



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
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Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Buell, Secretary

Lanier M. Cansler, Deputy Secretary

November 30, 2001

To All North Carolinians:

Governor Easley stated in his inaugural address that the people of North Carolina should be as one and that no citizen should be left behind. As Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, I am charged with addressing the needs of some of North Carolina's most vulnerable citizens, including those with mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse challenges. In order to meet the Governor's pledge, these North Carolinians need our help and support.

I made the commitment to you to make mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services one of my highest priorities. I began that commitment by developing, in collaboration with the North Carolina Legislature, a State plan for mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services. I am presenting to you with pride and enthusiasm, "The State Plan 2001: A Blueprint for Change."

This five-year plan is our first step in reforming our mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services system. The plan was developed with input of consumers, family members, providers, area programs, county commissioners, advocates and state staff. This living plan will be reviewed and revised on an annual basis as we learn from the steps of implementation.

Our steps will be incremental and our decisions will be difficult, but with your assistance and support, we will succeed in the shaping of our mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services system into a model for the 21st century. My staff and I stand firm in our resolve to implement this plan so that our mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse system delivers the assistance people need to live successfully in their communities.

Sincerely yours,

Carmen Hooker Buell

CHB/trl