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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION

**RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND
FAMILIES TO ENHANCE THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM'S CAPACITY TO COLLECT
AND UTILIZE DATA**

Introduced By: Senators Sheehan, Nesselbush, Cool Rumsey, Satchell, and Miller

Date Introduced: February 27, 2014

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1 WHEREAS, State health and human service agencies increasingly turn to robust data
2 systems to support their strategic planning, actions, and investments. Targeted data collection and
3 analyses have allowed these agencies to identify gaps in services, to monitor the status of children
4 and other vulnerable populations served in publicly-funded health and human services delivery
5 systems, to track outcomes, and to direct resources to programs that demonstrate their
6 effectiveness. These activities often result in publicly available reports that provide additional
7 transparency in government spending; and

8 WHEREAS, The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) currently
9 compiles a great deal of information related to the activities of the health and human services
10 agencies, and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) compiles data related
11 specifically to child welfare, collected in response to Child and Family Services Reviews, Title
12 IV-E foster care eligibility reviews, the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
13 assessment reviews, the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, and the
14 quarterly Program Improvement Plans to the federal Administration for Children and Families.
15 Some, but not all, of this data is submitted on a regular basis to EOHHS data warehouse to be
16 integrated with information on services provided by other EOHHS agencies; and

17 WHEREAS, DCYF has worked closely with the Office of Management and Budget
18 (OMB) and the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative to establish a cost-benefit model to
19 examine policies and procedures in the state's criminal justice system. As part of this effort,

1 DCYF has reported on a number of indicators related to the child welfare system, but certain
2 other measures that are critical to documenting children's well-being remain uncollected and if
3 collected have not been shared with EOHHS data warehouse; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2013, the Senate's Health and Human Services Committee conducted
5 hearings on DCYF which included extensive testimony on how DCYF's data collection and
6 reporting could support better policy and decision-making; now, therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
8 hereby respectfully requests that EOHHS work in collaboration with the DCYF to enhance
9 EOHHS' capacity to aggregate, collect, and utilize data to inform programmatic and policy
10 decisions for children, youth, and families and all health and human service agencies that assist
11 children and families at risk; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that EOHHS work in
13 collaboration with DCYF to build the analytical capacity to include in its reporting, to the extent
14 practicable, the five measures identified in the November 2013 report of the Senate Health and
15 Human Services Committee oversight of DCYF, including the incidence of maltreatment in foster
16 care (on an annual basis), incidence of advance transition plans for youth transitioning from care,
17 timelines of achieving permanent child placements (on a semi-annual basis), median length of
18 stay in congregate care, and average open cases per social worker; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that EOHHS collaborate with
20 all state health and human service agencies, the Family Court, the Rhode Island Department of
21 Elementary and Secondary Education, and other agencies to identify and report common
22 measures on youth in the foster care system, those entering the juvenile justice system, and
23 children and families receiving preventative services; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that EOHHS provide
25 direction to DCYF and Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and
26 Hospitals (BHDDH) to enter into a memorandum of agreement by December 31, 2014, which
27 specifically provides for youth who are identified with Severe Emotional
28 Disturbance/Developmental Disability to be referred to BHDDH five years prior to their
29 transition, and that specifically outlines the responsibilities of both DCYF and BHDDH to ensure
30 the effective transition of youth identified as eligible for BHDDH services on their 21st birthday
31 or before their 21st birthday if transition from DCYF to BHDDH is approved by the Family
32 Court; and be it further

33 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that EOHHS facilitate
34 DCYF's development of system-level measures to strategies, actions, and outcomes in its annual

1 reporting to the General Assembly, to see how system-wide results can be strengthened; and be it
2 further

3 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that EOHHS present a report
4 to the Senate detailing additional costs and resources that relate to the requested data collection
5 and reporting, for those measures that are not readily available; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
7 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Director of the Department of
8 Children, Youth, and Families, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human
9 Services, and the Commissioner of Education.

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