

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Website Helps Parents Seek Information on Children's Mental Health

The Connecticut Center for Effective Practice, a division of the Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) recently launched a new website: www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com. The Center developed the site to serve as a comprehensive resource for parents, caregivers and non-mental health professionals.

This site was designed as a resource for parents and caregivers who have questions or concerns about their child's mental health. It was developed with the help of other parents based on the thoughts and concerns they shared. When parents are first confronted with worries about their children's mental health, they often feel overwhelmed. This website provides a range of information on children's mental health and helps families better understand their options for seeking treatment.

Prior to the launch of this website, information about children's mental (also known as emotional or behavioral) health issues and resources was scattered across a variety of different websites. While dealing with the flu or a toothache usually means going to a doctor and a dentist, seeking help for a child who may have an emotional or behavioral problem is less straightforward. "As a child psychologist, I am often asked questions about children's mental health issues and where to go for help," said Bob Franks, director of the Connecticut Center for Effective Practice. "We built this site as a 'go to' resource for parents who are seeking information about children's mental health."

The site offers a list of *Frequently Asked Questions* ranging from "How do I know when to worry about my child's mental health?" to "What are the differences between various types of therapists?" Other questions cover what types of treatment are available, the use and potential impact of medications, questions to ask a therapist, how to share information with the rest of the family, and a wide variety of other common concerns. *About Best Practices* lists and explains the benefits of new evidence-based treatment approaches and also provides a list of resources for those wishing to find out more.

The site is free and accessible to anyone with access to the Internet. It covers mental health issues that can impact all age groups from toddlers to late teens. The Center worked with parents to ensure that the site is both easy to understand and to use. In addition to frequently asked questions, users can access downloadable and printable lists of questions to ask therapists on their first visit, as well as links to selected websites with more in-depth information.

"It is important to note that www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com is **not** a referral resource and does not take the place of consulting a mental health professional", said Franks. "Only trained professionals are qualified to make an informed diagnosis and determine what an individual child needs. However, the website will have done its job if it helps parents and caregivers better understand their child's needs and to seek help earlier."

For additional details or questions, please contact Bob Franks at rfranks@uchc.edu or 860-679-1531.

Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) is the operating arm of the Children's Fund of Connecticut (CFC) a public, charitable foundation focused on developing comprehensive, effective, community-

based health and mental health care systems for children and their families. Based in Farmington, CHDI works to advance policy, systems, program and practice changes that will result in better health and developmental outcomes for the children of Connecticut.

The Connecticut Center for Effective Practice (CCEP), a division of CHDI, focuses on improving mental health care for children across Connecticut. CCEP collaborates with state agencies and academic institutions to improve the effectiveness of treatment provided to all children with serious and complex emotional, behavioral, and addictive disorders.