

## ECCBC PFS Feasibility Study Addendum

Social Impact Solutions

### Benefits of the Feasibility Study

In addition to analyzing the feasibility of using PFS to expand CIP in Boulder County, the feasibility study process also produced many other benefits. Because of the nature of PFS, where a successful project involves the tight cooperation of many parties—the government, service providers, funders, etc.—the study process engaged these partners in a collective effort to prioritize, identify challenges and assets and map a path forward. This collaboration was in itself valuable, and produced many additional benefits related to data analysis and data sharing, surfacing new information and questioning assumptions, mapping the home visiting programs in the county, mapping the county’s child welfare process, a thorough analysis of the costs of child maltreatment, quantifying the costs of several discrete components of the child welfare process, identifying options beyond PFS, and focusing community attention on the urgency of child maltreatment prevention.

Data analysis and data sharing: Although the data was not able to answer all of the research questions, the process was grounded in data at all stages. One very important benefit was the ability to analyze the interaction between CIP and the County’s child welfare system. This would not have been possible were it not for the data sharing agreement MHP and DHHS executed, and the resulting commitment of people time on the part of both of those partners to analyzing the resulting data. That represented a good deal of work and will pay significant dividends into the future for both organizations.

Surfacing new information and questioning assumptions: The process provided the context and relevant data and information for CIP, MHP and DHHS to surface, question, and analyze the bases for assumptions. Between leadership briefings, the data working group, and the many interviews, we were able to surface a variety of issues. Where possible, data was used to further explore these issues. Since study participants represented a range of levels and competencies within each organization, in each case some individuals were not aware of the issues that the process identified. Below is a list of some of the topics that surfaced as a part of the study. These issues, obviously, have a much larger import/impact on the county community than the PFS examination, but the feasibility study process was able to provide the context for discussion and analysis.

- Despite the fact that the majority of CIP clients are not involved with child welfare, some DHHS personnel view CIP as too intensive for prevention work.

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- Since the transition to fee-for-service billing between CIP and DHHS, County funding to CIP has dropped, mostly due to the fact that CIP/MHP and DHHS have not been able to work out how to account for some CIP services, primarily prevention services.
- Since implementing DR, CIP is having to take on more responsibility for the families they serve that are part of FAR cases (owing to the fact that these families do not receive the more intensive case management from the County that is a part of HRA cases).
- CIP outcomes data suggests the program is more effective with families in the prevention space, compared to those already involved in the child welfare system.

Mapping the home visiting programs in the county: The earlier stage of the PFS exploration involved identifying all the home visiting programs operating in the County, interviewing all of those partners, and mapping the overlap, enrollment, target population, and expansion potential of each program. This analysis helped provide a foundation for ECCBC, the County, and community partners to identify gaps and consider an integrated approach to utilizing the unique benefits of each program. There has since been created a home visiting collaboration among the programs and County, which has greatly improved intentional collaboration.

Mapping the county's child welfare process: Through the course of the most recent phase of work, in collaboration with DHHS, Boulder District Court and MHP, we were able to map the child welfare process from referral, through all paths. Before initiation of the mapping process, no entity was able to provide a written flow chart for many parts of the process, let alone for the entire process, joining both DHHS and the Court. Although tweaks may need to be made on an ongoing basis, having a graphic representation of the entire system will be a resource to all community organizations that interact with child welfare. Several community organizations, and even DHHS and Court staff, have already provided feedback about how helpful that map is.

Thorough analysis of the costs of child maltreatment: One important component to a PFS feasibility study is quantifying the costs associated with status quo, in order to quantify what the monetary benefits would be of additional prevention. This part of the work involved quantifying the costs associated with child maltreatment in several categories: child welfare, education, juvenile justice, adult justice, short-term health, long-term health, and productivity loss. Although not all of the categories were directly relevant to the PFS models, quantifying all the estimated lifetime costs will be a useful analysis to help the County and community partners articulate the magnitude and urgency of the work in which they are all engaged. Furthermore, it helps to identify all the systems and aspects of public funding that are implicated by child maltreatment, which is much wider than just the County's child welfare system. The cost analysis could become a springboard in engaging the school districts and even the State's juvenile justice system in discussions around early childhood prevention efforts.

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Quantifying the costs of several discrete components of the child welfare process: Although only one component of the total societal costs of child maltreatment, the feasibility study took a deep dive into the costs associated with various stages of the child welfare system. This part of the analysis overlaid the map of the system mentioned above, with costs associated with several branches on the flow chart. Through extensive interviews with DHHS and Court personnel, and cost and workload data analysis, the study was able to quantify case rates associated with screening, assessment, ongoing case management, core services, out-of-home placement, and virtually every step of the dependency and neglect court process. Beyond CIP, this level of analysis can be an ongoing tool for evaluating the monetary impact for a number of potential programs or policy changes that would impact either the entire system, or any of these individual components.

Identifying a range of options, beyond PFS, for advancing efforts around child maltreatment prevention: The final report identified several different places where additional programming, through CIP or some other intervention, could be useful. In addition to primary prevention, these options included: the potential for a systematic or standardized process for identifying appropriate support service referrals in the Early Intervention Team; the potential for greater alignment between services and supports provided by the Intake Team for FAR cases, and those provided by the Ongoing Team for HRA cases; the potential to leverage lower re-referrals/involvements by adding “step-down” services after child welfare cases have been closed; and the potential to leverage better outcomes for families through a closer coordination between home-based services, like CIP, and substance abuse treatment services provided by MHP. In addition to these areas of potential opportunity, the report also identified several possible next steps for advancing the exploration, including PFS, but also other philanthropically funded opportunities, options around building evidence-base, and using the report findings to engage other potential stakeholders like the school districts.

Focusing community attention on the urgency of child maltreatment prevention: Finally, this project happened against the backdrop of a convergence of national, state and local focus on early childhood mental health, and the importance of prevention of child maltreatment. The fortunate coincidence of this timing meant that the study, both process and findings, was able to draw positive attention to Boulder County’s efforts and community assets, like CIP and the partnership on this study, as well as provide data points for policy-makers at the state and local level. In addition, in the course of the study, through interviews and data analysis, the leading edge of what might be a very concerning trend was identified—increases in the number and acuity of the highest risk cases, including open involvements and out-of-home placements, likely due to a corresponding increase in opioid abuse. Together with the local and state focus

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on the importance of maltreatment prevention, and the analysis of the costs and benefits of prevention, this data adds urgency to the conversation around increased prevention efforts. Through the committed advocacy of ECCBC and its substantial network, the study's work will be used to inform, engage, focus, and galvanize community efforts around the importance and urgency of maltreatment prevention. The next step on this front will be the community meeting, planned for the late summer, where the study will be presented and provide the context, information, and data for the state and local community to propel progress in Boulder County.