



Illinois Children's
Healthcare Foundation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION LAUNCHES
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE
*Building Systems of Care, Community by Community***

A Call to Communities and Evaluation Teams

Oak Brook, IL (Wednesday, September 9, 2009) - The Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation announced today a new multi-million dollar initiative to improve children's mental health services in Illinois. The Foundation is inviting Community Teams across the State of Illinois to submit proposals by January 6, 2010 and Evaluation Teams to submit qualifications by October 30, 2009.

"The mental health of children is as important to their overall well-being as their physical health," said Dr. Peter E. Doris, Board Chair, Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation. "The mental health systems serving the children of Illinois are fragmented and under-resourced. Supporting collaborative efforts to coordinate and integrate existing services will result in a comprehensive community-based children's mental health system to ensure more children receive the support they need as early as possible and through the age of 18."

To accomplish this, Illinois Children Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) has launched a multi-year/multi-million dollar Children's Mental Health Initiative, *Building Systems of Care, Community by Community (CMHI)*. ILCHF will select several communities throughout the State of Illinois in which it will invest the resources needed to build the community's mental health system of care for children. Strongest consideration will be given to proposals that are: developed by community-based collaborations, are creative and innovative, and build upon the existing service systems and programs in their respective community. See www.ilchf.org for a complete copy of the RFP. A teleconference to answer questions on the RFP is scheduled for 2:00 CDT on September 30, 2009. Community applications are due by January 6, 2010.

"Especially in these times of economic stress, we know that the best way to make the greatest impact on the mental health of our children is to attack the issues at their root. We'll accomplish this by enhancing the delivery systems to ensure that services are available to all children and the systems are sustainable," noted Tammy Lemke, President of Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation. "Children and families are suffering. We know 1 in 10 Illinois children or more than 350,000 under the age of 19 suffer from a serious mental illness severe enough to impair functioning and ability to learn. However, only 20 percent of these children will receive mental health services. The barriers to providing children's mental health services in our state must be overcome."

In addition to the RFP, ILCHF has also released a Request for Qualifications for an Evaluation Team to provide technical assistance and consultation during the development and planning phase of the CMHI. They will also conduct a multi-site evaluation of the implementation of systems of care in each selected community. See www.ilchf.org for a complete copy of the RFQ. All responses to the RFQ are due by October 30, 2009.

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About Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation

Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) is the only statewide private foundation focused on improving the health of all children in the State of Illinois

ILCHF was created in December 2002 through an action of the State of Illinois Attorney General's office. This activity established the Foundation which was funded with an investment of approximately \$125 million as a result of a settlement with a group of Illinois insurance carriers.

In 2007, ILCHF announced its first major initiative in the area of oral health. More than \$20 million is committed over five years on efforts related to building the capacity of the safety net system, workforce development and public education and awareness. During this same time period, ILCHF issued two requests for proposals on the integration of mental health and primary care services.

From the Foundation's inception through 2008, a total of more than \$35 million in grants has been invested in over 200 programs.

For additional information about ILCHF, please see www.ilchf.org.

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