

**The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**

*John G. Rowland*  
Governor

**A Healthcare Service Agency**

*Thomas A. Kirk Jr., Ph.D.*  
Commissioner

**Family Stages – Meet Ms. B**

Family Stages is a service collaborative for homeless women in Bridgeport who have a substance use disorder and who are pregnant or have recently given birth. The program also treats women with a co-occurring substance use and mental health disorder. Family Stages serves both the mother and her children. The program is a partnership of culturally competent housing and substance abuse service providers, including faith-based organizations, local health professionals, and state agencies such as the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

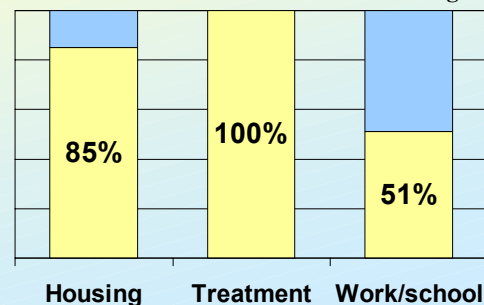
**Meet Ms. B...**She is a 34 year old African American woman who has been in Family Stages for a year. Her three children, ages 14, 7 and 2 were legally separated from her when the youngest child tested positive for heroin at birth. She's been through medical detoxification thirteen times and has had six inpatient hospitalizations. Ms. B. has also been physically and sexually abused. At the time of her referral to Family Stages, she was living with ten family members in a two bedroom apartment; in addition to the overcrowding, they were all at risk of eviction. The partner agencies of Family Stages helped Ms. B overcome many difficult hurdles. They worked closely with Ms. B for several months to organize and implement a detailed service plan that addressed child and family issues, housing, treatment and support services.

As of January 2003 Ms. B lives in a three-bedroom apartment, reunited with her three children, and working as a nurse's aide. She continues to be clean and sober, takes her medication regularly, and is an active member of a support group. Ms. B understands that she will continue to face difficult challenges. There are emerging family issues between her and her oldest daughter; Ms. B has already expressed an interest in the family therapy that can help them both.

**Accomplishments**

- Permanent housing for 33 women and their children.
- Substance abuse treatment for 39 women; 30 women are in mental health treatment.
- Twenty women are either working or in vocational/educational program.

**Percentage of Persons Served by Family Stages Who Have Been Placed in Service Settings**



**Partnering agencies:**

- |  |  |
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| <i>The Connection</i>                                | <i>LMG/Guenster</i>                      |
| <i>City of Bridgeport Department of Health</i>       | <i>Hall Neighborhood House</i>           |
| <i>Catholic Charities of Fairfield County</i>        | <i>Re-Focus Outreach Ministries</i>      |
| <i>Chemical Abuse Services Agency (CASA)</i>         | <i>The Center for Women and Families</i> |
| <i>Southwest Connecticut Mental Health Services*</i> | <i>UConn School of Social Work</i>       |

*\*SWCMHS is a network of DMHAS operated and funded non-profit mental health and addiction services in Southwest Connecticut. It provides a range of inpatient and outpatient psychiatric, substance abuse, crisis, support and rehabilitation services.*