

Charge to Gabriel Myers Work Group
From DCF Secretary George Sheldon

This document is a brief description of the guidance provided by Secretary Sheldon to the Gabriel Myers Work Group.

- Any death of a child is tragic; it is particularly so when a child as young as this sees suicide as an option to living
- Discussion of what we know so far on this case
- Discussion on steps already taken (e.g., Quality Assurance Review on this specific case and review of all foster children's file to determine the extent of prescription of psychotropic drugs)
- I'm convening this workgroup to take an independent look at this case and its implications on the way DCF does business throughout the State.
- While the focus of many of the news reports has been on the use of psychotropic drugs...and indeed that is a concern...I'd like for you to make a comprehensive examination of this case. I'd like for you to closely examine what went right...and what went wrong...as we responded to the needs of Gabriel Myers.
- I'd like for you to draw on a number of resources as you undertake this study...including members of our DCF Operations and Program staffs, the Guardian ad Litem Program, ChildNet, Broward County Sheriff's Office, Margate Police Department, State Child Protection Team (Dr. Mike Haney), Agency for Health Care Administration and necessary health care practitioners, members of the Judiciary, and any other resources which will allow you to complete this assignment.
- I'd like you to draw on existing documentation, including the report prepared by Judge Leifman, reports generated in the past by the Florida Statewide Advocacy Council (Betty Busbee), and material previously supplied to former Secretary Butterworth and me by YouthShine, as you examine factors which may have contributed to Gabriel's death.
- I don't expect you to conduct a re-investigation of the incident...that's already being done by the Margate Police Department...nor do I expect you to assess blame.
- I'm looking to you for a comprehensive analysis of the issues involved...an examination which will allow the Task Force for Fostering Success, chaired by General Butterworth, and this Department to identify and implement improvements to the system which reduce the chances of such a horrible event from occurring in the future.

- I've attached no specific timeframe for you to conduct this review...I would only ask that you complete your task with the sense of urgency that is expected in this agency and by our children.