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Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

INFORMATION TRANSMITTAL

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DATE: December 27, 2000
TO: All DCFS and Private Agency Executive, Administrative, Supervisory and Direct Service Staff
FROM: Jess McDonald
SUBJECT: **STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN IN PREPARATION FOR FEDERAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Information Transmittal is to inform all Department and private agency executive, administrative, supervisory level and direct service staff of the implementation of the plan to prepare for the ongoing Federal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR).

II. BACKGROUND

Recently, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) finalized a list of child welfare outcomes and measures that will be used to assess the performance of states in operating child protection and child welfare programs. State compliance with the new federal child welfare requirements will be assessed through Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). These reviews represent a significant departure from the former federal review process by utilizing a more results-focused approach in which two areas are targeted: (1) outcomes for children and families served by the child welfare system; and (2) systemic factors that directly effect the state's capacity to deliver services leading to improved outcomes. Inability of the states to meet established benchmarks will result in implementation of improvement plans by the DHHS. Subsequent failure to comply with the improvement plans will result in serious financial repercussions - a reduction of up to 40% of a state's administrative costs.

In order for Illinois to meet the established benchmark, **both** DCFS and its private sector partners (POS agencies) must demonstrate continuous efforts to ensure safety, permanency and well being of children and families. To meet this end, DCFS, in

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conjunction with the UIC Foster Care Utilization Review Program (FCURP), will implement the following statewide rollout plan to prepare for the Federal CFSR.

III. PROCESS

There are **two** components to the statewide implementation plan. The first component is a two-phased training program in which ALL DCFS regions and POS agencies that contract with DCFS, along with the assigned Agency Performance (AP) liaisons, will be required to participate. **(See Appendix A.)** The two phases of the training program will be comprised of classroom instruction and initial on-site reviews that will mirror the Federal CFSR. The data gathered from the initial on-site reviews will be used as a baseline measure for the State of Illinois and will provide valuable information as to how Illinois is currently performing. In addition, any program improvement plans that are developed to address deficits identified during these reviews will be utilized to initiate the second component of the implementation plan, a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process. To meet this end, DCFS regions and POS agencies will be asked to identify staff members at varying levels, which should also include quality assurance and/or program administrative staff, to participate in the two-phase training program.

The second component of the statewide implementation plan is a continuous quality improvement process that will be initiated by the on-site reviews conducted during the training program. **(See Appendix B.)** Following the classroom instruction and initial on-site reviews, each DCFS region will be reviewed annually. A statistically valid sample of cases will be randomly selected for the annual reviews and it is expected that one DCFS region will be reviewed each quarter. POS agencies, on the other hand, will be required to review one randomly selected case, per month. Data gathered during this CQI process will be utilized to improve both the outcome achievement levels and the quality of casework practices.

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- A. The State of Illinois will meet and/or surpass the established Federal benchmark of 90% substantial compliance for the identified CFSR outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being.
- B. Results of the reviews will provide a baseline measure of how the State of Illinois is currently performing relative to the established CFSR outcomes.
- C. Results of the reviews will be used as the baseline measure for the implementation of Best Practice Standards (the Standards) in the State of Illinois. Subsequent reviews will ascertain if the implementation of the Standards have improved outcomes for children and families. The reviews will also be used as a tool to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the implementation of the Standards.
- D. The assigned supervisor and worker will use completed Federal Review Preparatory Protocols (the Protocols) that are returned to respective regions/private agencies as supervisory tools to ameliorate identified case practice deficits.

- E. Supervisory and administrative staff will be capable of utilizing the Protocols and/or its components to evaluate casework practice during the course of regular supervision.
- F. Casework staff will be knowledgeable of the casework processes measured by the Protocols and enhance their practices to achieve the desired outcomes.

V. QUESTIONS

DCFS staff with questions regarding this Information Transmittal may contact:

Tom Ward at 217/524-2103 (Downstate)
Joan Nelson-Phillips at 312/814-5527 (Cook).

Purchase of service agency staff may contact:

Sylvia Kim at 312/355-4486.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Training
Appendix B - Continuous Quality Improvement Process

APPENDIX A -- TRAINING

Phase I – Classroom Instruction

The training program begins with three days of classroom instruction focusing on the relatively new concept of an outcome-based evaluation. The instruction will also include discussion of the conceptual framework used to develop the Federal Review Preparatory Protocol (the Protocol) and the accompanying Question by Question Specification Guide. The trainees will then use the Protocol to review an actual placement case. A question by question discussion, facilitated by the trainers, will follow the case reading for the purposes of establishing internal consistency and reliability of the responses.

Phase II – On-site Review

Shortly after the conclusion of Phase I (Classroom Instruction), trained DCFS/POS agency staff will participate in on-site reviews. DCFS will randomly select cases from DCFS and POS agencies that have completed the Phase I Classroom Instruction. The on-site review will be consistent with the Federal CFSSR process and will include case record abstractions and interviews with key stakeholders (e.g. the caseworker, placement providers, biological parents and children). Caseworkers and supervisors of the selected cases will be notified a week before the review so that interviews can be scheduled with the necessary stakeholders.

Subsequent to the on-site review, preliminary results and a summary of review findings will be presented at an exit conference with the administrative and supervisory staff of the region/agency reviewed. The reviewed region/agency will then be expected to develop a program improvement plan (PIP) or a quality improvement (QI) plan that addresses identified practice issues raised in the review. Implementation of the PIP/QI plan will be monitored by the reviewed region/POS agency's internal quality improvement process. In addition, the assigned Agency Performance Monitor and the Division of Quality Assurance will also monitor the PIP/QI plan.

APPENDIX B -- CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

DCFS Regions	
Ongoing Federal Preparatory Reviews	Action Planning -- Following up on Review Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In subsequent years following the initial Federal Review Preparatory Training (Phases I and II), each region will undergo an annual review of approximately 50 cases using the Federal Review Preparatory Protocol (the Protocol). Random selection of the sample size of fifty cases is intended to comply with strategies utilized by the Federal CFSR. ➤ The review team will be comprised of DCFS staff trained in the use of the Protocol. Inter-rater reliability will be ensured during the review process by having review team leaders staff and debrief each case with the reviewers on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All Protocols completed during the annual Federal Preparatory Reviews will be returned to the assigned caseworkers and supervisors. The Protocols must be used as supervisory tools to address any and all identified practice deficiencies. The supervisory sessions must be documented in the case record and any corrective actions must be monitored for compliance. ➤ DCFS regions will utilize their own regional quality improvement processes to analyze the aggregate review results and identify trends/practice areas in need of regional response. Each region will be expected to develop regional action plans and take appropriate steps to improve performance and outcomes.
POS Agencies	
Ongoing Federal Preparatory Reviews	Action Planning -- Following up on Review Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In subsequent years following the initial Federal Review Preparatory Training (Phases I and II), each POS agency will review one randomly selected case every month. POS staff trained in the use of the Protocol must review the cases. ➤ The Foster Care Utilization Review Program will audit, staff and debrief each case reviewed by POS agencies in order to ensure internal consistency and inter-rater reliability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For each case reviewed on a monthly basis, the completed Protocol will be used as a supervisory tool for the assigned worker and supervisor to address any and all identified practice deficiencies. The supervisory session must be documented in the case record and any corrective actions must be monitored for compliance. ➤ On a quarterly basis, AP Liaisons will provide aggregate data to their respective POS agencies. Each POS agency, with the assistance of their AP Liaison, will utilize their own internal quality improvement processes to analyze the review results and identify trends/practice areas in need of agency-wide response. Each POS agency will be expected to take appropriate steps to improve performance and outcomes. ➤ On a quarterly basis, the Cook Co. POS Monitoring Division and the non-Cook regions will provide reports to the Department State Quality Council for review.