



August 19, 2022

Robbyn Bowman, Co-Chair
Amy Elmer, Co-Chair
Polk County Citizen Review Panel

Dear Ms. Bowman & Ms. Elmer:

Thank you for your timely submission of the Polk County Citizen Review Panel's report in compliance with the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). This letter fulfills 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. Allow tribes to have full access to eWiSACWIS so they can complete needed case notes and case work. Through the above noted collaboration with tribal leaders and Polk County Department of Children and Families, this has become evident as a needed change in order to improve collaboration.**

DCF recognizes that this is a continued recommendation from prior years. DCF appreciates the collaboration and communication between tribes and local child welfare agencies to best serve Indian children and families. Tribes maintain sovereignty over the information and data related to their tribal child welfare agency's involvement with tribal children and families. Tribes currently have limited access to eWiSACWIS. DCF has formed a workgroup with the Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Directors to create a portal that would allow tribes and local child welfare agencies to more easily share information related to serving Indian children and their families. Exploration of expanded eWiSACWIS access continues to be explored but must be approached carefully and with agreement between all parties.

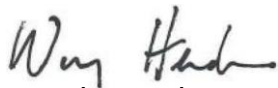
- 2. The current rule on relative placement through ICPC be changed to allow county workers to place with fit and willing relatives in other states prior to the completion of the ICPC process. This would especially be helpful as we are a**

bordering county with Minnesota and many of our families' relatives live near the Twin Cities (which is less than an hour away).

DCF recognizes that this is a continued recommendation. While DCF values placement with fit and willing relatives, which sometimes involves caregivers outside of the state of Wisconsin, and appreciates the call for expediency, DCF does not have the authority to supersede the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) for children who are under court-ordered jurisdiction. The ICPC is a national compact between states and has been codified into Wisconsin 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.

DCF continues to acknowledge and appreciate the continued efforts put forth by the Polk County Citizen Review Panel for their continued advocacy. Thank you for the time, energy, and commitment you have made to improve services for Wisconsin children and their families.

Sincerely,



Wendy Henderson
Division Administrator