

HOLD STATE AGENCIES ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

RISING DEMAND

**An estimated 35% of new clients in the adult mental health system (DMHAS) are young adults. From 1998 to 2007, direct referrals from the children's system (DCF) to DMHAS rose from 41 to 1,829, an increase of almost 4500%!
(excluding the new cases that were accepted regionally)**

According to DMHAS, "The referral trends through the central office threaten to thoroughly overwhelm our system of care...." The state "does not provide the levels of care, assessments, informed recovery plans, or staffing needs/competencies required to treat the complex and often significantly severe disorders facing our young adults." (DMHAS, April 2007).

PAYING FOR TRANSITION FAILURES

Currently, there is no oversight or accountability for youth transferred from DCF to DMHAS. As a result, the services and procedures essential for a safe transition may be disregarded. Young adults and taxpayers pay the cost of poor transitions.

- Most youth transitioning from DCF to DMHAS have long histories of abuse and neglect, trauma, complex mental health needs, and multiple placements.
- If they are not engaged in age-appropriate services, they are more likely to drop out of school, become homeless and unemployed, abuse drugs, attempt or contemplate suicide, and engage in criminal activity.

SPENDING MONEY SMARTER

Youth transferred to DMHAS with successful transition plans are more likely to make positive adjustments, require fewer services, and be stable and productive.

Connecticut can improve lives and save money by:

- holding DCF & DMHAS **accountable** for timely transition planning and collaborative programming through regular reports on the status and outcomes of transitioning youth;
- creating programs in Connecticut to meet the complex needs of this age group, particularly housing models or other community living arrangements that allow the young adults to remain in place after turning 18 and becoming clients in the adult mental health system (DMHAS);
- providing specialized young adult services (YAS) statewide.