



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
4126 Technology Way, Suite 100
Carson City, Nevada 89706
Telephone (775) 684-4000 • Fax (775) 684-4010
<http://dhhs.nv.gov>

Status Report:
State Oversight of Clark County Department of Family Services
Revised May 11, 2007

The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), has initiated a wide variety of proactive measures designed to assist the Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) in its efforts and the State's to vastly improve the quality of care and protection of children in the child welfare system through enhanced oversight, greater resources in terms of funding and staff, and proposed legislation during the 2007 Session. Further, DHHS initiated measures designed to increase the transparency of the child welfare system with the intent of restoring public confidence in the system through the sharing of findings, reports, and other information via the Department's website and other avenues.

CCDFS Oversight:

- DHHS contracted with a multidisciplinary panel of national experts to deliver an *external formal case review* of child fatalities that had occurred in Clark County. The panel delivered an objective analysis of selected cases and identified systemic trends and areas needing improvement to support the safety of children and prevention of child fatalities.
- The *Blue Ribbon Panel Child Death Review Committee*, initiated by the Director of DHHS in cooperation with the Legislature, was convened to provide a forum to publicly accept and review the child fatality report prepared by the national experts. This information was used to develop proposed legislation, corrective action planning, and interagency cooperation.
- In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, DHHS utilized three National Resource Centers to obtain technical assistance related to child protective services, legal and judicial issues, family centered practice and permanency planning, and organizational improvement.
- DHHS sought the assistance of the National Center for Child Death Review in the development of a fatality data collection system, local multidisciplinary team training on fatality review, and assistance in convening and conducting the national expert panel review of select child fatalities.
- In cooperation with the Legislature, DHHS worked with county child welfare administrators to create Nevada's Child Welfare Integration Future Funding Plan, which includes a nine point data indicator matrix designed to monitor child welfare system performance and progress. The Measuring System Improvement matrix includes:

- Absence of Maltreatment
- Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care
- Foster Care Re-entries
- Stability of Foster Care Placements
- Length of Time to Achieve Reunification
- Length of Time to Achieve to Achieve Adoption
- *Caseworker Visits*
 - *Goal: At least 95% of children in system seen at least once a month by their primary caseworker.*
 - *Present Clark County DFS rate: 58%*
- Supervisory Review
- AFCARS Data Quality

DHHS Direct Intervention Measures:

- Since September 2006, DHHS Child Welfare Multidisciplinary Teams (SCWMDT) have been on site almost daily at Child Haven and other CCDFS field offices conducting file reviews, observing Child Haven operations, conducting interviews with staff and foster parents, and assessing the ability of those facilities to gain state licensure, as outlined in AB 507.
- DHHS has developed and implemented a process in which child welfare agencies throughout the state, including CCDFS, must provide a written report of all child fatalities. These reports are made available on the DHHS website.
- DHHS has initiated Quality Improvement Activities and Agency Improvement Plans, which includes an ongoing, on site case review process conducted from a random sample of child welfare cases: file review and interviews with staff, parents, children, foster parents and others; and a report of findings generated. As a requirement of the quality improvement process, CCDFS is required to respond to each quality improvement review report with an Agency Improvement Plan that outlines action that will be taken to achieve performance improvement in designated areas. This plan is monitored monthly by the state.
- CCDFS has submitted a Safe Futures plan, which will be used to reform the child welfare system in Clark County. DHHS monitors follow through on a monthly basis.
- DHHS conducts training in accordance with the statewide training plan and monitors attendance, test scores, remediation needs, and remediation training of all training offered to CCDFS staff by DHHS.
- In response to the “Independent Child Death Review Panel for Clark County, Nevada Report of Findings and Recommendations Child Deaths 2001-2004,” CCDFS developed an action plan. DHHS monitors compliance with the action plan and collaborates with the Administrative Team and Executive Committee for the Review of Child Fatalities, the designated “report to” entity for additional monitoring.
- DHHS initiated and completed a review and verification process of the 55 cases identified in the CCDFS Ed Cotton Report.

2007 Legislation being considered (all either sponsored or supported by DHHS):

- *AB 147-Prohibits placement of children age three and under in a group shelter. Further, on or before January 1, 2009, the bill prohibits any child age six or younger from being placed in a group shelter facility.*
- AB 261-Provides release of information regarding missing children, disclosure reporting of fatalities and near fatalities of children and ensures state compliance with federal law.
- AB 263-Provides for state oversight and enforcement capability for county child welfare agencies related to compliance with federal and state law, regulation, policy and state plans.
- AB 293-Appropriates funds for the Legislature to contract with an auditor to conduct statewide child welfare reviews.
- AB 305-Creates a statutory committee to address issues relevant to the protection of children and provides for performance audits of the child welfare system.
- *AB 507-Ensures that the state licenses child care institutions and makes requirements for employee training in these types of facilities.*

Increased Child Welfare Funding

Funding requests included in the Governor's Recommended Budget for the Fiscal Years 08-09 biennium for the continuation of child welfare integration for Clark County totals approximately \$135.6 million, a 72.5% increase in General Funds over the FY06-07 biennium. The Budget includes:

- \$25 million for projected caseload increases for foster care placements and for adoption subsidies in Clark County (\$16 million in General Funds). This includes an increase of 64 full time employees (FTE).
- \$3.5 million to support an increase of 32 FTE to provide added visits to children, parents, and foster parents (\$2.6 million in General Funds).
- \$8.6 million to support foster care rate increases from \$21.50 per day to \$24 per day in FY08 and \$28 per day in FY09 (\$5.3 million in General Funds).
- \$1.3 million to support an increase of 6 FTE to provide 24/7 direct placement team (\$1 million in General Funds).
- \$800,000 to support an increase of 5 FTE to provide additional foster home recruitment and training (\$600,000 in General Funds).
- \$1.9 million to support an increase of 6 FTE to provide for increased foster care licensing activities and to enhance foster parent liaison activities (\$1.4 million in General Funds).

Additionally, the Governor's Recommended FY08-09 biennial budget includes:

- \$1 million to support an increase of 8 FTE to help DCFS meet federally mandated oversight of all child welfare agencies compliance with CAPTA—Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (\$700,000 in General Funds).
- \$5.2 million to support child welfare training (\$1.3 million in General Funds).
- Approximately \$2 million in General Funds to build capacity in the Family Resource Centers to provide differential response to child protective services.