

## IECA Suggestions on Proposed Legislation

(1)IECA appreciates that vulnerable adolescents who have been unsuccessful in local therapies must find their way to the most appropriate, licensed placement and that, as such, no referring agent should ever be allowed to accept a kickback. These kickback arrangements lead to agents directing families to a small number of programs under contract rather than the most appropriate program for that teen's unique needs. Anything that disrupts the premise that the adolescent's unique needs are paramount ends up harming the student. IECA supports barring such 'finder's fees' and any other financial entanglements.

The only area where we support any financial tie is on-campus visits. IECA standards and the current version of your legislation require referral agents to regularly and continually visit campuses. We allow the programs to cover the usual and customary costs of campus evaluative visits: coach airfare, one night in a hotel, ground transportation, meals on site.

(2)IECA supports providing detailed information to families exploring a placement. Two issues are raised.

Seven days prior to a placement for the information to be shared is a luxury that often isn't realistic. IECA suggests amending this provision to require that the information be provided within 24 hours of recommendations. [Our members must always provide families with several options, never just one, and we think requiring data be provided for each recommendation within 24 hours is fair.] I think this could meet the balance of needs during emergency placements.

Secondly, while the legislation requires the educational consultant to provide the data, such data will necessarily come from each program. We are concerned that educational consultants could be held liable for any incorrect or out-of-date information provided by the programs. We believe that the legislation should hold the programs, rather than the agents, accountable for the veracity of the information they provide.

(3)This legislation would apply to referral agents in the state of Oregon, as well as anyone working with Oregon families. From time to time (we would estimate once every five years or so), IECA members from other states will work with a single family in Oregon. We have practical concerns regarding how consultants/counselors from California to Rhode Island will adhere to requirements in Oregon, including a registration process, especially if a placement is made out-of-state within days. You may wish to consider an amendment that exempts out-of-state highly qualified educational consultants from the provisions of this legislation if the number of referrals made is considered de minimis (e.g. 2 or fewer referrals in a given year) or handled by a professional in identified exempt groups.

(4)A significant concern is that unqualified individuals take advantage of desperate families and offer placements. Sometimes these individuals are unqualified agents working off of kickbacks. Sometimes these are highly educated family counselors, psychologists, social workers and therapists whose training has not included visits to or detailed knowledge of programs and should not, therefore, be offering referrals.

(5)IECA's professional members who do therapeutic work must have an advanced degree in counseling, social work or a related field. They must visit 50 campuses for evaluative visits. They must demonstrate years of experience and ongoing education, submit references for checks, complete a description of their processes and modalities, and complete an ethics course. There are just 3 such professional members in Oregon, plus 2 working on their qualifications. In order to assure that Oregon families have access to highly trained support, I would suggest an amendment exempting IECA Professional Members, as most qualified to do this critical work.