

April 11, 2008

**CHILD DEATH, NEAR DEATH, STILLBIRTH COMMISSION/
CHILD PROTECTION ACCOUNTABILITY JOINT COMMISSION**

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY USE OF HISTORY IN DECISION MAKING SUBCOMMITTEE

FINAL REPORT

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Subcommittee Charge: *To develop multi-disciplinary programs, policies and procedures that will increase the sharing, use, and interpretation of history data to protect children.*

Chronology of History Subgroup: *To develop a mechanism which would allow DFS staff to easily review relevant history regarding individuals involved in a family's case. This historical information would be critical in completing safety assessments, case planning and decision-making efforts.*

Recommendation: DSCYF/DFS submit a FY09 budget initiative for a new FACTS system upgrade that will contain client and case related details about all individuals active in the case, as well as relationships to others.

Information-Sharing Subgroup: *To develop policy recommendations related to information sharing among entities in order to protect children from abuse or neglect while recognizing the rights of the family and its individual members (Refer to Information-Sharing Subgroup Final Report attached to the November 27, 2007 Subcommittee Meeting Site @ <http://denver.state.de.us/egov/calendar.nsf>)*

Recommendations:

1) DOE – LEA (Local Education Agencies) and Charter Schools

If a school is the reporter, the DFS investigator should inform the reporter or designated school contact that DFS responded, the child is safe in the home or child was placed, who is allowed to have contact with the child when DFS has legal custody, explain what assistance is needed from the school as applicable, who the school should call to update DFS about the child's status, and when the child's placement changes. Other specific case information should only be shared when there is a signed State of Delaware Interagency Consent to Release. When a case is active in DFS Treatment, upon signature of the Consent to Release form, the worker should notify the school when the child is placed or the placement changes. DFS shall comply with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act.

2) DPH (Division of Public Health)

When a case is active in Investigation and DPH was the reporter or is working collaboratively with DFS during the investigation, and a State of Delaware Interagency Consent to Release Information has been signed, inform DPH if the case is transferred to Treatment; if the case is closed, and who is allowed contact with the child when DFS has legal custody. When the case is active in Treatment, DFS notifies DPH if the service plan includes that agency and if there are safety issues that could impact DPH staff.

3) DFS should incorporate the above recommendations into the new worker Core training.

4) DFS ensures feedback is provided to reporters within 24 hours about whether a child abuse or neglect report was accepted or not.

Multi-Disciplinary Use of History in Decision-Making Subcommittee – Recommendations:

1) The CDNDSC/CPAC Joint Commission should send a joint letter to the Health Care Commission to explore possible collaboration regarding child safety in relation to the Delaware Information Health Network (DIHN).

2) The Joint Commission should request other child welfare system partners to assess how their agencies utilize history in decision-making and advise the Commission accordingly. Should there be the necessity to create a multi-disciplinary workgroup to address the use of history, our Subcommittee suggests the agency-appropriate staff chairs same.

- System partners may include: medical community, Department of Justice, Law Enforcement, and Family Court.

The Multi-Disciplinary Use of History in Decision-Making Subcommittee wishes to thank all participating partners and the Joint Commission for addressing this very critical area of child safety. This final report concludes the work of the Subcommittee.