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March 2, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR CHILDREN'S DIVISION STAFF

FROM: PAULA NEESE, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP) AND PEER RECORD REVIEW (PRR) RESULTS UPDATE

It has been over three years since we underwent the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in December 2003. The purpose of the CFSR and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) was to assist states to improve child welfare services and achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and their families. Through targeted strategies and action steps, the division has been addressing the child welfare outcomes and performance indicators found not to be in substantial conformity with the CFSR standards.

Our two-year PIP ended on January 31, 2007. We have completed the 600+ individual process steps and are on target to meet the agreed upon data goals for the six national standards addressing:

- Reducing the recurrence of maltreatment;
- Reducing the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care;
- Reducing the time children spend in foster care until reunification;
- Increasing the number of children exiting foster care and adopted within 24 months;
- Increasing placement stability; and
- Decreasing re-entry back into foster care.

Through targeted strategies and action plans, we have also:

- Improved the family assessment process
- Increased the placement of children with relative/kinship providers and siblings;
- Increased the filing and finalizing of TPRs
- Collaborated with our partners in the court system to improve the timeliness of permanency hearings.

We have been working on increasing the integrity of the PRR data for nearly two years. The PRR protocol and instructions have been revised, as needed, to reflect policy and

capture information required by the PIP. We fully expected a decline in the PRR data while we were refining this process. While I am pleased with the improvements we have made, there are several measures we must strategically focus on to improve before we can exit the PIP.

Timeliness of initial contact

- **Current Performance per the *Outcomes Report* = 73.4% Goal = 80.4%**
- **Policy** - For all investigations and family assessments, Missouri statutes require the child(ren) to be seen immediately in emergency situations and within 24 hours for non-emergency cases. Immediately is defined per policy as within 3 hours. For educational neglect reports, the victim must be seen within 72 hours [CWM Sec 2, Ch. 4.1.3.](#)
- **Expectations for change** – Circuit Managers will review measure #1 of the FY 07 Outcomes Report. Any circuit performing below the state goal will develop an action plan for improvement.

Timely completion of family support team (FST) meetings and permanency planning reviews (PPR)

- **Current Performance per the *Outcomes Report* = 64.7% Goal = 69.0%**
- **Policy** – Section 475(5) (B) of the Social Security Act requires each child to be reviewed by a panel of appropriate persons, including the parents and at least one person not responsible for the case management, no less frequently than once every six months. The review determines the safety of the child, the continuing necessity for and appropriateness of the placement. CD memo [CD06-39](#) clarified policy and practice of scheduling and completing FSTs and PPRs. Staff are to meet with the family within 24 hours of initial child placement and conduct FST meeting with 72 hours, and 30 days from the date of initial placement. Subsequent FST meetings are then to be held every thirty days until court adjudication and as needed. PPRs are to be conducted within the first six months of the child being placed in care and every six months thereafter. [CWM Sec 4, Ch.7.2](#) It cannot be held ONE day beyond the six months point or it does not meet the goal.
- **Expectations for change** – Circuit managers will ensure the frequency and timeliness of FSTs and PPRs occur per policy by analyzing the frequency data of measure #12 of the Outcomes Report and initiate a corrective action plan when circuit data falls below the goal. Such strategies should include reviewing the overdue PPR list and immediately scheduling a meeting.

Family participated in the development and signed the service plan

- **Current Performance per *Peer Record Review Results* = 71.1% Goal = 75.3%**
- **Policy** – Engaging the parents and building trust is crucial to achieving permanency for children. The Family-Centered approach is the division's philosophical base of child welfare practice. Parents and children will be given the opportunity for full inclusion in all phases of the assessment and service planning process. When the parents sign the plan, they convey their agreement to the goals and requirements of the plan. [CWM Sec 7 Ch.25](#)
- **Expectation for change** – Staff's efforts to involve the family in the assessment and planning process are essential in developing a therapeutic relationship and in empowering parents to make the necessary changes. Circuit Managers will work with staff to ensure that families are actively involved in the planning process. Service plans will be developed by focusing on the strengths and needs of the family and reviewed for signatures of family involvement.

Worker visits with the family and caretakers

- **Current Performance per Peer Record Review Results = 78.0% Goal = 85.4%**
- **Policy** – [CD06-63](#) memo provides information on worker visits with the family from who the child was removed. Children's Service Worker (CSW) should meet in the family's home one time per week during the first 30 days, but a minimum of one time per month. Ongoing case management after the initial 30 days requires a minimum of one home visit per month. This visit should not be included with any supervised visitation between parents and children that occur in the home. [CWM Sec 4, Ch. 6.1](#)
- **Expectation for change** – To ensure the safety of children in foster care, it is imperative for staff to conduct visits with parents and placement providers. Circuit Managers will review PRR results for current circuit performance and develop a plan for improvement if their performance is below the state goal. The improvement plan will include strategies within the next 90 days for worker visits with the family and caretaker to take place at least one time per month and documented in the case record via the worker.

Visitation plan in place to facilitate reunification

- **Current Performance per Peer Record Review Results = 82.5% Goal = 86.8%**
- **Policy** – Child visits with parents and siblings should occur within the first week of placement, and then weekly thereafter, when possible. The Visitation Plan developed through the Family Support Team process should include the frequency of the visits. It is recommended that a visit between a parent and child occur weekly or as frequently as possible in efforts to preserve the bond between a parent and child. It is the worker's responsibility to assure that the child is present for the visits and that a location is secured. Visits should not be canceled or rescheduled because of unexpected problems with the worker's schedule; a backup plan should be in place. [CD06-50](#) [CWM Sec 4, Ch. 7.3.3](#)
- **Expectation for change** – Visitation plays a significant role in reuniting children with their families and assists in preserving family, cultural and community connections. Circuit Managers will work with staff to make sure there is a visitation plan developed for each child or the visitation plan allows for visitation per policy.

The one year evaluative period which does not overlap with the two year PIP implementation period, which just ended, will begin on April 1, 2007. This Non-Overlapping year is critical in that the data outcomes achieved during this period will form the baseline for the next CFSR, which is scheduled to begin during federal fiscal year 2009. As we prepare for the second round, more information will be forthcoming to keep you updated.

In the meantime, we must work together to sustain the improvements we have made and strive to continue improving services to the children and families we serve. The attached [PIP Performance Data](#) spreadsheet provides information on the measures we have been tracking for the past two years. These data measures are taken from the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports and the Peer Record Review (PRR) Results. Additional PIP information is available through the department's website at: <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/cfsr/pip/index.htm>