



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

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**March 21, 2024**

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ATTENTION: DSS DIRECTORS**

**SUBJECT: CHILD WELFARE WORKLOAD STUDY**

**REQUIRED ACTION:**  Immediate  Time Sensitive  Information Only

The child welfare system in North Carolina and nationally is experiencing a crisis in workforce recruitment and retention. Statewide, the annual turnover rate of child welfare social workers is above 30%, with some counties grappling with half or more of their staff leaving every year. One consequence of North Carolina's child welfare workforce crisis is the increase in each worker's caseload. While the state has set a standard caseload for CPS Assessments of 1 worker per 10 families, more than 70% of counties have experienced at least one month of CPS caseloads that exceeded this standard over the past two years. Because caseloads do not encompass the entire scope of work included in child welfare workers' duties, the North Carolina Department of Social Services (NCDSS) contracted with Public Consulting Group, LLC (PCG) to conduct a study of the workloads of identified staff and supervisors. With the workload study data, NCDSS will be able to better identify and address disparities in workload among counties and support consistency in practice statewide.

The workload study was designed to determine if the amount of time required by the existing caseload is greater than the time staff have available to complete the work using two types of measurements: the amount of time staff have available for casework and the amount of time each case type takes when policy standards are met using a Random Moment Time Survey and a time study of cases.

Attached you will find the report from PCG. This report is the culmination of the child welfare workload study. However, this is just one data set to be examined and used to address North Carolina's child welfare workforce crisis. Ongoing monitoring of workload and caseload is imperative, along with a multi-faceted approach to target the various problems that impact workforce wellbeing.

NCDSS has several initiatives in place to further develop and support a strong and stable workforce in Child Welfare in North Carolina. These initiatives include the Child Welfare Education Collaborative, Training Redesign, and providing Recruitment Materials to all 100 counties that can be customized.

This report will be used for ongoing discussions between NCDSS and local Directors to establish plans for additional work to continue to grow the workforce.

**NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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As discussions continue as to what goals NCDSS will propose, we encourage you to read through the report to determine if there are steps that can be taken locally as well to strengthen the workforce. Through a collaborative effort, we are confident that the challenges facing North Carolina's Child Welfare workforce can be addressed to ensure that the child welfare workforce is both prepared and supported to provide better services to the children and families of North Carolina.

If you have an questions, please reach out to Peter West at [peter.west@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:peter.west@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,

*Peter L. West*

**Peter L. West**  
Section Chief for County Operations  
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