

Subject: Providence House comment on Clearinghouse of evidence-based practices

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to request that Providence House – a licensed, family preservation focused Crisis Nursery in Cleveland OH, be included in the clearinghouse of evidence-based practices in accordance with the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018. Providence House is Ohio's first and one of the nation's longest operating crisis nurseries. With 37 years of experience, we also support one of the longest lengths of stay among nurseries in the United States and the deepest levels of services beyond children's emergency shelter, promoting family stability and preservation and preventing foster care placements.

Our model is unique among crisis nurseries nationally, which typically only offer children's shelter. Based on university led evaluations of our outcomes, we know that parent education, case management, and aftercare services are the vital components that transform families and create enduring family stability. We plan to promote, replicate, and transform the landscape of crisis nurseries to adopt our model and improve outcomes for families in crisis across the U.S.

Families in crisis turn to Providence House when facing homelessness, violence or incarceration, or while receiving medical, mental health or substance abuse services. Our goal is to keep kids safe and families together. Often parents in crisis need a safe place for their children to stay while they work to address substance abuse, mental health, and other issues impacting their ability to parent and maintain family stability. Frequently, these parents do not have safe alternatives for childcare among family, friends, or partners and fear that their children may be taken from them (foster care) if they seek needed services, such as inpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment.

While children in a crisis nursery are temporarily cared for in a "home away from home" from their parent, it is a brief time apart which allows the parent to focus on treatment and rebuilding their family stability with the comfort of knowing that their children are safe, in a licensed home-like setting, and remain in their parents' custody. This dramatically alleviates the fear that their children will be taken from them if they seek the treatment and services that they require to achieve stability. As evidence of parent trust in our program, 70% of our admissions are self-referrals based on recommendations from other parents who have used our services.

We keep their children safe to prevent child abuse and neglect while working with parents to address root causes of family instability. Our two-generation, trauma-informed approach is focused on children and their parent(s) to prevent child maltreatment, reduce foster care placements, and strengthen families. The attached "Providence House Service Overview" outlines admission criteria, length of shelter stay, and the range of services provided to each family.

Last year 98% of the children we served were reunited with their families, and 85% of parents reported family stability had improved. A long term outcomes study (see attached "Children and Youth Services Review Providence House Study") demonstrated the impact of Providence House services:

- **Reduced Foster Care Placements:** When parents engage in Providence House services and complete recommended Providence House services (case management, parent education, and after care), their children are less likely to be placed in foster care after they leave Providence House. 82% of the children in the study remained in the parents' custody following services.
- **Successful Minority Families:** Minority families (African American and Bi-racial) are the most successful (vs. Caucasian), with more engagement in Providence House services and less foster care involvement after their child's stay.

A recent evaluation of Providence House services (see attached "CWRU PERI PH Report") found:

- The percentage of clients living in their own house or apartment increased from 55.8% at intake to 64.8% at discharge, an increase of 16.1%.
- The number of clients who were employed increased from 26.3% at intake to 45.6% at discharge, an improvement of 73.4%. Income increased from \$617.65 at intake to \$821.93 at discharge, an increase of 33.1%. The percentage of clients reporting no monthly income decreased (improved) by 31.5%.
- Almost all clients reported they had custody of their child(ren) at intake or discharge, and almost all clients expected their child(ren) to remain in their custody after receiving services.

Providence House currently offers consultation opportunities to those seeking to implement our program or improving their existing crisis nursery program. We are in the process of developing manuals that specify the components of the practices, protocols, and methods to administer our programming to maintain fidelity to the Providence House model. The attached "Providence House Services and Outcomes Report 2016-2017" further lists the outcomes we have achieved and the populations we serve.

Thank you for taking the time to review the attached material and your consideration of the Providence House (Cleveland, OH) Crisis Nursery model as a part of the clearinghouse of evidence-based practices in accordance with the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018.

To learn more about our program, visit our website [www.provhouse.org](http://www.provhouse.org). If you have any questions, please contact me directly at [natalie@provhouse.org](mailto:natalie@provhouse.org) or 216-651-5982 x224 or mobile 216-225-5677.

Sincerely,

Natalie A. Leek-Nelson  
President and CEO  
Providence House