

What's New in Phase II

Now that over nine months have passed since the implementation of Phase I of Best Practice, many people have questions about Phase II. Although plans for training and implementation of Phase II are still in development, progress is well underway towards implementation around the middle of 2003.

What does Phase II encompass?

Phase I of Best Practice includes only Intake and Investigations—from the time a call originally comes in to the hotline until the investigation is completed. Phase II of Best Practice includes everything that takes place after the case has been referred for permanency services. If you look at the Best Practice guide, you will see the following chapters:

- 1) Introduction to Child Welfare in Illinois
- 2) Permanency for all Children
- 3) Assessment and Service Planning
- 4) Intake and Investigations
- 5) Intact Families: Ensuring Safety through the Family System

- 6) Establishing Permanency for Children in Substitute Care
- 7) Reunification
- 8) Permanency through Kinship Care
- 9) Adoption
- 10) Independence

With only chapter 4, Intake and Investigations, having been implemented to date, Phase II includes a large part of the work we do.

What's Being Done to Prepare for Phase II Implementation?

While the remaining chapters of Best Practice are going through final revisions, plans for implementation are being made. Because there is so much involved in Phase II, an incremental approach to implementation is being planned—staff won't have to learn and implement everything all at once.

A current focus of activity is the development and piloting of training for Phase II. This training can be broken into four major categories:

- 1) Phase II Orientation/

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SACWIS: Making A Good System Even Better - A comprehensive process is in place to continuously improve SACWIS.

Phase I SACWIS On-Site Support - For the first month of SACWIS implementation, coaches were scattered across the State.

Phase I SACWIS Roll-Out - SACWIS was live on May 20th.

Frequently Asked Questions

The New and Improved DCFS Client Service Plan - More user friendly, greater focus on safety and well being.

SACWIS: Making A Good System Even Better

SACWIS “rolled-out” to the field on May 20th and staff have had three weeks of experience with the new application. Staff feedback about the system is generally positive, which is noteworthy considering the major changes SACWIS brings to the work setting. But like any new computer system, there are bugs and performance problems that need to be fixed to make the system perform better. In fact, there is a

specific process for these “fixes”:

- First, information about needed changes is gathered from investigation staff, field support staff and from those who man the Help Desk.
- Next, DCFS Implementation staff prioritize the changes at their weekly Thursday meeting.
- Changes are sent to the SACWIS Development Team, where they are initially tested.
- Then the changes are sent to

the DCFS Test Team, where they are double checked before the final fix.

- Finally, fixes are completed on the following Wednesday.

We want SACWIS to work optimally for staff and for the clients we serve. To this end, staff can be assured that every effort will continue to be made to improve SACWIS, now and in the future.

For more information about SACWIS changes, look on the D-Net SACWIS News page.

Phase I SACWIS On-Site Support

The SACWIS team dispersed from their desks in Springfield to the field to support SACWIS Go-Live.

About a hundred SACWIS project and field coaches spread out across the state to support the May 20th Go-Live of Phase I of SACWIS. Armed with copies of the various help materials and some concentrated application training, coaches were assigned to 27 groupings of Phase I sites to provide one-on-one support to the 1,300 new SACWIS users – Managers, Supervisors, Call Floor Workers, Child Protection Service Workers, Clerical Workers and many others.

Each of the 27 site groupings had a lead that helped coordinate kick-off meetings, one-on-one support scheduling and serve as a liaison with the SACWIS project team.

The main job of the coach was to provide initial support to get users going and then to, as quickly as possible, help them become self-sufficient. Other means of support were also available to users including detailed on-line help, 1-800 help desk, and a variety of quick reference materials. Responses to frequently asked questions and user tips were also posted on the D-Net.

A Child Protection Service Worker from the Central Region indicated that the on-site support coaches provided her with comfort just knowing that someone was there. She used the coaches to answer some ad hoc questions and also relied on the quick reference materials which she said “were great and I used them frequently when I began on SACWIS”.

Patricia Pinkney, a Child Protection Service Worker from Cook

County, felt pretty confident with SACWIS after the first week of implementation. She characterized the on-site support as being “extremely helpful” in enhancing her comfort with SACWIS.

Amy Wilmington, an investigation worker from Catholic Charities, felt confident with SACWIS after one and a half to two days. She thought the on-site support was helpful “especially in terms of helping to acknowledge when it is a system error as opposed to a personal one”. When asked what kinds of questions she had for the on-site coach, Amy described that, “typically I found myself asking questions that were related to time saving issues or things that were not in the reference guide, such as, how do you highlight more than one role, must you do a separate note for each family member attempted?”

Phase I SACWIS Roll Out

SACWIS Phase I was implemented May 20, 2002. Many staff felt privileged to be a part of the roll out and immediately could see the benefits once the learning curve was completed.

Mike Britt, a Cook County supervisor, indicated his staff was positive about SACWIS and quickly learned computer expertise was not essential as the web-based system was designed for the amateur. The system promotes accountability.

Another Cook County supervisor, Tammy Bates, indicated she could quickly move through the system to gather and approve case information.

A caseworker in the Southern region indicated paperwork could be completed in a more timely and efficient method, just point and click. The system populates the forms.

All staff agreed the field coaches were an incredible resource during the implementation. After the first couple weeks, the majority of staff felt comfortable with the system.

A Central Region Child Protection Service Worker shared she felt anxious and dreaded the implementation because she was not computer literate. However, she was pleasantly surprised to find the coaching staff provided the confidence and support to make the transition easy.

With a system the size of SACWIS, there will be areas to work out. The SACWIS project, field coaches and end users are jointly concerned about the speed of the system. Improvements have been made and this will continue to be an area of focus.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How will I get client signatures on the CERAP?

A: You will need to print the CERAP and take it to the client to sign and bring the signed CERAP back and place it in the paper file.

Q: Who has access to my work and why? What are the security levels?

Supervisors and above have access to your work. Other people who may read your work include the Office of the Inspector General, and Office of Legal Services. The people who have access to your work have not changed, however, their ability to monitor work is enhanced.

Q: What happens when the system goes down, the electric-

ity goes off, and/or the phone line is down?

A: A protocol has been set up and a Disaster Recovery person has been established for each site. If SACWIS should go down, each station can still use Microsoft Word to document notes and “cut and paste” once SACWIS is back on line. Generally speaking all case notes and pertinent data should be in the system within 24 working hours after the system is back online.

Q: Will we keep a paper file?

A: There will be certain documents that will need to be kept in a paper file. These include pictures, body charts, police reports, LEADS reports, substance abuse screens, and domestic violence screens.

Q: Will there be employee involvement in any systems changes that need to occur?

A: Best Practice requires employee involvement in the decision-making process regarding system related issues.

Q: Will there be a link to Norman funds?

A: There is not a link to Norman funds in Phase I of SACWIS. There may be a link in Phase II, which is still in development.

Q: When is an alert that is unresolved by the worker sent to the supervisor?

A: The escalation and timeframe are different for each alert type. Best Practice dictates alert escalation timeframes.

What's New In Phase II

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Overview

The Phase II orientation will cover a lot of the material in Chapters 1 and 2 of Best Practice, with a specific focus on the principles of permanency planning and an overview of what's to come in the rest of Phase II.

2) Illinois Model of Assessment

Training on the Illinois Model of

The New and Improved DCFS Client Service Plan

Did you know that Best Practice has improved the DCFS client service plan? We have been working on development of the service plan to produce a more user-friendly document for clients, while concentrating on safety, permanency and well being. We are committed to creating a plan that is an all-inclusive document, yet won't overwhelm our clients. The new plan will be implemented with Phase II of Best Practice.

One of the most beneficial features of the new plan is its direct connection to assessment. The design of the service plan in SACWIS is directly connected to the CERAP, Risk Assessment, and Social History, as well as the ongoing assessments and social history updates. From assessment, any of the risk, safety and well being factors that are checked will display in the service plan.

Assessment will include assessment, social history, and service planning.

3) Child and Family Teams

This training will focus on facilitating child and family teams, and will include group dynamics and group process.

4) Concurrent Planning

With concurrent planning on all cases being one of the core principles of Best Practice, staff will learn how to apply concurrent planning to achieve permanency

outcomes.

Where can I get more information about Best Practice?

You can locate the chapters of Best Practice on the D-Net. As we get closer to the roll out of Phase II, you will hear more about Best Practice through training, the D-Net, and the Best Practice/SACWIS newsletter. If you have questions, you can send them to the Best Practices mailbox, which is on outlook or:

bpractic@idcfs.state.il.us.

Another useful feature is that the service plan will double as the WRAP plan. No longer will workers labor over extensive WRAP plans in addition to their service planning. Best Practices and Operations staff have worked together to combine these two documents so that all service needs are met, while keeping mind of the various domains that need to be explored with our families. A tenet of Best Practice that supports the combination of these plans is that service planning should be done within the context of the Child and Family Team and should not be the sole effort of the worker.

In addition to modifications to the client service plan, members of the Best Practice team have formed an efficiencies workgroup which, in preparation for Phase II Best Practice and SACWIS, are in the process of reducing and eliminating forms currently used in the field. The primary goal of this process is to eradicate redundancy

in our work and to create efficiencies that not only benefit field staff, but our clients as well. Watch for more updates on efficiencies in the future.

We are hopeful that these changes will in fact improve our practice and overall service delivery to children and families. While our clients' needs are paramount, we have also been very focused on the needs of the field. When SACWIS/Best Practice Phase II rolls out next summer, the way in which we do service planning will dramatically change for the better.

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Please send inquiries and suggestions to the Best Practice mailbox. It is listed in Outlook or can be reached at bpractic@idcfs.state.il.us.