

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

Brian Blalock, Cabinet Secretary

Terry Locke, Deputy Secretary

NEWS RELEASE*For Immediate Release***February 3, 2020***Improving the Quality of Life for Our Children.*

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CYFD Hires Director of Behavioral Health Division

Danielle Cossett, LPCC, CPC, Brings Decades of Experience to Department

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department is pleased to announce the hire of Danielle Cossett, LCSW, CPC, as its new Director of Behavioral Health. Cossett is a clinical social worker with more than 30 years of experience working with adults, youth and families in a variety of settings.

“Over the past two years, CYFD has championed accessibility to mental health services throughout New Mexico,” said CYFD Cabinet Secretary Brian Blalock. “The number of Infant Mental Health physicians has increased by 50% and sites that provide comprehensive wraparound services has increased by more than 100%. Danielle is the right person to lead our Behavior Health Division and continue building on that momentum to provide the best possible services and support for New Mexico’s children, youth, and families.”

Cossett is a graduate of Smith College School for Social Work, a Nurtured Heart Approach® Advanced Trainer, and a Certified Parent Coach. She worked as the Clinical Director at New Mexico Solutions, a Community Mental Health Center in Albuquerque/Santa Fe, from 2005 to January 2021 building and supervising a strong clinical team. She takes a developmental, humanistic approach in the treatment of trauma, addiction, grief & loss, parenting, professional development and clinical supervision.

In her 15-1/2 years with New Mexico Solutions, Cossett was able to commit to methodologies such as the Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA) and affect culture change within New Mexico Solutions. Cossett said, “It’s that Nurtured Heart Approach lens that I’d like to really support and bring to CYFD and leadership.”

The Nurtured Heart Approach impacts all relationships in positive ways. Using the NHA Lens assists children in further developing their self-regulation, supports parents build strong relationships and provides tools for professionals in the field. Cossett was part of a consultant group that brought Nurtured Heart Approach training to CYFD’s field staff.

Cossett is also president-elect on the National Association of Social Workers New Mexico Board. “Last spring, I felt that I wanted to do something bigger with more systemic impact. I’m now seeing the impact I can make both as CYFD’s Director of Behavioral Health and my position with the NASW-NM board are right where I need to be,” Cossett said.

Human Services Department Behavioral Health Director Dr. Neal Bowen said, “I look forward to working closely with Danielle as CYFD and HSD continue to respond to the specific needs of New Mexican children and families.

Meeting families where they are and responding to their specific needs are key to rebuilding the state's behavioral health systems."

CYFD's Behavioral Health Division is responsible for a number of directives stemming from the state's Kevin S. Settlement, building a trauma-responsive department through legislative, policy and procedural approaches. Cossett fills the role vacated by Bryce Pittenger, LPCC, who moved on to serve the people of New Mexico as CEO of the state's Behavioral Health Collaborative overseeing behavioral health efforts for 15 state agencies and the Governor's office.

"Danielle has years of experience working in children's behavioral health in New Mexico. Her collaboration and keen clinical skills are just what our system of care needs," Pittenger said. "She has honed her ability to understand and respond to children who have experienced trauma, and through her leadership, children's behavioral health will meet the goal of delivering and coordinating trauma-responsive services."

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