



### Editor's Introduction

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## Editor's Introduction

*Seymour J. Rosenthal, MSSW*

Nothing more dramatically portrays the enormous complexities of the social work profession, than the media's recent depiction of the horrors befalling children in foster care. The recent exposure of the New Jersey case of alleged child abuse and neglect of foster children placed with the family remains a stinging image in the minds of people. Both the individuals involved in the case and the system of foster care were mercilessly chastised at a time when states and local governments are being called upon to exert more effective supervision of their caseloads. Governors and other administration personnel are decrying the lack of funds for these important programs. State administrators are in need of help with meeting the demands of the child welfare system. The children in the system are true victims of the lack of resources, followed closely by workers who typically have over extended caseloads and inadequate sporadic supervision.

Deep concerns exist in the profession about the quality of public child welfare services. In addition, people in the profession and interested publics exacerbate the concerns with the continuous call for privatization of many traditionally public child welfare services, such as adoption, foster care, and now protective services. Concerning the role of professional social work and continuing education, they remain involved, but need to take more active steps toward the development of clinical supervision and assisting supervisors to create more adequately prepared child welfare workers.

This issue has its genesis in the personal and professional interests of the guest editors, Dr. Michael Kelly, PhD and Dr. Paul Sundet, PhD. Both long time members of the same faculty, they have developed the policy, planning and administration MSW concentration

and have taught together for a number of years. Paul Sundet is a leader in the development of state legislation, policy, and programs. Widely known and respected, he brings to the school a special expertise in state programs. Mike Kelly, Social Work Extension program director for 15 years, was responsible for a large number of state and federally funded programs until joining the teaching faculty in the early nineties. His career has included extensive work in developing, implementing and evaluating state programs with a particular interest in child welfare. They have continued a deep professional interest in how continuing professional education, university extension programs and the needs of public social services can best be merged. Of particular concern to them has been the quality of supervision, its impact on delivery of public human services and the role of social work education in preparing practitioners to perform that function and continuing their professional development. They have recognized a new opportunity in the Children's Bureau approach to multi-state funding through the regional quality improvement centers (QIC).

The issue is truly dedicated to many people in and out of the profession who work to improve the system in a variety of ways. It presents an unique and promising effort to create models of funding by government to find ways to overcome the arduous path of improving foster care in America. The effort to engage and to develop a rational process for reporting on the experiences was both a Herculean and creative task. Without the guest editors' insightful outlook and genuine passion for child welfare, this issue and its appropriate intentions never would have reached its well deserved publication.

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