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# Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Sims Consulting Awarded Work First/CPS initiative

Concord, NC – PBH is pleased to announce that Sims Consulting and Clinical Services, Inc. was awarded the request for proposal for Work First/CPS Substance Abuse Initiative, effective October 1. The program will cover all five counties in the PBH catchment: Cabarrus, Davidson, Rowan, Stanly and Union. The service provides early identification of substance abuse disorder(s) or mental illness that may affect the Work First/Child Protective Services consumer's ability to secure and maintain employment through screening, comprehensive clinical assessment, referral and care coordination services. The service provider is responsible to ensure that barriers to receiving treatment are addressed under the requirements of G.S.108A-25.2 and G.S.108A-29.1. This includes case consultation, follow-up, training with local Department of Social Services and other activities approved by the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS).

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North Carolina's Work First Program is the cornerstone to reforming a fragmented welfare system into a system that focuses on employment and self-sufficiency. This approach to reform is based upon the universal belief that society functions best when it is built upon personal responsibility and employment. Put simply, Work First is the blueprint for "changing welfare as we know it" in North Carolina.

Substance abuse and mental health issues are significant barriers to employment for a number of adult Work First participants. To assist these families in becoming employed and maintaining employment, all Work First adult applicants/recipients will be screened for possible substance abuse unless the adult applicant/recipient meets an exception. If the screening indicates the adult is at risk for substance abuse, he/she will be referred to a Qualified Professional Substance Abuse (QPSA) or other qualified staff. The QPSA will conduct a comprehensive substance abuse assessment. If treatment is appropriate, the QPSA will facilitate the arrangements for the treatment. Applicants/recipients who do not comply with their treatment plan are not eligible for Work First cash assistance.

For more information about this program, contact John Giampaolo in the Network Operations Department at (704) 721-7051.

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