



ROBERT B. TAYLOR
Chief Probation Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

9150 E. Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242
(562) 940-2560



March 31, 2008

Dear Ms. Karen Gunderson:

Please accept this letter in support of the Los Angeles County's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Department of Mental Health's (DMH) intention to participate in California's group home reform effort as outlined in AB 1453. The Probation Department, in partnership with DCFS have made strides to improve outcomes for all youth in congregate care under the Title IV-E Capped Waiver Initiative and the proposed commitment to RBS reform is a logical and insightful step to advance this objective.

Based on our reading of the Los Angeles County Letter of Intent, we feel that Probation's vision for optimal care and supervision of our youth in group home settings is aligned with that of DCFS and DMH, most importantly, the key elements that make up the RBS continuum of care: improved safety, faster timelines to permanence and reduced reliance on our of home care. Probation shares the DCFS/DMH RBS reform philosophy, which is supported by evidence and research that children do best with their families. In the Capped Waiver environment, Probation has initiated the Placement Community Transition Services (PCTS) program. The purpose of PCTS is to work with youth, families and group homes to reduce the amount of time youth spend in congregate care, by incorporating the home based intervention, Functional Family Therapy (FFT), into the youth's therapeutic milieu. By leveraging foster care services with EPSDT, a continuum of care is funded that provides short term, out-of-home treatment with evidenced based services designed to strengthen the family's ability to better manage itself. Moreover, Probation has been working towards enhanced up-front assessments for our youth prior to entering congregate care in order to make the most therapeutically appropriate placement match. Assessments would include parent or caregiver involvement, similar to the TDM process DCFS is employing.

Notwithstanding Probation's genuine support for the DCFS/DMH RBS Reform initiative and our clear alignment in philosophy and practice with its goals, we cannot at this time join with DCFS and DMH's efforts to implement the specific demonstration project outlined in the Letter of Intent. However, we believe that within a year's time, Probation may be in a better position to partner with DCFS and DMH and could benefit from the learning opportunity and enhanced continuum of services offered through the RBS Reform effort.

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Thank you for your consideration of this Letter of Support and please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jitahadi Imara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

Jitahadi Imara, Deputy Director
Special Services Division