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To: Medical Directors, Directors of Nursing, Program Directors
Child and Adolescent Licensee and State-Contracted Programs

From: Ken Duckworth, M.D.
Deputy Commissioner
Clinical and Professional Services

Date: August 27, 2001

Re: The Reduction/Elimination of Restraint and Seclusion in Child and Adolescent Programs

I am writing to outline the DMH Child and Adolescent Restraint Reduction Effort. By now you should have received the letter from Commissioner Sudders identifying as a Department of Mental Health (DMH) priority the intention to lower/eliminate the use of mechanical restraint and seclusion in our child and adolescent licensed and state-contracted inpatient and intensive residential programs.

This effort is grounded in the understanding that clearly defined treatment that is integrated into all aspects of the milieu, 24 hours a day/7 days a week in a spirit of teaching and learning responsive to the developmental needs of children is essential in order to meet this goal. Collaborative strength-based behavioral management plans that are clear and built on frequent positive reinforcement designed to help the child feel successful is critical as is the staff’s ability to be playful, use humor and most importantly, be hopeful about the child’s possibilities for healing and recovery.

The kick-off event for this effort is an outcome-based conference to be held on Oct. 4, 2001. Save this date! The conference, Promoting Strength-based Care: Reducing/Eliminating Restraint and Seclusion in Child and Adolescent Programs, will offer state-of-the-art best practices by national leaders. Specific technical expertise regarding the achievement of this goal will be provided.
Conference attendance will be by invitation-only based on *your identification of 5 key program staff, two of whom should be direct care*. In the months following the conference, you will be asked to participate in follow-up meetings.

The Department of Mental Health will continue to offer clinical consultation and technical expertise by Nan Stromberg, R.N., C.S., Gordon Harper, M.D., Lizbeth Kinkead, R.N., M.B.A., and Janice LeBel, Ph.D. who have served as resources within the Department. As well as providing programmatic and clinical guidance, they have made available up-to-date relevant literature. Lareina La Flair, M.P.H. will serve as “librarian” and be available as the contact person for this project. Specific requests for assistance may be funneled through her. Messages for her may be left at 617-626-8078 or she may be contacted directly at Lareina.LaFlair@dmh.state.ma.us.

The Department of Mental Health supports peer-based “best practice” round-table meetings currently being conducted by some of the licensee programs. These peer to peer consultations and other workgroups serve as an important tool for connecting state-wide programs to best practice approaches.

In addition to the round-table meetings, the Department of Mental Health is sponsoring three Grand Rounds over the next year to serve as follow-up meetings to the October 4 forum. Tentative target topics include: the Systematic Development of a Milieu-Based Approach, the Psycho-educational Model (PEM), Caring for the Caregiver. We will be sending out the Grand Rounds schedule at a later date.

I look forward to working with you as we collectively meet the challenge of providing high quality clinical care to children with psychiatric disorders.

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