

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

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## ■ DIALOGUE

Submit letters to: The Inquirer, Box 8263, Philadelphia, 19101

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150-word limit. Writers must include home address and day and evening phone number.

### ISSUE | CHILD WELFARE

#### It takes a village

To improve the lives of Philadelphia's most vulnerable children, we need to integrate city services, including child welfare, physical and behavioral health, housing, and other programs for the child and family.

Public Health Management Corp., a multiservice, nonprofit, public health institute, sees the importance of keeping children safe and well. We help coordinate care and provide interventions where needed. And we're seeing the results.

Consider the family at risk of losing its children to foster care because of mental-health and substance-abuse issues. Our intervention and focus on integrated care supported an intellectually challenged parent. The result is a family kept intact, safe, and well, and accessing the resources it needs to remain that way.

Making these systems work together is difficult, but it's the only way to help struggling families thrive.

Some might say, "That's just one family." They're right, but using this approach is how we can help so many more. This is how we can give children the opportunity to grow and develop in nurturing and protective family environments. This is how we can help them become self-sufficient adults. This is how we can produce real change in Philadelphia.

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■ Richard J. Cohen, CEO, Public Health Management Corp., Philadelphia, rjc@phmc.org