

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • MSC 2401 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2401
Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Director
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal,
(919) 733-3055

January 6, 2003

Dear Chairperson:

This letter is to provide you with Community Child Protection Team (CCPT) updates and information. Specifically the letter addresses the **end of the year report to the Board of County Commissioners, Citizen's Review Panels as required by the federal Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA), CCPT training, the foster care backlog and Session Law 2001-291 HOUSE BILL 275, the Decriminalization of Infant Abandonment.**

A copy of your report to the local Board of County Commissioners is due at the Division by January 31, 2003. This report, jointly developed by the CCPT, is one mechanism that CCPTs utilize to inform the community about the status of child protection in the community. Reports to the Commissioners will include system deficiencies and gaps in resources and or services that have a negative impact on children and families in the community. Information for the report is gathered from case reviews, team collaboration, statistical information from the Department of Social Services and from other sources unique to your county. CCPTs have an opportunity to offer recommendations of strategies to remove the presenting problem. CCPTs are also encouraged to communicate system deficiencies or gaps in services to the North Carolina Division of Social Services as a means of promoting change. To obtain guidelines for the end of the year report you may refer to the *Community Child Protection Team Reference Guide*, page 45.

The Division is pleased to inform you that the suggested format for CCPT non fatality case reviews and the end of the year report is now on the web. You may find this information at <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/childrenservices/initiatives/ccpt.htm> .

In 1998 CCPTs were designated as Citizen Review Panels as required by the federal Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA). CAPTA legislation provides limited federal funding for child welfare programs in North Carolina. A main focus for Citizen Review Panels is evaluating how child welfare policy established on a federal or state level impacts families and children on a local level.

The Division has identified two areas of concern in reviewing the operation of CCPTs statewide. The CAPTA regulations require the presence of consumers of child welfare services on the Citizen Review Panel. The Division is concerned that consumers are not adequately represented on the CCPTs. During 2003 the Division will promote consumer participation through education and public awareness programs. Each CCPT is asked to make efforts to recruit child welfare consumers to be on the team. It is important that CCPTs consider this directive as the team carries out CCPT business.

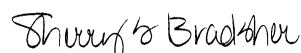
The second area of concern is in regards to the foster care backlog. The foster care backlog is an issue for CCPT because factors that impact permanency often reflect system deficiencies or gaps in services. In considering the foster care backlog, CCPTs may determine from case reviews barriers that prevent children from obtaining safe permanent homes in the county. Once the barrier is identified the team may collaborate about strategies to address the barriers.

In July 2001, the Governor signed into law House Bill 275, the Infant Homicide Prevention Act. This Act serves to decriminalize the abandonment of infants under certain circumstances. The membership composition and purpose of CCPTs creates a natural resource for developing a local public awareness/education campaign and a protocol for receiving abandoned infants. Included with this letter is a protocol model developed by Forsyth County. George Bryan, Executive Director of North Carolina Exchange/Exchangeette authored the model and has agreed to share information with others that are interested in the model. Mr. Bryan may be reached at telephone number 336-748-9028. His address is 500 W. Northwest Blvd., Winston Salem, NC 27105. In considering this project you may view House Bill 275 on the web at <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/html2001/bills/currentversion/ratified/house/hbil0275.full.html> .

Phyllis Fulton, CCPT Coordinator, has developed training for CCPT chairpersons. She has provided the training for approximately sixty CCPT chairpersons in four locations. She will be doing the training in 2-3 additional sites in early 2003. All chairpersons are expected to participate in the training. During 2003 Ms. Fulton will participate in CCPT case reviews. She will schedule participation based on request by teams and other factors.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to the children and families of North Carolina. Ms. Fulton is the liaison between the CCPTs and the NC Division of Social Services. She is also available for consultation and guidance. Ms Fulton may be contacted by telephone at 919-733-4622 or by fax at 919-715-6714. Her email address is phyllis.fulton@ncmail.net.

Sincerely,



Sherry S. Bradsher
Deputy Director

CC: County Directors of Social Services
Children's Services Team Leaders
Children's Program Representatives

SSB:pbf

CS-01-03

Forsyth County “Safe Surrender”

Implementation Plan

Step 1: Pull together a task force of interested parties

- Child Abuse Prevention Agency
- Hospital OB Social Worker
- Department of Social Services-Child Protective Services
- Department of Social Services-Adoptions
- Hospital Pediatrician
- Family Services Adoption
- Law Enforcement
- Emergency Medical Services
- Perinatal Service Agency
- Baby Love Coordinator-Local Health Department
- Community Volunteers
- Representatives of Cultural and Language Diversity

Step 2: Develop and coordinate protocols and capacities for handling an infant who is abandoned

- Address who is to determine if infant is over 7-days-old
- Determine which hospital would like to manage immediate health care
- Determine how to discuss abandonment with a parent if there is opportunity
- Address the potential for obtaining medical history
- Establish action required if infant is harmed in first seven days by parent (s)
- Determine how to encourage the use of abandonment to health care providers, representatives of the legal/law enforcement system, and/or social workers.

Step 3: Train the professionals in the protocols

- EMS will be first responders responsible for transport of infant if 911 system is alerted or if law enforcement initially encounters infant.
- Baptist Hospital will be responsible for health check and will coordinate with law enforcement and Department of Social Services.
- Department of Social Services is responsible for placement and agrees to expedite termination of parental rights.
- Adoption agencies agrees to expedite adoption placement process, if requested

Step 4: Market the plan to the public

- Invite key players to the table
- Research other states' publicity
- Examine key issues and sensitive marketing issues
 - How to publicize without encouraging abandonment on a wide-scale basis
 - How to encourage abandonment to responsible parties
 - How to encourage adoption as an alternative
 - How to promise no criminal prosecution while law enforcement may still be involved
 - How to promise abandonment while knowing you must advertise for the parents during termination of parental rights
- Determine marketing tools: Television, flyers, posters, stickers, etc.
- Make needed language translations
- Arrange for distribution of materials
- Determine costs and who will be responsible for payment
- Identify a spokesperson