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TO: Shelley Pighin, Health Services Personnel Officer
Jamie Holgerson, Personnel Services Assistant III

FROM: Stacey L. Tupper, Administrative Services Assistant III

DATE: January 17, 2007

SUBJECT: Justification for Direct Appointment - Mental Health Community Support Worker Classification

In September 2000, a request and justification for direct appointments to the classification of Mental Health Community Support Worker was submitted to the Human Resources Department and subsequently granted. It is my understanding that Human Resources has requested a new justification, as we are requesting direct appointments for individuals who are not in project positions, as was the case when the original request was made. Please note that *all* appointments to this classification subsequent to 2000 have been made by direct appointment.

When the classification of Mental Health Community Support Worker was originally established, the intent of the positions was to allow former mental health consumers the opportunity to work in the mental health system, providing *peer* support to individuals currently receiving treatment. As mental health systems around the nation moved away from the medical model of treatment toward the rehabilitation model, these systems began including consumers in program planning, development and service delivery. Because these individuals have experienced the system firsthand, their contributions have been invaluable in providing more effective services to our clients.

Mental Health Community Support Workers were originally only assigned to provide peer support to consumers of the Adult Mental Health System. However, several years ago, the practice of hiring peers to provide services to our clients expanded to the Children's System of Care, and we began hiring individuals on a contract basis who were referred to as "parent partners." Parent partners provide *peer* support to parents and families of seriously emotionally disturbed children and adolescents who receive services from our system. Parent partners all have seriously emotionally disturbed children in the mental health system and assist other parents in navigating that system. They have been part of the Children's System of Care



for years, working under individual contracts, rather than as permanent merit system employees. Parent partners all complete comprehensive Child and Family Team Facilitator Training.

Also several years ago, the Mental Health Division began employing staff under contract to work as consumer advocates for Mental Health Administration's Office for Consumer Empowerment. These staff are consumer providers who represent the mental health consumer perspective in the development and implementation of mental health programs and work to increase consumer involvement in quality improvement and system change activities. These staff all complete the training provided by Mental Health Administration's Office

In late 2006, we received direction from the County Administrator's Office that we were to no longer hire "contract employees" and were to either appoint those individuals under contract with the Division to positions in appropriate existing merit system positions or create new classifications for those individuals. Rather than create new classifications for the parent partners and consumer advocates, we modified the job specifications of Mental Health Community Support Worker I and II to include the duties performed by those staff, who also provide *peer* support within other parts of the mental health system.

Based on the special requirements associated with this classification, it would not be viable to fill vacancies through the traditional competitive examination process administered by the Human Resources Department. We are therefore requesting vacancies in this classification be filled through the direct appointment process.