

Data Sharing and Mapping Task Force Recommendations
May 20, 2015

- 1. Establish a task force on mental health and addiction services for vulnerable youth, or add that charge to an existing task force.**

Rationale: Our task force was asked to map existing mental health and substance abuse services for vulnerable youth in order to identify gaps and duplication. We have completed the mapping project, and in the process, identified several more issues related to children's mental health services that would benefit from a task force specific to that topic. The issue noted in number 2, below, is one example.

- 2. Convene a meeting of agencies funding mental health and substance abuse services to vulnerable youth in order to collaborate on developing a common set of requirements and forms for service providers, in order to streamline the providers' reporting, financial, and accountability procedures.**

Rationale: In gathering information from mental health providers, we uncovered an opportunity to increase the efficiency of those currently providing mental health services to vulnerable youth and families. Providers noted that each funding source has distinct reporting and data requirements that unnecessarily increase the time spent on paperwork and thereby reduce the time available to spend serving youth directly.

- 3. Support efforts by the Indiana State Health Department to establish HPSAs (Health Professional Shortage Areas) in order to bring federal resources into Indiana to help ease the shortages of health and mental health providers for youth, especially in rural areas.**

Rationale: During the course of the mapping project, the task force discovered that ISDH is working on gathering data and submitting applications to the federal government for certain geographic areas of the state to be designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (including Mental Health Shortage Areas). This work provides one concrete solution to the potential service gap areas identified during the mapping phase, as the federal HPSA designation provides a way to incentivize new providers to serve those areas. The task force with this recommendation simply asks the Commission to make a statement of support in favor of ISDH applying for the HPSA designation on behalf of any area that qualifies based on the data. We would also like to encourage ISDH to seek ways to make providers aware of those designations and the incentives that are tied to serving in underserved areas.

- 4. Request that Commission members direct their staffs to fully cooperate with the Task Force's data-sharing capstone project currently underway.**

Rationale: As previously reported, the task force has taken on a data-sharing capstone project that involves a legal analysis of state and federal information privacy laws, a survey of those working directly with vulnerable youth through DCS, the courts, and schools; and ultimately a practice brief based on this information to help guide communities on appropriate and legal ways to share information for the benefit of vulnerable youth. The task force will soon be sending out a memo to agency heads and agency counsel requesting their participation in a review of the legal research and their assistance with disseminating the survey to those frontline workers under their agencies. With this recommendation, the task force simply seeks to inform the Commission members of the forthcoming memo and affirm that all agencies are supportive of the project and its ultimate goal, to ensure that agencies serving vulnerable youth are sharing information in ways that are legal, ethical, and beneficial to children.