

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.”
-- World Health Organization

SUPPORT CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH

***Increase children’s social and emotional health supports by \$14 million in FY 09
for a total investment of \$20 million in ICMHP strategic priorities***

Illinois is a national leader in promoting children’s mental health serving as a model for other states in strengthening the social and emotional well-being of children and youth. Illinois leaders took bold steps when they passed the Children’s Mental Health (CMH) Act of 2003 and created the Illinois Children’s Mental Health Partnership (ICMHP). Since the passage of the CMH Act, and in accordance with the ICMHP Strategic Plan, Illinois has served greater numbers of children at younger ages and earlier stages of need with more effective mental health programs and services, reduced fragmentation of services, enhanced interagency collaboration, and expended \$56.6 million less over the last three years by serving children with community based mental health services instead of costly hospitalizations.

Impact of Investments: In FY 08, state leaders invested \$6million in many of the Partnership’s strategic plan priorities for strengthening children’s mental health including:

- Enhancing children’s school readiness and ability to achieve academic success by supporting implementation of the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards in 85 participating schools by providing grants of \$10,000 to 38 school districts throughout the state.
- Expanding the capacity of community mental health agencies to meet the needs of young children ages birth to seven by implementing the Early Childhood Children’s Mental Health Consultation Project in twelve communities throughout Illinois.
- Providing early intervention services (e.g. individual and group counseling, social skills building) to children and adolescents who do not meet the criteria for a mental health diagnosis but are at risk for developing significant mental health problems by awarding grants of up to \$100,000 to community mental health agencies throughout the state.

FY 09 Request: In FY 09, Illinois must maintain and expand these important initiatives for children’s mental health and overall well-being by investing an additional \$14 million in such crucial ICMHP priorities as:

- Expanding children’s mental health services, including services for children from birth to age 5 and for youth who have experienced trauma (e.g. violence, abuse).
- Expanding the number of schools that receive support for implementation of the SEL Standards and for mental health services and supports for students.
- Supporting the development of a statewide family-based initiative to help families better access mental health services and supports for their child.

Children’s health, well-being and academic readiness cannot be achieved without addressing their mental health.

Research indicates that children’s social and emotional well-being is as important as their physical and cognitive health:

- About 1 in 10 Illinois children suffer from a mental illness severe enough to cause impairment. Yet, up to 80 percent of children and youth who need mental health services do not receive them.
- 42 percent of Illinois child care programs reported asking a family to withdraw a child because staff were unable to handle the child’s behavior.
- Over 50 percent of the 102 counties in Illinois do not have access to a child psychiatrist leaving many families struggling to find appropriate services for children and youth in need.

Prevention and early intervention programs are cost-effective, improve school readiness and achievement, and reduce the need for special education and public assistance later in life. We must continue our landmark commitment to helping all kids be physically, mentally, and socially strong and resilient.

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