



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
1250 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

MAR 17 2008

Secretary Dempsey Benton
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services
2001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2001

Dear Mr. Benton:

This letter relates to the Child Welfare Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that was mandated as a result of the findings from the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) conducted in North Carolina in March 2007. The initial version of the PIP was submitted on September 27, 2007. After negotiations with my staff, the plan was resubmitted on November 26, 2007, and December 21, 2007. Further technical changes were made and the final version was submitted electronically to this office on February 14, 2008.

We appreciate the diligence of your staff in working through the intricacies of this process. We have reviewed the plan, as amended, and hereby approve it effective April 1, 2008. In accordance with 45 CFR 1355.36 (b) (1), any penalty resulting from non-conformity to the law and regulations will be held in abeyance until you have had the opportunity to implement the plan.

Section 45 CFR 1355.35 (d) (4) requires that quarterly status reports be submitted on the progress in implementing the program improvement measures. The third quarter of Federal Fiscal Year 2008, ending June 30, 2008, will constitute the first quarter requiring a progress report, and the reports are to be submitted within 30 days from the end of each quarter.

You have developed a comprehensive and challenging list of corrective actions, which should have a positive effect on the outcomes for children and families who are impacted by the child welfare system. While the Administration for Children and Families approves the PIP, please be reminded of the agreement between the Children's Bureau's Central and Regional Offices and the State that the PIP measures need to be re-negotiated once North Carolina has completed all of its revisions to the Quality Assurance (QA) case review system. At that time, we will discuss whether those revisions/changes will impact the baselines.

Implementing the respective strategies and tracking progress and timeframes for completion will require concerted efforts by the North Carolina Division of Social Services. We look forward to our collaboration over the next two years in the implementation of program improvement. In addition, technical assistance remains available to you through the National Resource Centers.

Enclosed is a copy of the approved plan and the PIP Agreement Form. If you have any questions regarding this or other related matters, please contact Donna Dummett at (404) 562-2826.

Sincerely,



Christine M. Calpin
Associate Commissioner
Children's Bureau

Enclosure(s)

cc:

Joan E. Ohl, Commissioner; ACF,ACYF; Washington, DC
Ruth Walker; Child Welfare Regional Program Manager; CB, RO IV; Atlanta, GA
Kenneth J. Wolfe, Acting Director; ACF, OPA; Washington, DC
Sherry Bradsher, Director, NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS),
Division of Social Services; Raleigh, NC
JoAnn Lamm, Deputy Director, NC DHHS, Division of Social Services; Raleigh, NC
Charisse Johnson, Section Chief, NC DHHS, Division of Social Services; Raleigh, NC
Melissa Beard; CB, CFSR; Washington, DC

I. PIP General Information

CB Region: I II III IV X V VI VII VIII IX X

State: North Carolina

Lead Children's Bureau Regional Office Contact
Person: Donna Dummett

Telephone Number: 404-562-2826

E-mail Address: donna.dummett@acf.hhs.gov

State Agency Name: North Carolina Division of
Social Services

Address: 325 N Salisbury St
Raleigh, NC 27699

Telephone Number: 919-733-3055

Lead State Agency Contact Person for the Child and
Family Services Review (CFSR): Candice Britt

Telephone Number: 919-733-7831

E-mail Address: candice.britt@ncmail.net

Lead State Agency Data Contact Person: Hank
Bowers

Telephone Number: 919-733-4530

E-mail Address: hank.bowers@ncmail.net

State PIP Team Members* (name, title, organization)

1. Jo Ann Lamm, Deputy Director, NCDSS
2. Esther High, Section Chief, Family Support and Child Welfare, NCDSS
3. Kevin Kelley, Assistant Section Chief, Family Support and Child Welfare, NCDSS
4. Beverly Daniel, Local Operations & Review Manager, NCDSS
5. Sara Anderson Mims, WorkFirst and CPS Policy Manager, NCDSS
6. Patrick Betancourt, Multiple Response System Coordinator, NCDSS
7. Tammy Johnson, Adoption Indexing Manager, NCDSS
8. Paul Waddle, Foster Care and Adoption Manager, NCDSS
9. Marina Chatoo, Community Based Programs Manager, NCDSS
10. Teresa Turner, Staff Development Manager, NCDSS
11. Bob Hensley, Foster Care Licensing Manager, NCDSS
12. Keith Davis, Local Support Operations Manager, NCDSS
13. Judy Massengill, NCDSS
14. Dannette Smith, Mecklenburg County DSS
15. Eric Zechman, CPS Policy Consultant, NCDSS
16. Rebecca Huffman, SOC Coordinator, NCDSS
17. Tamika Williams, NCDSS
18. Holly McNeill, Multiple Response System Consultant, NCDSS
19. Angie Stephenson, Child Welfare Attorney, Attorney General's Office
20. Hank Bowers, Performance Management Chief, NCDSS
21. Terri Reichert, CPS Policy Consultant, NCDSS
22. Susan King, NCDSS
23. Susan Robinson, NCDMH/DD/SAS
24. Gail Cormier, Executive Director, North Carolina Families United
25. Kelly Nguyen, Powerful Youth

26. Barbara Jones, Cherokee Family Services
27. Lana Dial, Court Improvement Project Director, AOC
28. Sandy Pearce, AOC
29. Warren Ludwig, Wake County Human Services
30. Karen Butler, Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
31. Brendan Hargett, Guilford County Department of Social Services
32. Ruth Amerson, Another Choice for Black Children
33. Jane Malpass, Another Choice for Black Children
34. Anita Evans, NCDSS
35. Trishana McKendall, Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office
36. Natasha Cox, Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office
37. Sue Stelmach, Onslow County Community Child Protection Team
38. Joy Stewart, University of North Carolina
39. Laura O'Neal, Nash County Department of Social Services
40. Angie Pittman, Buncombe County Department of Social Services
41. Jamie Blevins, Wilson County Department of Social Services
42. Christina Christopoulos, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy
43. Liz Snyder, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy
44. Nicole Lawrence, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy
45. Elizabeth Weigensberg, University of North Carolina
46. Sally Shaw, Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
47. Carl Williamson, Alexander County Department of Social Services
48. Regina Dickens, RSD Consulting
49. Cheryl McGee, Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
50. Kaye Radford, Nash County Department of Social Services
51. Melvia Batts, Nash County Department of Social Services
52. Joyce White, NCDSS
53. Phyllis Fulton, NCDSS
54. Sydney Batch, Attorney
55. Judge Lisa C. Bell, 26 th Judicial District
56. Judge John M. Britt, 7 th Judicial District
57. Judge Paul McCoy, Judicial District
68. Judge Regan Miller, 26 th Judicial District
69. Judge J.B. Trosch, 26 th Judicial District
70. A.J. Coutu, 25 th Judicial District
71. Alisa Huffman, AOC
72. Paul LaChance, Governor's Crime Commission
73. Jo McCants, AOC
74. Jan Norwood, Nash County Department of Social Services
75. Bill Stanton, Caliber, ICF
76. Alexia Stith, AOC
77. Brandi Tolbert, 25 th Judicial District
78. Jane Volland, Guardian Ad Litem Administrator, AOC

79. Tyrone Wade, Attorney, Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
80. Iris Williams, Northampton County Court
81. Lori Cole, AOC
82. Danielle Carmen, Indigent Defense Services
83. Wendy Sotolongo, Indigent Defense Services
84. Louis Pitts, Legal Aid
85. Janet Mason, School of Government
86. Colleen Turner, Director, Gates County Department of Social Services
87. Gary Ander, Alamance County Department of Social Services
88. Michelle Hughes, Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina
89. Debra McHenry, Department of Public Instruction
90. Catherine Joyner, Division of Public Health
91. Tony Troop, School Based Child and Family Support Team Initiative
92. Leanne Fowler, Boys and Girls Homes of North Carolina
93. George Bryan, The Children's Home
94. Tracy Turner, North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services
95. Rhonda Bennett, NCDHHS, DIRM
96. Phillip Redmond, The Duke Endowment
97. Kelly Crowley, DMH/DD/SAS
98. Kirstin Frescoln, AOC
99. Steve Preister, NRCOI
100. Judge Robert Brady, 25 th Judicial District
101. Alma Brown, Guardian Ad Litem
102. Kathy Stone, Wilson County Department of Social Services
103. Kristy Perry, Person County Department of Social Services
104. Anna Hamburg, Adoption Consultant, NCDSS
105. Gail Cormier, North Carolina Families United
106. Cyndy Benson, Catawba County DSS
107. Ronald Moore, NCDSS
108. Alex Goldstein, MHA
109. Adele Spitz Roth, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy
110. Angela Mendell, Bladen County DSS
111. Denise Shaffer, Orange County DSS
112. Dean Duncan, UNC
113. Beverly Smith, NC Kids
114. Cathie Beatty, Buncombe County DSS
115. Narell Joyner, MeckCares
116. Jeffery Watson, Youth Advocacy and Involvement
117. Nicole Lawrence, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy

*List key individuals who are actually working on the PIP and not necessarily everyone who was consulted during the PIP development process.

II. PIP Agreement Form

The PIP should be signed and dated by the Chief Executive Officer of the State child welfare agency and by the Regional Administrator for the Children's Bureau Regional Office responsible for the State. The approved PIP with original signature must be retained in the Children's Bureau Regional Office. A hard copy of the approved PIP must be submitted to the following parties immediately upon approval:

- State child welfare agency
- Children's Bureau (Child and Family Services Review staff)
- Child Welfare Review Project, c/o JBS International, Inc.

Agreements

The following Federal and State officials agree to the content and terms of the attached Program Improvement Plan:

Sherry S. Bradsher

9/27/07

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director, Division of Social Services

Date

Christine M. Calpin

3/10/08

Children's Bureau

Date

IV. PIP Matrix

State: North Carolina
 Type of Report: PIP: _____ Quarterly Report: ___ (Quarter: ___)

PIP Strategy Summary and TA Plan

State: North Carolina
 Date Submitted: _____

Primary Strategies	Key Concerns	TA Resources Needed
<p>I. Child, Youth and Family Involvement. Increasing child, youth and family involvement at all points of contact has been identified as crucial to effecting system change. At the front end, increased family involvement should result in more effective in-home service delivery through an on-target assessment of service strengths and needs and meaningful service agreements that are owned by families and youth. The identification of the real issues which are contributing to the maltreatment affords an opportunity to connect the family with crucial service needs. Addressing the root causes of the maltreatment will reduce repeat maltreatment. True child, youth and family involvement lends itself to effective in-home service delivery and should result in fewer children entering care. For those children who have been in care for some time, specific efforts to locate relatives and connections through family finding techniques will be beneficial; we recognize that in some cases, thorough case work to engage family members up-front has not occurred. Targeted recruitment of foster and adoptive homes for older children will be guided by input from youth and current foster and adoptive parents.</p>	<p>Initial and sustained contact with absent parents, particularly fathers. (Item 25) Need for increased usage of child and family teams to involve the child and family in case planning. The use of child and family teams can help prevent removal, establish appropriate permanency goal, identify most appropriate placement, contribute to expedited reunification, guardianship or placement with relatives, and timely adoption when that is identified as appropriate. (Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) Disparities in findings between in-home services and foster care services. (Item 3, 13, 15)</p>	