

# ACMH 2011 Policy Priorities

## Michigan's Public System of Children's Mental Health

**Serious emotional and mental health disorders in children and youth are real and treatable. Supporting good mental health and well-being for children, youth and families is good public policy!**

### Increase Funding for Public Mental Health Services for Children

Studies clearly show that one in five children has a diagnosable mental health disorder: **yet 75 to 80 % of children do not receive the mental health services they need.**

Michigan has historically failed to prioritize funding for children with serious emotional disturbances. **For the past two decades, state general fund (GF) dollars have been cut by 14%.** General Funds are used to serve uninsured and under-insured children. The number of children identified with serious emotional disturbance in need of GF funded services continues to increase.

### Adopt Family Driven, Youth Guided Care as Best Practice

Family-driven, youth-guided care is a philosophy about how child serving systems such as mental health can partner with caregivers and youth for improved outcomes. This philosophy, when successfully implemented, **maximizes state funding and resources, produces efficiencies, improves quality, and increases satisfaction with services.**

**Family-driven means:** families have a primary decision making role in the care of their own children as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all children in the community, state, tribe, territory and nation.

**Youth-guided means:** young people have the right to be empowered, educated and given a decision-making role in their own care as well as the policies and procedures governing the care of all youth in the community, state, tribe, territory and nation.

Family-driven and youth-guided care should be implemented at all levels, including the individual **child and family, service delivery, and systemic levels.**

### Mental Health Parity

All individuals with insurance, who need mental health treatment, have a right to coverage equal to their physical healthcare coverage. Insurance policies often discriminate against mental health conditions by covering far more physical conditions than mental conditions. Michigan is **one of only 7 states that does not have parity.** This inequity must be rectified by policy that provides equal coverage for **all mental health conditions.**

**Children's Mental Health Matters!**

