBLIC CHILDREN SERVICES ASSOCIATION OF OHIO

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 2, 2005

## Addressing Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Social Welfare

By PHIL HART

STONEWALL COLUMBUS, OCWTP TRAINER

There are few current topics that create as much divisiveness, suspicion and anger as homosexuality. Homosexuality has moved to the front page because topics like gay marriage and equal rights are generating heated debate among groups of people with widely differing views and opinions. For the gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT) person who finds him or herself in the middle of a political, religious or social debate, the price can be immense.

Helping professionals are often the first, if not only, individuals who will be in a position to hear the feelings and experiences of GLBT people. As the debate rages, individuals become less and less willing to confide in family or friends for fear of being "outed" (where a person's sexual orientation is disclosed without their knowledge or approval), or losing critical support like housing, family, financial assistance for college, or being victimized by threats or hate crimes.

Social workers must be educated about the challenges and issues related to GLBT people and be ready to assist them in overcoming their intense and isolating battles. Statistics reveal that sexual orientation issues can create tremendous stress on GLBT youth:

- \* Suicide is the leading cause of death among gay and lesbian youth.
- \* 50% of all gay and lesbian youth report that their parents reject them due to their sexual orientation.
- \* Approximately 40% of homeless youth are identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual

\* Gays and lesbians are at much higher risk than heterosexual population for alcohol and drug abuse.

In order to provide effective support to GLBT individuals, there is much to learn:

- Understanding social work ethics regarding clients with sexual orientation and gender issues.
- Basic understanding of vocabulary related to sexual orientation and gender.
- The complex process of coming to terms with one's sexual identity, gender identity, and "coming out."
- Resources for professionals, families and GLBT people.

In the world of helping professionals, fear of stirring debate among our co-workers, creating discomfort along philosophical or religious lines, or believing that the subject is too controversial to discuss and learn about could be considered naive at best, and dangerously unethical at worst.

Many GLBT people, their families and friends have approached me after trainings, some with tears in their eyes, to share how much it would have meant to have a compassionate caseworker help them find their way toward wholeness in an environment that too often judges and condemns without true understanding. As more and more caseworkers are trained; gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people will find, as many hurting and marginalized people have found in the past, that they are safe in our midst. In the helping professions, we are called to demonstrate that unconditional positive regard is not simply a theory for caseworkers, it is our orientation. **Phil Hart can be contacted by e-mail at philhart1@aol.com** ♥

## Announcing The Ohio Research Consortium for Evidenced-Based Practice in Child Welfare

By SALLY COOPER

INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN SERVICES

To help ensure that child welfare practice in Ohio has a strong empirical base, PCSAO has launched The Research Consortium for Evidence-Based Practice, a collaboration between the University Schools of Social Work and the public child welfare system in Ohio.

A planning group was convened to determine the Consortium's mission, goals and proposed activities. The formal mission of the initiative is:

*To involve universities, child welfare agencies, and other stakeholders in a collaborative effort to utilize research findings to inform and improve child welfare practice and outcomes in Ohio.*

*We do this by identifying desired performance outcomes; articulating critical practice needs and questions; using research to identify promising solutions; performing rigorous evaluations to gather performance and outcome data; and making recommendations for policy, programmatic, practice, and training decisions based on the best available evidence.*

An Executive Committee was established to manage and oversee the Consortium's activities. This group is made up of representatives from PCSAO, ODJFS, PCSAs, the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program, Ohio University, The Ohio State University, Wright State University, the University of Akron, and the University of Toledo. The Institute for Human Services is coordinating and facilitating the initiative.

Since no permanent funding is yet available, Committee members are donating their time and resources to ensure the initiative's success.

The first scheduled project is a systematic review of the research literature on two

[See CONSORTIUM, back page]

# Why is the Federal Government Trying to "License Granny"? (continued)

room and board. The child welfare agency also works to provide additional specific support (perhaps a bed or clothing stipend), as necessary for that child in that family. All involved -- the kinship caregiver, the birth parent and the agency -- are viewing the arrangement as a temporary situation. Once government at any level begins paying a room and board rate, this delicate family dynamic would change. Reunifying would be perceived as a significant loss of income. Permanency time lines require a court decision after 12 months in agency custody. Consequently, would children be placed in Planned Permanent Living Arrangements so foster care payments would continue? We know children that age out of foster care, without a permanent family struggle with many challenges as young adults.

**Providing enhanced financial support for kinship caregivers who become permanent families for abused, neglected children makes more sense.** If a court determines reunification is not going to happen, kinship caregivers often become permanent families for the child – with a judicial award of legal custody or legal guardianship. Availability of an ongoing Kinship Subsidy for these families would be an incentive to make a permanent commitment to that child, just as an adoption subsidy provides the much needed financial security for many unrelated families adopting special needs children.

*Instead of pushing policy to create more temporary foster caregivers, the federal government needs to support permanent families by allowing a Title IV-E Guardianship Subsidy for permanent kinship families.*

**What is the federal government's compelling reason to change this long-standing policy?** PCSAO cannot see a convincing rationale:

- **Safety?** No. Currently, unlicensed kinship caregiver homes undergo thorough site and safety assessments, just not the rigid detailed requirements discussed above. And all caregivers, whether licensed or unlicensed, have the same criminal background requirements. Both undergo fingerprint background checks. And like licensed foster

placements, kinship placements are made with judicial oversight.

- **Preference for placing children with unrelated paid foster caregivers vs. family?** No. Both federal and state law require and encourage early search and engagement of safe relatives for children needing temporary and permanent care. Research proves children fare better with safe kinship providers.

- **Budget cuts? It is true the President's budget, as proposed, estimates a cost savings** due to this proposed rule, assuming the child protection agency social work service claims for many grannies and other caregivers will cease. But it is hard to believe the federal government supports leaving abused and neglected children in any homes, on a temporary basis, without caseworker involvement and support. Clearly, **Ohio agencies would continue to provide the same level of services, and suffer an estimated annual loss of federal funds, to the tune of \$10 million. This becomes a cost shift from the federal government to local government.** (If on the other hand, every unlicensed kinship caregiver became licensed, the federal and local cost would both increase significantly - 40% local, and 60% federal share.)

- **Increased governmental intrusion?** Full scale licensure of grandma and other kinship caregivers will only ratchet up the governmental intervention of extended families willing to provide temporary support to their children in need. This rule seems to be in direct conflict with many of the administration's positions on reducing the needless intrusion and role of government in families.

**PCSAO and its 88 county public children service agency members strongly oppose this "Licensing Granny" rule.** It serves no one, especially not the abused, neglected and dependent children of Ohio, or the good kinship families that offer temporary care and support when needed. We strongly support empowering birth and extended families to care for their own children. Unnecessary governmental intervention is not good for children or families. It is time to focus on immediate safety and long-term permanency for children. ♥

## Consortium (continued)

key practice questions, both of which have been identified as critical to Ohio's Program Improvement Plan (PIP). They are: 1) strategies to prevent recidivism into substitute care by children who have been reunified with their families; and 2) intervention strategies that can help prevent recurrences of neglect in families.

The research reviews will be conducted by two Ph.D. students in The Ohio State University's School of Social Work, under the guidance of Dr. Denise Bronson. IHS contributed the funding to support the work on these two issues. The Consortium hopes to have preliminary conclusions by June.

Ultimately, the Research Consortium will be a resource to PCSAs, PCSAO, and ODJFS in seeking answers to many critical practice issues and problems. The Consortium will identify practice issues, conduct systematic reviews of research on key questions, help county agencies evaluate their programs and services, help interpret evaluation data, and link with other national organizations to promote evidence-based child welfare practice in Ohio. The Ohio Child Welfare Training Program will collaborate with participating universities to train the child welfare work force in how to access and apply findings from empirical research to direct practice.

The Consortium meets monthly at the OCWTP's Central Ohio Regional Training Center. **For more information about the Research Consortium, please contact Sally Cooper at the Institute for Human Services at 614-251-6000 or Max Bucey at PCSAO at 614-224-5802. ♥**

