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Governor Scott Walker
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Division of Safety and Permanence

May 26, 2015

Ashley Stokes, Co-chairperson
Desiree Parker, Co-chairperson
Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council
Office of Youth Services
Division of Safety and Permanence
201 E. Washington Avenue
P O Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916

Dear Ms. Stokes and Ms. Parker: *Ashley and Desi,*

Thank you for your timely submission of the 2014 Youth Advisory Council 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 Youth Advisory Council submitted two 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) Weekly visits and an option for dialing telephone calls with siblings should be court ordered to nurture the sibling relationship. The person supervising the visits should take necessary steps to ensure confidentiality and blending into the environment to help youth feel safe.

The DCF agrees that children, their parents, and their siblings have a right to family interaction whenever possible to maintain and enhance their attachment to each other. The CPS Ongoing Services Standards state that every child placed in out-of-home care must have a Family Interaction Plan that includes frequent visits with his or her siblings, unless there is a documented reason why it is not safe or in the child's best interest for such visits to occur. Visits with the family should occur at least weekly, and sibling face-to-face interaction must occur at least monthly. Additional interactions are not prohibited, and in fact are encouraged, and include all types of contact such as in person, telephone, texting, letters and e-mail. Also, agencies are directed to ensure that the visits occur in settings that encourage the most natural interaction between family members while minimizing any threats to safety. We appreciate and look forward to receiving ongoing input from the Youth Advisory Council regarding firsthand experiences faced by children placed in out-of-home care in Wisconsin.

2) DCF should conduct outreach to former foster youth ages 21-15 to make them aware of the Affordable Care Act provision for former foster youth.

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The Department recognizes and understands the importance of eligible and potentially under-insured former foster youth being aware of the health care benefits for which they are eligible through the Affordable Care Act. The DCF collaborated with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to ensure that anyone who identifies themselves as a former foster youth who aged out of care during the application process for Badger Care + is flagged for participation in the Former Foster Care Youth provision. As a result of your request, the Office of Youth Services (OYS) plans to post the information on its website along with other independent living topics and resources. The OYS will create a flyer with input from the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council that will be forwarded to homeless agencies and health clinics around the state. DCF hopes that the new services delivered by regional agencies in the western and northeastern part of the state will provide more consistent connections to health care for youth who have aged out of care.

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

Sincerely,



Fredi-Ellen Bove
Division Administrator

cc: Christine Lenske, Independent Living Coordinator