

Children and Family Services Client Reporting by Counties to DHFS

Background

The Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) Core is used by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHFS) to collect information on clients served under human service programs by counties. The Core data includes counts of clients served by target population and type of service using standard program clusters. The client count data is used for various purposes, including federal Social Service Block Grant (SSBG) reporting and matching client counts with human services expenditure data from cost reports submitted by counties for the Community Aids program.

The HSRS Core data along with information from HSRS modules is used primarily by the Divisions of Long Term Care and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (DLTC and DSAMHS) for a variety of human service programs. DHFS maintains the HSRS system and provides technical assistance to counties on HSRS reporting issues.

The HSRS Core data has been used to collect client count information for the following target populations that pertain to the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS):

- 1) Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) including child protective services and out-of-home care (OHC). Collection of HSRS Core data for the CAN target population was discontinued in CY 2005.
- 2) Children and Families (CF) including services to children and families other than CAN services and services for other target populations such as mental health, AODA, physical disability or developmental disability. Collection of HSRS Core data remains in effect for the CF target population.

The HSRS Core is also used to collect client information on Juvenile and Status Offenders - Juvenile Justice (JJ) target population - as a service to the Department of Corrections (DOC) for purposes of the Youth Aids program. Collection of HSRS Core data remains in effect for the JJ target population until instructed otherwise by DOC.

Impact of eWiSACWIS

The implementation of the eWiSACWIS system for child protective services and out-of-home care services eliminated the need to use the HSRS Child Substitute Care module of HSRS that was previously used to collect OHC information for both the CAN and JJ populations. Per DCFS Memo 2004-03 (issued jointly with DLTC/DSAMHS), counties must continue to report in the HSRS Core and appropriate modules for other services provided to the CAN and CF populations, such as AODA, mental health and developmental disability services.

Since the case management features in WiSACWIS cover all CAN program services, use of the HSRS Core for CAN client count data was discontinued in CY 2005. All client

count data for the CAN population used for SSBG and Community Aids purposes is currently collected using eWiSACWIS.

The CF target population includes a wide variety of services and are often referred to as “child welfare” cases. Counties contract some of these services out to community-based organizations and county staff have limited involvement in managing the services provided to the families. Examples of CF services include crisis/respite child care, parenting skills, family resource centers, and county funding for domestic violence services. Services to the CF population are typically not recorded in eWiSACWIS, with service intakes being the only case activity likely to be recorded. The DHFS effort with counties in 2004 to develop the Human Services Revenue Report (HSRR) shows there is considerable variation among counties in HSRS Core reporting for the CF population. Some counties, including the Milwaukee County Department of Human Services, have stopped reporting HSRS Core data on services to CF clients.

Data Collection Options for CF Target Population

The DCFS is considering options to replace the use of HSRS Core as a mechanism for collecting client count data for the CF target population. The client data is still needed for SSBG and Community Aids purposes and the federal government has implemented new client reporting requirements for Federal Title IV-B funds, which are provided to counties through Community Aids and the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program.

- 1) Implement an annual Children and Families Services Report process with counties to collect data on services to the CF population. This paper report would build on the current limited client count information provided by counties in their annual report for the PSSF program. The report would continue to utilize the HSRS Standard Program Clusters (SPCs) to be consistent with the structure of expenditure reports which are based on the target populations and SPCs.
- 2) Enhance eWiSACWIS so that service information could be provided for child welfare service intakes. The service information would be based on the current HSRS DDE-31 Core form which identifies the start and end dates of services by SPC. The service information would be entered as part of the case closure process for child welfare cases.
- 3) Allow counties the option of using either a paper report or eWiSACWIS for client data reporting for the CF population.

Recommendation: The WCHSA Children and Families Policy Advisory Committee recommend Option 3 in April 2007. To implement this option, DCFS would pursue an enhancement to eWiSACWIS by December 2007 and develop the CF annual report format so these data collection mechanisms are ready for CY 2008.