


To: DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove 
Administrator

Re: Update to Wisconsin's Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement System

PURPOSE

This memo is to provide an update on the progress towards building Wisconsin's Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system that enhances the previous Quality Service Review (QSR) process to support the assessment and improvement of our child welfare practice, processes, and outcomes. The new CQI system will involve more than case record reviews; it will incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources and methods. This data will be used to improve practices, policies, and outcomes at the state and local levels. CQI is an iterative process that produces effective improvements in our child welfare system. Local agency participation is essential to the successful development, application, and implementation of a robust CQI system. This memo provides introductory information on Wisconsin's evolving Child Welfare CQI system and information regarding ongoing local agency partnership. More detailed information will be provided in future memos.

BACKGROUND

Wisconsin's previous Child Welfare CQI system relied primarily on the QSR process, including case reviews and focus groups, designed to assist in improving practice at the local level. Identification of practice issues was labor intensive and relied on a small sample, not representative of statewide or county-wide caseloads. In 2014, after the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and completion of the resulting Program Improvement Plan (PIP), the Department of Children and Families (DCF) initiated a process to revise and improve its Child Welfare CQI system. These revisions to the CQI system have been initiated to develop a robust and effective way to meet the five essential mechanisms of a CQI system outlined in the Administration of Children and Families Information Memorandum 12-07 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/im1207.pdf>) issued on August 27, 2012. These include:

- (1) Administrative oversight to ensure consistency
- (2) Quality data collection
- (3) Case review instruments
- (4) Sharing of data and analysis on all performance measures
- (5) Feedback to stakeholders and decision makers.

Wisconsin's evolving Child Welfare CQI system improves on the QSR process by incorporating critical components of quality improvement models and is supported by multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative information. It moves from a localized case review focus to a system-wide quality improvement approach. This new approach also allows us to engage in collaborative improvement efforts grounded in multiple sources of data, information, and knowledge to improve outcomes and better serve children and families at the state, tribal, and agency level.

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Wisconsin Child Welfare CQI system is a continuous problem-solving approach that begins with a comprehensive understanding of state and local practices and processes and their impacts on child welfare outcomes. This system will use multiple sources of data, information, and knowledge to understand the strengths and weaknesses of Wisconsin's child welfare system. Critical information sources will include case record reviews, other specialized case reviews, KidStat performance data, and eWiSACWIS dashboards. Wisconsin child welfare performance data will be shared in reports and other performance metrics on the DCF Child Welfare CQI Website <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cqi>. This data will lead to informed innovations in our child welfare practice and processes.

The new Child Welfare CQI system is expected to be useful and beneficial to local child welfare agencies both by involving county and tribal agencies in the implementation and use of CQI review tools, as well as providing data that can enhance the understanding of local performance. Ultimately, with continued growth and development of our system, this information will be accessible and useful in informing changes in processes and procedures at the local level to improve outcomes.

Together with tribes and local agencies, DCF will use the Child Welfare CQI system to make strategic decisions on improvements to state statutes, standards, policy, resources, training, and technology.

There are several current efforts underway to advance the Child Welfare CQI system, including the following:

- Engaging Wisconsin's Professional Development System for CQI related training materials and processes
- Reconstituting the CQI advisory committee, composed of local county leadership and tribal representatives
- Collaborative development of case record review tools
- Application and interpretation of results of case record review tools

Other upcoming efforts for which more detailed information will be provided in future memos including:

- Publication of the Access case record review preliminary report
- Publication of the Initial Assessment case record review preliminary report
- Application of the Ongoing case record and CFSR review tools
- Involvement of local representatives in the case record review process
- Collaborative engagement in soliciting, identifying, and resourcing improvement projects

Thank you for your continued efforts to provide high quality services to the children and families of Wisconsin.

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MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>