

COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA

For the Agenda of:
September 11, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: Report Back On The Details of CPS Program Reductions And Restoration
Priorities of Programs If Additional General Fund Is Available

Supervisory
District: All

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BACKGROUND

During the September 10, 2009 Budget Hearing, the Department of Health and Human Services was requested to report back on the details of Child Protective Services program reductions.

DISCUSSION

Child Protective Services has proposed the following reductions:

Administrative Staff – 2 Program Managers, 3 HS Program Planners, 1 ASO 2, 1 Program Specialist, 1 Sr. OA, 1 OA2, 1 Stock Clerk:

- Reducing 10.0 administrative and support staff will significantly weaken the infrastructure necessary to provide oversight, accountability, and development of improvement initiatives including community partnerships, collaboratives and system improvement areas identified in the MGT and Grand Jury reports.
- Swing shift emergency responders will receive no on-site management oversight or support.
- On site Management will be impacted in remaining programs due to consolidation of programs.
- Reduction as a result of the corresponding cut to program staff in program.
- Reducing 3 Program Planner will impact improvement activities including strategic planning, building community partnerships and implementing evidence based best practices to improve services will be compromised resulting in delays in meeting Division and stakeholder expectations for improvement. Ability to provide mandatory

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- reports to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) will be significantly compromised and timelines unable to be met.

Clerical Staff – 20 FTE's:

- Social workers will spend less time working with children and families and more time doing paperwork.
- Social workers will lack support to provide timely investigations, case management and meet Juvenile court requirements and timeframes resulting in poor quality services and sanctions from the Court.
- Customer service will be negatively impacted, including delays in responding to telephone inquiries and processing critical case information across the Division.

Adoptions – 6 Social Workers, 1 Supervisor, 2 Family Service Workers, 2 Paralegals, 1 Program Specialist, 1 Sr. Legal Transcriber, 1 Sr. Office Assistant, 3 Office Assistants:

- The loss of program staff in the Adoption program would result in a significant increase in caseload for the remaining staff in the program.
- The cases of approximately 350 to 400 children would be distributed to the remaining units, supervisors, social workers and clerical staff. Additional workload for remaining staff would result in a reduction of the time staff has to complete the routine child welfare duties associated with case management and court related activities.
- Cases would move significantly slower through the adoption specific tasks such as matching and supporting adoptive placements while preparing the child and family for termination of dependency.
- Increased caseloads would negatively impact not only the well being of children and families currently served by the Adoption program but also those whom the Adoption program reaches through placement coordination across divisions.
- Adoption staff availability to support concurrent planning in Family Reunification and permanency in Permanency Services would be adversely effected.
- More children would likely be placed or simply remain in higher cost foster family agency homes.
- The number of adoption finalizations would be significantly reduced. Adoptive families would be less prepared to exit the system, increasing risk of post adoptive disruption.
- Far fewer children would exit within the legally mandated 24 month time frame affecting Federal and State outcomes.

Emergency Response - 24.5 ER Field Social Work Staff & Family Service Workers

- Since February 2009, timely response to both Immediate Response and 10 day referrals has been at or above 90%. Children suspected of suffering child abuse or neglect will be left waiting in unsafe situations for social workers to respond. Position cuts will reflect an inability to respond timely.
- In 2008 ER investigated 12,629 reports of child abuse and neglect impacting 70,710 children.
- As a result of these investigations, 544 children were placed into protective custody.
- In August of 2009, the ER bureau responded to 243 Immediate Response (IR) referrals, and 523 10 day referrals resulting in an average of 15.5 referrals assigned per month. Loss of positions will increase monthly referrals assignments to remaining staff – many which will still be in training.

- Position cuts will result in no Swing Shift (after-hours) investigations. Since February 2009, the ER Swing Shift unit has responded to 25 Immediate Response referrals per month. This number reflects a period of time when the unit was not fully staffed due to hiring and training.
- In June 2009, the unit became fully trained and staffed to further respond to IR referrals, reduce OT, and respond to referrals received during regular shift hours in which the family was unable to locate.
- Position cuts will result in delays over the weekend due to lack of loss of 1 weekend unit,
- Reassignments will result in the remaining weekend unit being left with SW staff not trained in investigations. As a result of position cuts and “bumping” 8 experienced ER supervisors have been demoted.
- Reduction in FSW transportation services for children being removed from unsafe homes will result in significant delays in response to requests from law enforcement and social workers, tying up patrol and social worker time.

SAFE Center - 3.1 FTE's:

- Trauma to child victims (470 per year) due to duplicative interviews by multiple investigative agencies involved in sexual abuse investigations.
- Reduced successful prosecution and juvenile court protective interventions leaving children at risk of harm, due to lack of coordinated investigations.
- Data reflects that SSD and SPD utilize the SAFE center more frequently than partner law enforcement agencies.
- SSD conducted a total of 168 Sexual Abuse (SA) cases, 6 Physical Abuse cases (PA) and 4 Witness to Victims (WTV) while SPD conducted 133 SA, 3 PA, and 6 WTV
- Citrus Heights Elk Grove and Folsom Police departments participated in SAFE Center Forensic Interviews as well.
- Following a rigorous evaluation process, in March 2009, The National Children's Alliance Board of Directors approved accreditation of the SAFE Center for membership for the next 5 years.

Legal Transcribers – Court Services and Family Reunification 3.0 FTE's:

- Legally required reports to the Juvenile Court will be late resulting in continuances, lengthier stays in foster care, and the likelihood of financial sanctions and civil litigation.

Senior Legal Transcribers – Court Services and Family Reunification 3.0 FTE's:

- Senior Legal Transcribers serve as leads to the Legal Transcribers. Though an important function, this reduction will be mitigated with a plan to improve efficiency by switching to standardized court report templates embedded in CWS/CMS. Lead function and oversight will fall to clerical supervisors with the exception of the Court Services swing shift unit of transcribers that will have no lead and no supervisor available to them during the evening hours.

Court Services - 6.0 Social Workers and 1.0 Supervisor:

- Social workers responsible for finding immediate placements for children just removed from their homes will be reduced by 29% (from 10.5 to 5). To mitigate this impact, analysis is underway to determine if this function can be managed by relocating

Placement Support social workers to the Children's Receiving Home and consolidating supervision with staff at the Granite Park office.

- Early Intervention Specialists who conduct alcohol and drug assessments of parents whose children have just been removed will be reduced from 4 to 3. Overflow of these families, will be diverted to the ADS Division for assessment and referrals to treatment.
- Social workers responsible for completing removal investigations and preparing for Initial Hearings will be reduced by 16.5% (from 12 to 10). This reduction will result in delays in the protective custody warrant process increasing the time children remain in potentially dangerous situations.

Foster Care Health Program – Court Services 5.0 Social Workers, 1.0 Supervisor and 3.5 Child Development Specialists:

- Eliminating the clearance exam will result in our youngest, least verbal child abuse victims, ages 0-5 receiving no baseline examinations prior to entering foster care. Last fiscal year 751 children received a clearance exam.
- These exams often detect non-obvious signs and symptoms of child abuse as well as forensic evidence. This information will no longer be available to social workers and child abuse detectives, and the underlying medical conditions of the children will no longer be immediately diagnosed and treated.
- Additionally, there will be no coordinated process in place to provide urgent care for children ages 6 and older exhibiting signs of serious illness at time of removal. Children in need of urgent care will be transported to local emergency rooms resulting in long waits and higher staff and medical care costs to the County. Last fiscal year 322 children received this exam.
- The CPS team out-stationed with the CAARE Team to process these children into care will no longer be needed. In addition to 5.0 social workers and a supervisor, this team includes the Child Development Specialists who provide supervision and support to these traumatized children in a child friendly waiting room while they await exam and placement.
- Restoring the clearance exam component requires a minimum restoration of 3.0 swing shift social workers and 3.5 Child Development Specialists.
- Eliminating the comprehensive exam will result in the priority population of children under the age of 3 not receiving the specialized developmental screening and assessment exam as mandated by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Instead exams for these children will fall to generalized CHDP providers who lack specialization in this area and will reduce the likelihood of detecting developmental deficiencies that require referrals to specialized care. Last fiscal year 337 children received this exam.
- Restoring the comprehensive medical component requires the restoration of 1.0 Public Health Nurse. This nurse tracks children who require follow up to ensure that critical information is communicated to the case carrying worker and that follow-up care is obtained.
- Finally, eliminating the Foster Care Health Program will do away with the highly specialized development exams performed by a developmental pediatrician specializing in child abuse.
- The developmental exam identifies specialty need care and assists the foster parent obtain the specialty care appointments.

- Failure to address the developmental needs of this population will result in higher medical, educational, and placement costs as these children age.

Family Maintenance - 64.0 Social Work Staff and FSW's

- Reduction in staffing will eliminate early intervention services designed to reduce risk and keep children safe will result in less children and their high risk families from being served each month. An average of 400 families, including 800 children, ranging in age from 0-17, receives oversight, intervention, support and services by Family Maintenance social workers each month.
- Social workers serve an average of 16-18 families each month, and monitor the health, safety, education and well being of children, while they are at home-these children are the most vulnerable situations.
- A six month snap shot reflects that from February 2009 – July 2009, Fm staff removed 15 children due to exigent circumstances, executed 41 Protective Custody holds, and filed 15 Non- Detaining Petitions (NDP). Absent intervention with these families, these children's abuse would have continued to escalate resulting in serious abusive situations.
- Without early intervention services, some families will continue to escalate resulting in increased child death and serious injuries with more children entering foster care increasing the strain on the current system and the overall child welfare costs to the County. Of the 599 children, with a Family Maintenance or Informal supervision case closed in the 2nd Quarter of 2007, in the following 12 months, [580 (96.83%)] of the children remained intact together with their families. Data for 2008 is pending, however preliminary reports reflect like findings.
- Families will not be provided with FSW transportation to participate in risk reduction services (drug testing, parenting classes, and treatment).
- Reduction in transportation services for children being removed from unsafe homes will result in significant delays in response to requests from law enforcement and social workers, tying up patrol and social worker time.
- Parent coaching/demonstrating for housekeeping, budgeting and parenting will not be provided to families receiving Family Maintenance.

Family Reunification – 6 Social Workers, 2 Supervisors, 1 Unit Clerk:

- Reducing the case carrying workforce by 7.5% will diminish the Division's ability to safely case manage the over 2,390 children receiving mandated services in this program.
- Redistributing the caseload evenly among the remaining social workers would result in approximately 32 children per social worker. This does not take into account the gradual build up of cases for the estimated 36% of staff who will be newly assigned to FR as of 9/28/2009.
- Even at this number, caseloads are double the State's own study that recommends a minimal caseload standard of 15.58 children per worker.
- Reducing the workforce during the same time the FR caseloads have risen by 31% will result in fewer children receiving monthly face to face contacts, less placement oversight, lack of follow through on service referrals and more late and incomplete reports to the Juvenile Court.
- As it is currently, monthly contact compliance is 90%, and though this meets the State's minimum standard, in the month of June, 233 children do not have a documented social

work contact in CWS/CMS. With the proposed cuts, this number is projected to get worse.

- Reducing supervisor positions will result in an increased rate of supervisor to social worker ratio from 1:6 to 1:7 and less capacity to oversee the larger supervisor caseload of over 200 children.
- Reunification and Permanency outcomes will decrease with more children remaining in out-of-home care until emancipation.
- Failing to provide minimal service in these areas will result in more court imposed financial sanctions, an increase in overall foster care costs to the County, the likelihood of increased abuse in foster care, less permanent connections for children, and civil litigation.

Family Reunification – 3.0 Court Officers :

- Reducing the Court Officers from 8 to 5 will result in the case carrying social worker spending more time in the court room and less time in the field with families. Currently these dedicated positions are assigned to every court room and provide back-up coverage for any absent Court Officer.

Family Reunification -2.0 Kinship Reassessment Workers:

- Eliminating the 2.0 dedicated kinship reassessment workers will result in the work falling to other social workers to complete. 152 kinship reassessments are projected to be due during the upcoming quarter. To mitigate the impact to case carrying workers, the Kinship Unit is exploring how their work can be reorganized to absorb this demand.

Permanency Services – 3 units – 26.8 FTE's:

- Reduce ability of Permanency staff to conduct permanency efforts leading to fewer children achieving permanence and resulting in poorer outcomes around placement stability and well being.
- Reduced ability of staff to engage, know and support the youth on their caseloads due to an increase in the average caseload from 45 to 60 cases.
- Poor Federal and State performance outcomes around placement stability and permanence leaving the County vulnerable to fiscal sanctions.
- Permanency staff will have delays in court report timeliness and completions resulting in Juvenile Court imposed sanctions.
- Approximately 255 AWOL children will receive less proactive outreach efforts and reduced response efforts to leads, leading to decreased child safety.
- Decreased permanency efforts will result in more children remaining in long term foster care and significantly increasing foster care costs.

Team Decision Making Facilitators - 3.0 FTE's:

- Unnecessary placement changes causing trauma and disruption for approximately 150 children per month.
- Inability to safely reduce the number of children entering foster care through an inclusive decision making process that includes parents, extended family, involved professionals, community members and others.

- This will negatively impact the county placement stability outcome measure. We are currently at 23.3% which is 11% lower than the California statewide average. The national goal is 41.8%.

Foster Home Licensing – 1.0 FTE:

- Reduce capacity for quality assurance reviews, program development and coordination with the state agency.

Independent Living Program – 11.0 FTE's:

- Reduction of 12.0 ILP staff will challenge the ability of the CPS program to adequately engage, prepare and support youth as they transition into adulthood and out of the dependency system. These are mandated services consisting of outreach to youth, life skills assessments, personal growth and living skills workshops, education planning, employment services, and housing assistance.
- There are 1300 youth age 16-21 years enrolled in the program.
- ILP related case management services are provided by three entities, the CPS Division-ILP Unit, Foster Youth Services staff in four school districts, San Juan, Elk Grove, Sacramento City and Twin Rivers, along with the services provided by the co-located at the Adolpho transitional housing program.
- The loss of the CPS ILP unit will result in additional workload for the Permanency Services social workers, who would be expected to take on the outreach and ILP case management duties with the help of college interns, Americorp members and the faith community .
- Youth who do not receive ILP services are more prone to unemployment, homelessness, and overrepresentation in the mental health, alcohol and drug, and justice systems upon emancipation exacting huge fiscal tolls on many other County systems.

Laptop Purchase

- A reduction of \$397,925 for the purchase of laptop computers will eliminate funding for the laptops for the majority of CPS social workers. There will be funding for 104 laptops for the Emergency Response social workers only.

Intra-fund DHA Reduction:

- Loss of two DHA Eligibility Workers will eliminate the Foster Care Eligibility Liaisons that work with CPS staff to ensure documentation is accurate and timely to maximize federal funding. As a result, DHHS and DHA are working together to determine if there is a way to continue this partnership without the intra-fund transfer.

UCD Clearance and Comprehensive Exams

- Eliminating the clearance exam will result in our youngest least verbal child abuse victims receiving no baseline examinations and no opportunity to detect physical symptoms and/or evidence of abuse and neglect that are not obvious to non-medical professionals.
- Eliminating the comprehensive exam will result in the priority population of children under the age of 3 not receiving the specialized developmental screening and assessment exam as mandated by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Instead exams for

these children will fall to generalized CHDP providers who lack specialization in this area and will reduce the likelihood of detecting developmental deficiencies that require referrals to specialized care. Failure to address the developmental needs of this population will result in higher medical, educational, and placement costs as these children age.

Contract Services

Services to be reduced will include the CWLA contract for \$50K, UC Davis Training Academy for \$14K, Drug Testing for 182K, and Intrafund provided to DHA Investigative Assistants for \$329K. Reductions in these contracts will result in less oversight of MGT change recommendations implementation, less oversight of drug dependent clients, increased time for their children in foster care, less training opportunities for staff and less consultation, and delay in completing criminal record search and the whereabouts of absent parents requests for potential caretakers in placement cases where the health and/or safety of a child is in question and investigate the whereabouts of absent parents for Juvenile Court petitions.

Respectfully submitted,

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