

Response to Questions on the FY 2012 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Foust

Question: The Carryover package includes a \$5 million increase in expenditures for the Comprehensive Services Act funding “based on anticipated expenditures in FY 2012.” When was the need for the increased expenditures identified? On what will the increased expenditures be spent?

Response: The Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) provides both community-and facility-based services to at-risk children and their families. Services offered through CSA are driven by federal and state mandates in foster care and special education. County agencies and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) work collaboratively to design service plans meeting the unique needs of families with children and youth who have, or are at-risk of having, serious emotional or behavioral difficulties.

In FY 2008, the state instituted changes to its classification of service requirements related to mandated services. Based on reinterpretation of state policy regarding foster care prevention, the State has placed children in need of mental health services in the mandated services category. This reinterpretation was intended to prevent the relinquishment of custody by parents whose children are in need of mental health services, but for who there is now only limited non-mandated funding available to purchase services. By broadening the foster care prevention population, for which services are mandated, more youth must now receive services.

As a result of this state action, a permanent CSA reserve was established in Agency 87, Unclassified Administrative Expenses as part of the FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan. This reserve addresses the funding shortfall due to the state change, as well as any significant fluctuations in the number of youth served or complexity of services provided. This reserve has been utilized each year. The FY 2012 funding requirement is based on the adjustment made as part of the *FY 2011 Third Quarter Review* and is consistent with current policy.