

The Office of Governor M. Jodi Rell



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Governor Rell: Children's Mental Health Treatment Advancing in Connecticut

Smaller Programs Closer To Home Result In 30% Reduction In Large Residential Programs and 34% Reduction In Children Out Of State

Governor M. Jodi Rell said the opening of 46 new therapeutic group homes since 2005 by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) has helped to improve the way Connecticut offers help to children with mental health needs.

“In large part as a result of the group homes, DCF successfully has reduced by 30 percent the number of children receiving services in larger residential treatment centers since April 2004,” Governor Rell said. “In addition, DCF has reduced the number of children receiving services out of state by 34 percent since September 2004.”

The number of children in residential treatment centers has declined from 889 in April 2004 to 618 children today. There were 491 children receiving services out of state in September 2004, and there are currently approximately 320 children out of state.

The homes, which began opening in 2005, offer a full array of mental health services to children who have been traumatized due to abuse and neglect and who need treatment for their emotional conditions.

“The group homes are designed to provide the clinical services the children need in an environment that is as close to a real home as possible,” Governor Rell said. “Each home is gender specific and serves five to six children. We plan to bring the total number of group homes up from 46 to 54 by the end of the current fiscal year.

“The group homes fill a key spot in the range of services for children with mental health treatment needs. For children who can successfully live in the community and in a home-like environment, this offers the best chance to prepare them for a healthy, independent life. Ultimately, we want children to go back to a regular family home, and the group homes afford them an opportunity to develop the skills to do that.”

While DCF has operated group homes for some time, the therapeutic model offers a high level of mental health services that the traditional group homes did not offer.

DCF Commissioner Susan I. Hamilton said the development of the therapeutic group homes is a key part of DCF's continuing work to ensure that children receive mental health services in the appropriate setting.

“Connecticut historically has been heavily reliant on the more restrictive levels of care, such as hospital and residential settings,” Commissioner Hamilton said. “The new group homes, together with in-home services for about 2,000 children, which did not exist prior to 2004, means that the State has made important strides in serving children in the least restrictive setting possible based on each child’s unique clinical needs and circumstances.”

“At the same time, we recognize that we have a lot more to do to improve, including making sure we have timely discharges when children are clinically ready to move to a less restrictive level of care,” said Commissioner Hamilton. “We are also committed to finding additional ways to improve the effectiveness of the services we do offer.”

Therapeutic group homes are located in the following towns:

- Barkhamsted;
- Bethel;
- Bethlehem;
- Bridgeport;
- Bristol;
- Coventry;
- Cromwell;
- Danbury;
- East Haven;
- Enfield;
- Glastonbury;
- Groton (Noank);
- Hamden;
- Hartford;
- Hebron;
- Lebanon;
- Ledyard;
- Manchester;
- Mansfield;
- Middletown
- Montville;
- New Britain;
- North Haven;
- Plainville;
- Prospect;
- Thomaston;
- Torrington;
- Waterbury;
- Wethersfield;
- Winchester; and
- Windsor.

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