



## Policy Agenda –2010 As of 1-12-2010

**Saint Francis Community Services** promotes and supports effective policies, regulations and laws in the arenas of Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health and Children’s Health. Our agenda provides a road map for our efforts in an extraordinary year. The outlook for the state budget remains daunting requiring us to look for solutions while gathering crucial information of the impact these cuts have on the constituencies we serve.

Strategic Policy Area	Specific Initiatives <sup>1</sup>	Level of Involvement <sup>2</sup>
<b>Serving a Rural Population</b>		
<p>The needs, perspectives, and culture of our rural and frontier population shall be reflected in decisions and policies that shape services to children and families at <u>all</u> levels.</p>	<p><u>1.</u> <u>Access to Mental Health Services</u> in Rural and Frontier areas: Monitoring resources and applying research conclusions about current access to shape public policy and the distribution of resources.</p> <p><u>2.</u> SB 104 – Supported last year and would extend Medicaid reimbursement coverage to LCMFTs; LPCs and LCPCs. Currently BC/BS disallows.</p>	<p>Provide guidance and leadership support to the subcommittee of the Governor’s Mental Health Services Task Force and develop strategies to promote research findings on the barriers to mental health. Play a strong leadership role in promoting the findings of the Rural Mental Health Task Force in the legislative and administrative environment</p>
<b>Mental Health and Behavioral Services</b>		
<p>All children in the child welfare system will have access to quality and timely mental health and behavioral health services designed to sustain and reunite families.</p>	<p><u>3.</u> Partner with Alliance organizations to identify and implement strategies for leveraging additional Medicaid dollars and minimizing the impact on Medicaid cuts. (Provider Tax; PRTF funding)</p>	<p>Play strong and supportive partnership role and closely monitor developments</p>

<sup>1</sup> Specific Initiatives: indicates specific legislation; administrative policy; coalition effort (Legislative; Administrative; Community Advocacy activity)

<sup>2</sup> Level of Involvement: Take a leadership role; Play a supportive or partnership role; Closely Monitor

<b>Shaping and Influencing Positive Systems Change</b>		
<p>Changes in the child welfare and health systems affecting children and families must be adequately funded, accompanied by plans to build system capacity, and have a process for monitoring and evaluating performance against outcomes. Most importantly the interests of the children and families impacted by system change must remain the primary focus in proposing and/or implementing major systems change.</p>	<p>4. <u>529 Scholarship option</u> – Extend the option of establishing a 529-scholarship account to youths in the foster care system.</p>	<p>Play a leadership role and closely monitor</p>
	<p>5. Review tax-exempt status for current non-profits not covered. Promote an assessment of the policy and practice of granting exemptions to non-profits.</p>	<p>Play a leadership role and closely monitor</p>
	<p>6. Implementation of a memorandum of agreement between the departments of SRS and KDHE that addresses efficiencies in the licensing and regulatory structure. Promote recognition of accreditation as a presumption of compliance in particular areas.</p>	<p>Work in partnership with other accredited child welfare organizations to ensure implementation of an MOU or in the alternative specific legislation</p>
<p><b>Legislation and the State Budget</b> – As a result of consecutive budget the state has experienced a loss to the base budget of over \$2 B dollars. This has called into question the wisdom of continued cuts as a way to bring the budget expenses and revenues in line. We must begin work toward alternatives in funding services that will provide stability to the critical social service system. Adequate revenue must be a top priority.</p>	<p>7. Monitor reduction in resources on the CINC and JJA systems and assess implications for service access</p> <p>a. Promote the review of tax exemption and overall tax structure in the state</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to work in coalition with other organizations for building alternatives to additional cuts in the Kansas budget</p>

**Communicating progress**~ During the legislative session we will provide regular updates on legislative activities on our advocacy website at <http://www.st-francis.org/the-advocate-current.php> where our *Advocate Newsletter* will be posted and updated weekly. This session you can also follow us on “twitter” for up to the minute observations and information on the legislative process. Check it out at <http://twitter.com/ConnectionUNLTD>