



July 26, 2021
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 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. The panel recommends that the current rule on relative placement through Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) be changed to allow county workers to place a child immediately with a biological parent in other states if background check comes back as appropriate, prior to ICPC process.**

DCF recognizes that this is a continued recommendation from last year. While DCF values placement with fit and willing relatives, which sometimes involves parties outside of the state of Wisconsin, and appreciates the call for expediency, we do not have the authority to supersede the ICPC for children who are under court ordered jurisdiction. The 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 for children who remain under court ordered jurisdiction. In instances where a parent from whom the child was not removed, absent evidence that this parent is unfit, the court may allow the child to be under the care of the other parent and relinquish jurisdiction, in which case, ICPC would not apply.

- 2. The panel recommends that the state allow tribes to have full access to eWISACWIS so they can complete needed case notes and case work.**

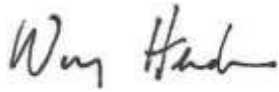
DCF recognizes that this is a continued recommendation from last year. DCF appreciates and elevates collaboration between tribes and local child welfare agencies in best serving Indian children and families. Tribes currently have limited access to eWISACWIS and, ultimately, maintain sovereignty over the information and

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data related to their tribal child welfare agency's involvement with tribal children and families. Exploration of expanded eWiSACWIS access continues to be explored 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendy Henderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wendy Henderson
Division Administrator