

Major Merger For Child Services Agencies

Written by Steve Frank
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Major changes coming in a merger of two of North Carolina's oldest and most respected child welfare agencies, Grandfather Home for Children in Avery County and Barium Springs Home for Children in Iredell. The release on the move says the merger will better serve the state's most at-risk children and their families as the provision and funding of their care undergo unprecedented change. Grandfather Home, 100 years old this year, has, for many years operated as a subsidiary of an umbrella organization called Homes for Children. After the merger, Barium Springs Home for Children will become another subsidiary of Homes for Children. The parent company, Homes for Children, will reconstitute their board of directors to equally represent Barium Springs and Grandfather Home for Children. The release said that, by combining assets, the two agencies will become one of the largest child welfare providers in North Carolina, with a projected operating budget of \$35 million and more than 360 employees and 350 foster families who serve some 3,500 children in 63 counties. Grandfather Home is based in Banner Elk and has five offices in Asheville, Charlotte, Raleigh, Waynesville and Winston-Salem. Barium Springs has 13 offices across central and western North Carolina. Core services for both agencies are adoption, foster care, and comprehensive treatment for traumatized or neglected children delivered in residential, outpatient and in-home settings. The release said that Barium Springs and Grandfather Home already have closely aligned missions and their leaders believe the merger will enhance and expand the scope of services, provide a larger operating footprint and continuum of care, and deliver operational efficiencies. John Koppelmeyer, chief executive officer of Barium Springs who will become chief executive officer of the merged entity.