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Governor Scott Walker  
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Division of Safety and Permanence

March 24, 2014

Marathon County Citizen Review Panel  
Vicki Tylka, Director  
Marathon County Department of Social Services  
400 East Thomas Street  
Wausau, WI 54403

Dear Vicki:

Thank you for your timely submission of the 2013 Marathon County Citizen Review Panel report. This letter responds to the citizen review panel annual report requirement in the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

The Marathon County citizen review panel submitted five recommendations to improve child protection services at the state level. A brief summarized statement of each recommendation and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) response follows:

1. *Evaluate possibilities for reducing paperwork requirements for social workers to allow more face-to-face time with families.*

As you know, the Department has committed to working with the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) to address this issue, using the Lean methodology, which focuses on improving processes, communication and outcomes for employees and consumers. DCF and WCHSA are currently collaborating to define the scope of the project. Planning for the project is underway with a projected start date of Fall 2014. Both Department and WCHSA staff will participate in the Lean project to identify opportunities to achieve efficiencies and eliminate unnecessary paperwork.

2. *A better coordinated approach to child welfare training.*

A new DCF executive structure for the child welfare training system was created to evaluate and improve child welfare training. The new structure includes representatives from the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS), DCF management and staff, county agencies, and the Wisconsin County Human Services Association. This team has identified a strategy to implement new training or revise existing training, where needed.

The WCWPDS, together with seven work groups made up of county, DCF, training system and university personnel developed practice competencies, which will serve as the basis for creating new worker foundation and advanced foundation training. The competencies were developed using the lens of best practice, state statutes and Child Welfare Standards. It is anticipated that these competencies will be used in the continued development of pre-service and quality improvement

measurements and in social work curricula; have the potential to be extremely helpful to counties as the basis for job descriptions, staff development, and performance evaluations; and numerous other values as this project evolves.

3. *Revamping of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to improve both the process and outcomes for children and families.*

As you are aware, the Department is engaged in a redesign of the child welfare CQI process. The Department is collaborating with WCHSA and other stakeholders in this redesign effort. The goals of the redesign are to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the CQI process for both the state and counties. Our target is to pilot a new process by the end of 2014.

4. *Assure attendance of the DCF staff at the annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference.*

We agree that it is beneficial for the DCF CRP Coordinator to join panel members at the annual National Citizen Review Conference. Attendance at out-of-state events by state employees is dependent upon available funds and staff resources.

5. *Increase positive public awareness efforts using print and television to promote accomplishments and increased community involvement to support children and families*

The DCF agrees that public awareness is crucial to educating the community about child welfare and the many challenges faced by Wisconsin children and families. We currently contract with private agencies to support extensive media campaigns, such as the recruitment of foster parents. Additionally, we are currently partnering with the Children's Trust Fund, the Child Abuse Prevention Fund and others to launch a major new initiative in Wisconsin about growing safe, stable nurturing relationships and environments through an approach called the Positive Community Norms framework and the Science of the Positive. A survey of Wisconsin adults was created, implemented and analyzed to create baseline data, and the project is now working on message development, communication planning, and pilot testing and refining.

Thank you for your continued dedication and efforts to improve child protective services at the state and local levels. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss these responses to your panel's recommendations.

Sincerely,



Fredi-Ellen Bove  
Administrator