CONNECTIONS

Memo

To: COMMISSIONERS, CONNECTIONS Implementation Coordinators, Directors of Services

From: CONNECTIONS Implementation Team

Date: April 22, 2003

Re: CONNECTIONS Local District Self-Assessment

The CONNECTIONS Implementation Team, in conjunction with the Regional Office staff and staff from the Strategic Policy and Planning Unit of OCFS recently held regional forums to introduce local district staff to policy, practice and system changes that will take affect in the near future, and continue with Build 16 of CONNECTIONS. During these forums, the Implementation Plan was introduced, and certain activities and tools were discussed.

One of the tools highlighted was the Local District Self-Assessment. The Self-Assessment is designed to focus the attention of local districts on planning to implement Build 16 as well as on early readiness activities to prepare for future changes. The Self-Assessment tool was suggested by a workgroup of local district and voluntary agency staff. The workgroup recommended a tool that would assist in focusing and identifying areas that will need the greatest attention and change, as well as to gauge areas where the district is already prepared to implement.

Each Self-Assessment item listed is stated as a benchmark. The district should assess its current state of readiness in comparison to each benchmark. The "gap" between current readiness and the benchmark should be noted in the space provided under each item. The benchmark and the gap identified should be used to develop action items; steps that can be taken to lessen the gap and prepare for the implementation of CONNECTIONS Build 16 and subsequent releases. The action items can be recorded at the end of each section, and will include who will be responsible for completing the items, and when they are due.

The Self-Assessment is divided into five sections:

Section I <u>Organizing the Implementation of Build 16 and Future Builds</u>

This section will help districts identify whether they have the appropriate staff assigned to assist with the implementation tasks.

Section II General Readiness Issues

This section will help to insure that staff and stakeholders have a basic understanding of the new functionality, and have a plan for CONNECTIONS training for appropriate staff.

Section III Staff Computer Literacy

This section will help to review that appropriate staff have basic computer skills, and insure that appropriate staff are competent with current CONNECTIONS procedures

Section IV Data Clean-up

This section will help to review activities that the local district can complete to "clean up" the database and minimize workload on the day of the implementation

Section V Program and Operational Considerations

This section will help to review local district activities regarding policy and practice changes to the safety assessment, risk assessment profile (and subsequent opening/closing cases for services), progress notes and duplicate investigations.

CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation staff are available to assist you with the completion of the Self Assessment tool. They will be contacting your agency Implementation Coordinator in the near future to schedule a meeting to discuss the overall plan for implementation and ways that CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation staff can best support your local implementation planning process. CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation staff will be available to bring a lap top demonstration of the new functions, and can also forward additional copies of any materials that you feel may be helpful to you. They will also assist you in developing the action items, and may be able to provide technical assistance or arrange for training, if appropriate. Please feel free to contact the Regional Implementation staff if you have any additional questions regarding the Self Assessment, or questions regarding any of the other implementation activities that are planned for the upcoming Builds.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to assist you with the implementation activities for Build 16.