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Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Emilie Amundson

Division of Safety and Permanence

August 19, 2019

Connie Raether, Co-chair
Citizen Review Panel Serving Outagamie County
Outagamie County Department of Health & Human Services
401 South Walnut Street
Appleton, WI 54911

Dear Ms. Raether:

Thank you for your timely submission of the Citizen Review Panel Serving Outagamie County's annual report. This letter responds to the citizen review panel annual report response requirements set forth 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 (DCF) Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) response follows:

- 1. There has been a recommendation that the budget for child welfare be increased by \$30 million to assure reasonable caseloads. The CRP supports this proposal.*

The DCF acknowledges and appreciates the Panel's support of the proposal to increase the budget for child welfare by \$30 million in order to assure reasonable caseloads. As of July 3, 2019, the budget was effectively passed and signed by Governor Evers, allocating an additional \$25.5 million to the child welfare budget. The DCF is very appreciative of the efforts the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) and its representatives put into the effort to increase funding to our state's local child welfare system and is excited to see what this will mean for our state's local child welfare agencies in the balance of the state.

- 2. The Panel also recommends state screening of foster parents and more training for social workers by the state.*

Given workload and strained resources, the DCF appreciates the panel's attention to economy of scale and avenues to create broader efficiencies.

The Milwaukee Child Welfare Training Partnership, with the support of the DCF, currently trains foster parents statewide. We also support the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, which provides supports and services to public, private, and tribal foster care licensing agencies, foster and adoptive parents, and guardianship families. Through this affiliation, the DCF provides resources and supports to assist interested families through the process of fostering, including technical assistance, on-site agency assessment, and strategic planning surrounding improvement of the fostering process.

The DCF also has an ongoing collaborative relationship with the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System focused on developing and offering a robust foundational training system for workers statewide. However, the DCF would welcome more specific training need recommendations should the panel wish to provide them.

3. The Panel recommends funding of family treatment courts.

2017 Wisconsin Act 202 authorized grants to be administered by the DCF to counties or tribes to enable them to establish and operate Family Treatment Court programs. 2017 Wisconsin Act 261 appropriated \$250,000 GPR funding per year for the new grant program, and on July 1, 2019 the first of these Family Treatment Court programs began accepting clients. The DCF views this as a learning opportunity to further evaluate and consider future directions and potential growth in this key aspect of our state's child welfare service system.

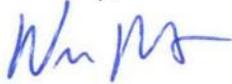
4. The Panel recommends that the state do more to address prevention, recognition, assessment, treatment and development of evidence-based models to address the opiate crisis.

The DCF supports efforts made to address the opiate crisis under the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention That Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities Act. This act amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) by authorizing grants for a variety of agencies and organizations to help facilitate collaboration in developing, updating, implementing, and monitoring effective interventions for persons with Substance Use Disorder.

The Department of Health Services (DHS) has been the primary entity responsible for implementing the provisions of this act, and one of the ways in which they have done so was through the creation of a number of different fully allocated positions and programs, which are detailed on the DHS website at <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDHS/bulletins/243342b>.

Thank you for your panel's continued dedication and efforts on behalf of Wisconsin children and their families.

Sincerely,



Wendy Henderson
Division Administrator