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Governor Scott Walker
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Division of Safety and Permanence

April 23, 2015

Barbara Berry, Chairperson
Marathon County Citizen Review Panel
Marathon County Department of Social Services
400 East Thomas Street
Wausau, WI 54403

Dear Ms. Berry:

Thank you for your timely submission of the 2014 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 citizen review panel submitted four recommendations to improve child protection services at the state level. A brief summarized statement of each recommendation and the Department of Children and Families Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) response follows:

1) *Ensure that mandated programs are adequately funded.*

The Marathon County panel has also submitted this recommendation to the DSP in past years, and the DSP continues to agree that supporting the agencies serving families and protecting children is critical to achieving successful outcomes. Previously, the DSP responded that initiatives such as the Integrated Case Plan, Alternative Response, and In-Home Safety Services Initiatives were launched to help support counties. More recently, the Division has worked with almost half of Wisconsin's counties to implement the Post Reunification Support (P.S.) Program. This Title IV-E demonstration project provides 12 months of support to children and families after reunification and is tailored to meet the individualized needs of the child and family.

Beginning this year, the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (PDS) will implement a training series for counties on best practices in family finding. PDS will also provide interactive and supportive case specific consultations intended to address obstacles and challenges unique to each case, community, and agency.

DSP is looking to expand the use of the Geographic Placement Resource Services (GPRS) application to stabilize placements of children in out-of-home care settings. In addition, there are plans to expand the use of trial reunification to improve successful and stable reunification of children with their families. The Division has continued the Supervisor Safety Decision-Making Training Program statewide to improve supervisors' understanding of the conceptual foundations of safety and assist them to provide key tools and support to their staff.

2) *Balance of prevention and early intervention in CPS*

The DSP agrees with the need to balance prevention and early intervention in child protective services (CPS). Examples of DCF prevention services include a home visiting program, efforts focused on promoting quality early care and education, and the Families and Schools Together (FAST) initiative. DCF also supports the Community Response Program managed by the Children's Trust Fund that has operated in Marathon County for several years.

Examples of CPS intervention programs include intensive in-home safety services and case management and other services to help children in OHC, and foster parents and birth parents work toward reunification or other permanency options when reunification isn't possible. Wisconsin's recently implemented Post Reunification Support (P.S.) Program provides services and supports to children and families most at risk of reentry in the initial 12 months after reunification and is another example of service expansion in the CPS continuum. Finally, Wisconsin's Post Adoption Resources Centers provide supports to families who adopt children.

3) *Use of data for performance outcomes*

The DCF continues to strengthen data collection and use in key areas as a need in our new Child and Family Services Five-Year Plan for 2011-2015. Data is used to assess performance of safety, well-being, and permanence outcomes as identified in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), and DSP is redesigning its CQI system to effectively measure quality improvement in the future. Currently, the Division is expanding CPS access and initial assessment data warehouse information and developing related business intelligence performance monitoring reports. In October 2014, the Division began designing and developing a child welfare ongoing case management data warehouse and related performance monitoring reports.

To further supplement and advance use of the above technical and reporting functionality, the Division has produced several interactive dashboards which are available to the public via the Department's website. These same dashboards with additional data are available to eWiSACWIS users at the county agency and BMCW levels, which will support and inform local analysis, monitoring, and data-driven decision making. The dashboards currently address the following program areas:

- CPS Access,
- CPS Initial Assessment,
- CANS Assessment,
- Child permanency and placement related outcomes,
- Caseworker contacts with children in OHC, and
- Provider performance based measures.

4) *Public education efforts to focus on the positive accomplishments and importance of CPS and what the community can further do to support children*

The Marathon County panel submitted this same recommendation to the DSP in their 2013 report. DSP continues to agree that public awareness is crucial to educating the community about child welfare and the many challenges faced by Wisconsin children and families. The Department has engaged in public foster care campaign each year since 2011 with the goal of raising public awareness about the need for additional foster parents for the children in care. As a result of the

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annual campaigns, DSP saw a substantial rise in requests for information about foster care. DSP will continue its media and public awareness efforts regarding foster parents.

Additionally, Governor Scott Walker proclaimed the month of April 2015 as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Awareness Month in Wisconsin. The DCF posted this proclamation on its website to promote public awareness and encourage community members to join together to protect and help prepare our children to become productive members of society by taking an active, positive role in their lives today.

Thank you for your dedication and efforts on behalf of Wisconsin children and families. I hope you find this information helpful in responding to your recommendations.

Sincerely,



Fredi-Ellen Bove
Division Administrator

Cc: Vicki Tylka, Director, MCDSS
Dawn Perez, Child Welfare Manager, MCDSS