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## **BMCW Receives \$463,961 Grant to Help Keep Children and Mothers Together Safely**

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) has been awarded \$463,961 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support a family-centered treatment program for mothers with substance abuse problems while protecting children. Substance abuse is a serious risk factor for child safety and is the reason many children are removed from their homes. The *Families Come First* program combines treatment for mothers while allowing the family to safely stay together.

"Any time we can keep children safe and families together, we should do so," Department of Children and Families Secretary Reggie Bicha said. "By working together to support the mother's substance abuse treatment and keep the connection with her children strong, we are ensuring the well-being of children and transforming families."

*Families Come First* is designed to work with mothers and children who have come to the attention of BMCW because of substance abuse. Through this program, BMCW will collaborate with Meta House to strengthen these families as the mothers overcome addiction. Research shows that bringing children into residential programs with their mothers, focusing on the mother-child relationship and treating the children have benefits for both the mother and the child. In addition to substance abuse treatment mothers receive mental health and trauma treatment; mother-child family therapy; assistance with domestic violence issues; basic living skills; physical health needs; literacy and employment; housing; and basic needs to better prepare them to meet the needs of their family.

“Meta House has been very successful treating mothers at high risk of perpetrating abuse and neglect while keeping their children with them safely, “ said Dr. Francine Feinberg, Executive Director of Meta House. “Alongside the mother’s recovery process, Meta House will work with BMCW to ensure the children are protected and their needs are being met.”

### **About BMCW**

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare works with families to ensure the safety and well-being of children. Overseen by the State of Wisconsin’s Department of Children and Families, BMCW provides child protective services to Milwaukee County. The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare promotes the best interest of children by supporting and encouraging families’ efforts to resolve problems that threaten the safety of their children.

### **About Meta House**

Meta House, based in Milwaukee, was the first residential treatment facility in the country designed specifically for women with substance use disorders, and has been providing long-term gender-responsive treatment for over 40 years. Meta House was also one of the first in the nation to include children in the residential setting.

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