

NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Deputy Secretary for Opportunity and Well-Being

September 21, 2023

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, MANAGERS,
SUPERVISORS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

**SUBJECT: UPDATES TO THE INTAKE POLICY MANUAL AND CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION
SYSTEM ROLLOUT**

**PURPOSE: INTAKE POLICY ALIGNMENT FOR CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION SYSTEM
ROLL OUT**

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

NC DSS is committed to ensuring that local child welfare agencies are provided with the most up to date protocol and guidance to support compliance with the law and best practice of child welfare services. We also want to ensure that counties stay informed throughout the Child Welfare Information System (CWIS) rollout process.

Last month, NCDHHS shared information on the estimated timeline for statewide implementation of the Intake Module, starting with the 25 counties currently using the NC CWIS for Intake and Assessment. These 25 counties will go live in the CWIS as of Sunday, September 24, 2023.

NC DSS staff have worked closely with these counties leading up to launch including training more than 300 county staff. All 25 counties have completed 90-day and 30-day Readiness Assessments as well as Final Readiness checklists. In addition, NC DSS has developed a plan to provide counties with wrap around support during implementation of new policy and the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Screening and Response tool in the CWIS. This includes on-site support, virtual business and after-hours support, as well as daily check in calls to discuss successes, challenges, and any additional questions.

As all 100 counties transition into the CWIS, NC DSS has revised the CPS Intake manual. In addition, a draft SDM Screening and Response Intake Manual for CWIS has been developed. These resources are designed to ensure alignment in practice as counties await transition into the system as well as provide clear policy on process and guidance for those that are using the system. Changes will provide clarification on screening conflict of interest and jurisdiction cases between counties who are in the

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system and those who are awaiting entry. The changes have been posted to the [Child Welfare Manual website](#) and will be effective immediately.

The revised manual changes include:

- **CPS Intake**

- Substance Affected Infant screening has been aligned with federal law, state statute and case law, to comply with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).
- Clarification on policy and guidance regarding the caretaker definition.
- Policy and Guidance for handling cases as counties transition into the Child Welfare Information System.
- Clarification on two-level decision making when a supervisor is unable to locate a higher-level manager.

The revised protocol and guidance will provide social workers with what must be done and how it should be done. NC DSS recognizes the shift in practice that is required for the changes listed above, particularly the changes to Substance Affected Infant screening. These changes were made to assist workers in making screening decisions that better reflect the needs of the families that we serve in child welfare and to align with federal law to ensure Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) compliance.

Next Steps

An FAQ will be provided to assist with changes to policy and the system. In addition, the revised changes will be presented to the county child welfare agencies at an upcoming Children's Services Committee meeting.

A live webinar, **CPS Intake Policy Alignment**, will be provided on **October 2, 2023 at 11am** to provide further instruction on the policy changes and implementation. The webinar will be recorded and uploaded to view for those unable to attend. The link to register for the webinar is: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2271985082129965914>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Office Hours for CPS Intake Policy Alignment will be provided to discuss all policy changes and answer questions for county workers who are awaiting entry into the Child Welfare Information System on Tuesday, **October 24, 2023, from 2pm-3pm**. County workers can register for Office Hours at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1451043521344067935>.

For the counties who are live in the system Office Hours to answer any questions about policy and practice will be held on Wednesday, **October 25, 2023, from 11am-12pm** and county workers can register at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2598866590532934490>.

This policy is effective immediately and has been published on the Division's web page that can be found at <https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional/social-services/child-welfare/policy-manuals> for your review.

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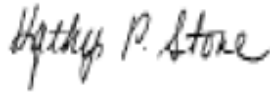
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If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Hubbard at Amanda.Hubbard@dhhs.nc.gov, DSS HS Program Consultant, or your Regional Child Welfare Specialist.

Sincerely,



Kathy Stone
Section Chief for Safety and Prevention
Department of Health and Human Services
North Carolina Division of Social Services

Cc: Lisa Tucker Cauley, Senior Director for Child, Family and Adult Services
Adrian Daye, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice
Katie Swanson, Deputy Director for County Operations
Tammy Shook, Interim Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice
Carla McNeil, Section Chief for Prevention and Safety
Peter West, Section Chief for County Operations
Kimaree Sanders, Section Chief for Licensing and Regulatory

Attachments:

FAQ Information Sheet
FAQ for New CPS Policy Spring 2023

CWS-62-2023

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