

## **NEW YORK STATE LAUNCHES FREE ONLINE VIDEO SERIES TO TRAIN CASEWORKERS HOW TO ENROLL FOSTER CHILDREN IN BRIDGES TO HEALTH PROGRAM**

### **NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (OCFS) FIRST STATE AGENCY TO OFFER CASEWORKER TRAINING VIA YOUTUBE AND ITUNES**

New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Gladys Carrión, Esq., today announced the premiere of a free 13-episode online video series to train local county social services and not-for-profit agency caseworkers on how to enroll eligible foster children in the Bridges to Health Medicaid-waiver program.

This free online video series will provide local department of social services commissioners, health care integration agencies (HCIAs), voluntary agency executive directors, administrators, supervisors, and, most importantly, caseworkers, with the information and training they require to enroll eligible clients in Bridges to Health.

This series is immediately available for viewing on either the [OCFS Internet](#) website, [YouTube](#), or [Facebook](#), and as a download from iTunes. To find the series in the online iTunes store, enter "OCFS" in the iTunes search box on the upper right-hand corner of the iTunes screen.

"By utilizing free social networking and online tools like YouTube, Facebook, and iTunes for caseworker training, OCFS is able to contain costs while still fulfilling, even enhancing, its critical core mission to improve outcomes for children," said Commissioner Carrión. "OCFS is especially pleased to use these tools to train caseworkers how to enroll eligible foster children in Bridges to Health."

New York State Chief Information Officer and Director of the Office for Technology Dr. Melodie Mayberry-Stewart said: "The use of social media and Web 2.0 is fast evolving in government. I applaud OCFS for embracing the social networking technology available to deliver important social services to our citizens. Because social networking is being integrated in the daily lives of so many New Yorkers, we must continue to use programs that allow collaboration, transparency, and openness."

Bridges to Health is a comprehensive community care program which focuses on the most vulnerable children in foster care. This program provides expanded and enhanced services to foster children with disabilities, including children in OCFS custody. These children typically have serious emotional problems or developmental disabilities or are medically fragile. The program also serves their families, including birth parents, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and siblings.

Bridges to Health includes just over a dozen services, including health care coordination; family and caregiver support; crisis management; intensive home care support; immediate crisis response services; accessibility modifications; and advocacy for the children's participation in school and other community activities.

Medical institutionalization of disabled children annually costs \$185,000 to \$300,000 per child. Bridges to Health, even with these expanded and enhanced services, will have a significantly lower annual cost of approximately \$50,000 per child. The program is approved by the United States Department of Health and Human Services to use Medicaid funding to provide services not otherwise available through Medicaid.

Once children are enrolled in the program, they may be eligible for services until they are 21 years old. There are currently 831 children enrolled in Bridges to Health.

OCFS Internet: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/b2h>  
YouTube/OCFS B2H Training Channel: <http://youtube.com/ocfsb2h>  
OCFS Facebook Page: <http://tiny.cc/ocfsfacebook>

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