



201 East Washington Avenue, Room E200
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916
Telephone: 608-266-8787
Fax: 608-266-5547

Governor Scott Walker
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Division of Safety and Permanence

April 19, 2016

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

Dear Ms. Schultz:

Thank you for your timely submission of the 2015 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 two new and two continuing recommendations to improve child protection services at the state level. Each recommendation and the Department of Children and Families Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) response follows:

New recommendations:

- 1) *Ensure that foster parents and the CPS system have an adequate means of communication to share concerns as the regional Independent Living project is brought forth for implementation in 2017.*

In the first six months of the contract year for each new Independent Living region, DCF plans to reach out to county and tribal child welfare agencies within the region to obtain feedback on the transition to the regional Transition Resource Agency for 18-21 year olds. We look forward to hearing how things are going, about any collaborative efforts underway, and what, if any, changes are being made to the county process for life skills development and transition planning for older youth.

- 2) *Juvenile Justice data be created for uniform data collection and integration with the CPS system, so as to provide the CRP and counties with required data to measure performance, including recidivism.*

DCF concurs with the need to develop a consistent, robust data collection system for the Juvenile Justice population to inform policy-making and program development and monitor outcomes and performance. As you are aware, the responsibility for community-

based Juvenile Justice (JJ) services transferred to the Department of Children and Families from the Department of Corrections on January 1, 2016. One of the new statutory requirements for DCF is to collect data, create and report on performance measures for the JJ system. In collaboration with counties and other stakeholders, DCF will be working on developing a comprehensive, integrated data system for the JJ system.

Repeated recommendations:

Ensure that mandated programs are adequately funded, and

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 has submitted these recommendations to the DSP in past years, and our response remains the same: We agree that supporting the agencies serving families and protecting children is critical to achieving successful outcomes. We continue to fund and implement initiatives that complement mandated programs, providing additional support for the child welfare agencies. In addition to continuing initiatives (e.g., Alternative Response, In-Home Safety Services, the Post Reunification Support Program, etc.), we fund and coordinate prevention services, such as the Home Visiting Program and Families and Schools Together. In 2015, the Wisconsin Trauma Project expanded, bringing to 25 the total number of counties and tribes receiving training on evidence based trauma informed approaches or systems change assistance to help build a trauma informed care infrastructure. In collaboration with the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System, we continue to identify and focus on developing needed training and tools to better support the work of the child welfare workforce.

The 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 DSP also continues to heighten public awareness about child abuse and prevention. The DSP in partnership with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board and the Prevent Child Abuse Program/Children's Hospital of Wisconsin developed and launched a campaign for National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April 2016. The campaign includes a Toolkit with a range of materials and activities that can be used locally to educate the public about child abuse and urge the community to take important steps towards preventing or intervening when a child is at risk.

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

Sincerely,



Fredi-Ellen Bove
Division Administrator

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