

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES



MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Staff

**FROM:** Trista D. Piccola *JP*  
Director

**DATE:** June 30, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Utilization Management Unit

As part of our continued efforts to promote the safety and well-being of Rhode Island's children, youth, and families, DCYF is implementing a Utilization Management (UM) system beginning July 1 to ensure accountability for consistent and high quality practice and services. The UM process will begin with children who are in congregate care due to abuse and/or neglect. We will be expanding to other populations (e.g., juvenile justice, behavioral health, etc) in the future.

This memo and the attached document offer an overview of the newly-formed Utilization Management unit, and how it will impact various units and staff within DCYF. The UM Unit includes Annette Bedrosian, Supervisor; Cathleen Sears, Clinical Reviewer; and Audrey Shaw and Ly Kue, Utilization Management Specialists.

The Department has made significant strides in recent years toward increasing family placements and ensuring congregate care is used for short-term, intensive treatment. The UM process will join the Directors Approval Process (DAP) and Expedited Permanency Meetings (EPMs) in further advancing these goals by reviewing congregate care placements to ensure youth are receiving services necessary for their level of need and for the appropriate duration.

Research has demonstrated the importance of family placement for children's development, as well as showing that youth living in institutional settings are at a greater risk of developing physical, emotional, behavioral and social issues and are less likely to find a permanent home than those who live in family foster care. To learn more about the importance of family placement, please see the [American Orthopsychiatric Association Consensus Statement on Group Care](#).

The UM Unit will need your input and partnership in this process to be successful, including direct collaboration with the Family Services Unit (FSU) and Juvenile Probation (in the future), as follows:

- ***FSU Caseworkers and Juvenile Probation Officers*** will respond to UM staff requests for case information to determine a youth's current level of need at predetermined intervals during their congregate care placements. When a youth is identified for possible step-down, UM staff will assist with completing the appropriate follow up.
- ***FSU and Probation Supervisors*** will provide appropriate oversight and assist in complex cases when step-down is indicated by the UM process.
- ***Regional Directors and Juvenile Probation Administrators*** will receive regular UM reports, allowing them to track progress and trends and to outreach to FSU supervisors as appropriate.

If you have feedback for streamlining or increasing the effectiveness of the UM process as the work begins, please share any ideas with Annette Bedrosian or Christopher Strnad. Thank you for your continued dedication to serving Rhode Island's children, youth, and families.