

THE OBSERVER



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Reporting Accurate and Objective Information Based on Facts, not Agenda-Setting Theories

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America's Children

Foster Care – Save Our Society- "SOS"!

Series - Part 5 of 5

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No longer can society whisper about the atrocities within "**The System**" of **Child Protective Services, Foster Care and Adoption**. The whispering has become amplified voices wanting to know how and why a system so damaged can be allowed to continue within its present mode.

A SOS alarm has sounded and we must save our society. Our youth are our future and will eventually have the responsibility of caring for us when we become unable to care for ourselves. By not protecting our youth, we have weakened a generation and have removed the civility component necessary to strengthen the family unit, community and the general public. The instability of a family increases a child's risk. Children deserve and require our protection.

The five [protective factors](#) for strengthening families are: 1) bonding-nurturing, 2) parental knowledge and the understanding of youth development, 3) parental flexibility and resilience, 4) social networking with family, friends and neighbors, 5) having a solid support (finances, housing and necessities) to help one to parent effectively.

"[The System](#)" on many occasions has been a safety net, however, based on the fractures, it needs to be completely revamped and updated to make it more productive and efficient. An overwhelming myriad of systemic problems include lack of funding, case overload, overworked personnel, some incompetent social workers who have yet to exercise common sense and compassion, unaccommodating office hours and a dependence on voice mail and phone looping. [Has CPS outlived its usefulness?](#)

The following questions raise red flags: Does "The System" operate with full disclosure including financials? Why was the consultant data omitted from the DCF website for such a lauded psychiatrist, yet did not mention the pharmaceutical consulting positions? "[Dr. Tandon](#) reports serving as a consultant to AstraZeneca LP, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, Eli Lilly and Company, Janssen Pharmaceutica, and Pfizer Inc."

The PsychRights organization which is a tax-exempt charity law project for psychiatric rights stated:

"In 2009, Eli Lilly agreed to pay \$1.4 Billion in [criminal and civil penalties](#) for such off-label promotion of Zyprexa and Pfizer agreed to pay \$2.3 Billion for the illegal off-label promotion of Geodon and other drugs. In May of 2010, Astra-Zeneca agreed to pay

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\$520 million for the illegal off-label promotion of Seroquel for use in children. However, despite these large penalties by the drug companies, the practice has not stopped. It is merely a cost of doing business to these pharmaceutical Goliaths and, in fact, caps their liability for these crimes. Most importantly, these settlements have not stopped the practice of child psychiatrists and other prescribers giving these drugs to children and youth and Medicaid continuing to pay for these fraudulent claims."

Were these penalties ever paid, and if not, why not?

Per [Miami Herald, July 7, 2009](#), political writer Marc Caputo:

- In 86 percent of cases, the prescribing physician didn't complete what's known as a Psychotherapeutic Medication Treatment Plan, which helps case workers, legal guardians, judges and other physicians determine a child's mental well being.
- In 75 percent of the cases, the case workers did not provide physicians with pertinent medical information about the child.
- In 76 percent of the cases, the case worker didn't provide parents with information about the psychotropic drugs their kids were being prescribed. Nor did the case worker help arrange transportation or phone conversations between the doctor and the child's guardian.
- In 58 percent of the cases, the case manager didn't attempt to speak with or meet the parent or guardian prior to seeking a court order to medicate the child.
- In 89 percent of the cases where parental consent wasn't obtained to medicate children, case managers failed to inform state lawyers that they were seeking a court order to administer the medication.

In August 2010, [Florida banned foster children from clinical drug trials](#).

- Who comprises the Ethics Committee and are they qualified to investigate? a comparison study of the children upon admission into "The System" on medication would identify any increase of drug usage for their duration. Do those who are appointed actually submit a job application and have a background screening or is the resume automatically accepted? Periodic checks and balances involving updated background screenings of all personnel associated with "The System" should be on-going. A permanent background screening/security department would be advantageous.

To read an [Overview of Time of Arrest Policy and Practice](#) (46 page Report). Where is the report that would inform the public of the average number of cases per case worker and a comparison of new cases to the prior year? **Does a case worker work on a quota system?**

- Do larger numbers of those admitted into "The System" automatically increase Federal funding allotment and are the case workers and executives receiving bonuses based on the numbers?

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- Is there a benefit to "The System" to keep children beyond the normal time frame . . . and just what is the normal time frame? Does the paperwork reflect foster children held in foster care and then fed into the adoption pool during specific times of the year depending on Federal scrutiny?
- How many of these cases go to trial and are appealed and how many appeals are actually overturned? much of this data is exempt from Florida's Sunshine Law.
- Electronic documents and records shared by case workers and physicians would give a more realistic view of the child.
- Losing case paperwork exhibits incompetence. The paperwork represents vulnerable children in need of help. It's important to hold people accountable for their negligence within "The System."
- Since many of the children enter "The System" within a crisis mode, this agency must become a 24/7 operation. A crisis is an unscheduled event and one must have assurance of reaching the right people at all times!
- Why do we think our computers need a 24 hr. help line, yet our children seeking help must wait until daily operational hours? Maybe a 24 hr. call center is necessary and would eliminate the re-routing of calls, the looping of voice mails and the frustration by those calling.
- Law enforcement should be the first contact if a child has been abused. A law has been broken and so has a spirit. A system of social workers need to be available 24/7 and by reducing the work load for the case worker, a more compassionate and effective social worker would be available and would lessen the turnover ratio.
- All case workers who visit homes should have a camera for instant documentation of abuse and upon returning to the office should be turned in immediately and digitally computerized.
- An investigation and review of the children routed from "The System" into the mental institutions would be revealing. Are children kept unnecessarily and are the institutions used as warehousing for children who have been irresponsibly put on psychotropic medications?
- Since social workers have different educational experience, uniformity regarding training of all personnel would help make those involved in daily activities more understanding of the big picture. Two or three weeks of orientation are not acceptable.
- Are the child care facilities associated with "The System" monitored and are the personnel associated with those [day care centers](#) thoroughly screened?
- Are the counselors and participating volunteers thoroughly screened for the [summer day camps](#) for the children in "The System"?
- How many emergency shelters are available and are they equipped to handle those in a crisis mode?

To fix problems they must first be identified! Let's get serious about protecting our youth and allowing them to have a future. And for all of those who have helped foster children and adoptees . . . Salute!

Suggested Additional Reading:

[Foster Parent Handbook](#)
[Foster Care Statistics 2010](#)
[Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)
[Foster Care Inquiries by State Chart](#)

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[National Coalition for Child Protection Reform](#)

[Links to documents by Nick Bryant](#)

[Correspondence between Lawrence E. King, Jr. and Boys Town director Father Robert P. Hupp \(Nick Bryant\)](#)

[The Franklin Cover-Up](#)

[Billion Dollar Psych Drug Scam](#)

[Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008](#)

[State Enacted Legislation](#)

[Dec. 2010 Report Beyond Investigations: current Innovations in Responding to Reports of Child Maltreatment](#)

[Background checks for summer camp officials...and day care agencies used by DCF](#)

[Pedophile Ring Smashed](#)