



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

DATE: February 8, 2017

TO: Child Protective Investigators
Regional and Sheriff's Office Family Safety Staff
Regional Managing Directors
Family and Community Services Directors
Community-Based Care Lead Agencies

FROM: Secretary Mike Carroll

SUBJECT: Efficiencies to Support Child Protective Investigations and Case Management Staff

Over the past few months, I have met with frontline child welfare staff throughout the state in a series of "huddles" to hear directly their concerns and the challenges they are facing. My visits to each region for these huddles have reinforced my belief in the commitment our child protections staff have to this work and their fundamental desire to protect the light that shines in each child who touches this system.

The huddles also have made clear the personal toll and professional strain our investigators, case managers and their supervisors face daily due to the high volume of cases and the inconsistent execution of the child welfare practice model from region to region, circuit to circuit.

Our child welfare practice model is sound. In each case, we should – we must – be doing good child safety assessments, not simply incident-based investigations. Implementation science tells us that fidelity to such a practice and culture change can be expected years after we begin implementing, not after simply months or weeks. While challenges faced during an implementation can make it difficult to stay the course, the significance of the work we do and the lasting impact it has on children and families demand that we remain committed to the new child welfare practice model.

I recognize some efficiencies are needed in order to prioritize workload and begin to realize the full benefits of the new practice, particularly improved outcomes for families. In response to the concerns expressed by our child protective investigators, I charged leaders from the Office of Child Welfare and Operations with assembling a statewide workgroup to develop some pragmatic solutions to improve the child protective investigations workload. The solutions developed by the workgroup are in the attached report. Your regional leadership has begun implementing many of the identified "Immediate Solutions" with a goal of statewide implementation by March 1, 2017.

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There will be written resources and information distributed from regional Family Safety leadership and the Office of Child Welfare to continue to clarify the practice and to enhance training to frontline staff, supervisors and managers. In the meantime, I want to underscore a critical point: **Investigators do not need to wait until completion of a Family Functioning Assessment to connect a family to necessary services.**

Please ensure this message reaches all child protection staff. Your regional Family and Community Services Directors can address any questions you have about the statewide pilot and the report from the Efficiencies Workgroup.

I appreciate the work of the group leads: JoShonda Guerrier, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare; Lisa Mayrose, Suncoast Region Managing Director; and Patricia Medlock, Northeast Region Managing Director.

I also thank the following team members: Natalie Clayton (Northeast Region), Tasha Cousins (Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office), Allison Montgomery (Central Region), Heather Smith (Southeast Region), Janice Thomas (Office of Child Welfare Consultant), Angela Viramontes (Northwest Region) and Christopher Williamson (Florida Abuse Hotline).

I especially thank the child welfare professionals who are committed to this work, including those who have met with me and candidly expressed supports needed to help them better complete their work. Thank you for your commitment.



ATTACHMENT

CPI Efficiencies Summary Report

cc: Deputy Secretary David L. Fairbanks
General Counsel Rebecca Kapusta
Assistant Secretary for Operations Vicki Abrams
Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare JoShonda Guerrier
Children's Legal Services Director Grainne O'Sullivan
Office of Child Welfare Directors