

August 12, 2020

Betsy Byker, Coordinator
Polk County Citizen Review Panel
Essential Connections for Families
2198 84th Avenue
Osceola, WI 54020

Dear Ms. Byker:

Thank you for your timely submission of Polk County Citizen Review Panel'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 three 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. The current rule on relative placement through ICPC be changed to allow county workers to place with fit and willing relatives in other states prior to the completion of the ICPC process.

The DCF recognizes and values placement with fit and willing relatives, which sometimes involves parties outside of the state of Wisconsin. The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is a national compact between states and has been codified into state law. Under this compact, placing a child with a relative across state lines requires a home study approval prior to the placement in the receiving state, and each receiving state establishes their own requirements for placement approval. While emergency situations may occur, necessitating immediate placement of a child with a relative out of state, ICPC process and placement evaluation and approval is still mandated. Wisconsin encourages proactive ICPC requests to minimize placement disruption should the relative be deemed ineligible for placement. The goal of ICPC is to ensure that the safety of children placed across state lines is ensured and that agencies maintain responsibility for the planning and wellbeing of that child. The DCF appreciates the call for expediency but does not have the authority to supersede the national compact.

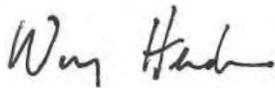
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2. Allow tribes to have full access to eWISACWIS so they can complete needed case notes and case work.

The DCF appreciates and elevates collaboration between tribes and local child welfare agencies in best serving Indian children and families and in adherence to the Indian Child Welfare Act. Tribes currently have limited access to eWISACWIS, and maintain sovereignty over their own information and data. Exploration of expanded eWISACWIS access has been, and continues, to be considered but must be approached carefully and in agreement between all parties.

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

Sincerely,



Wendy Henderson
Division Administrator