

60-Day CIRT REVIEW REPORT

I. Introduction

The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) protocol was adopted by the Oregon Department of Human Services on November 1, 2004. This protocol was developed for the following purposes:

- To specify the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare procedures that will be used when a critical incident occurs;
- To increase the Department's accountability to the public;
- To ensure timely responses by the Department with respect to any critical incident in Child Welfare; and
- To increase the Department's ability to recommend necessary changes to statutes, administrative rules, policies and procedures, practices, training and personnel matters.

The initial findings of the Critical Incident Response to the case involving Jordan Knapp were reported in a 30-Day Report on January 9, 2005. The protocol requires that, within 30 days of completing that report, if system issues are identified, the Critical Incident Response Team must:

- Develop recommendations to address the system issues;
- Identify action steps. The action steps will be specific as to time lines, tasks and parties responsible for the tasks; and
- Communicate recommendations, action steps and progress to the public and stakeholders as appropriate.

As per the protocol, the above-identified areas are covered in this report.

II. CIRT Review Progress and Actions Taken:

1. **Finding:** There was an apparent lack of coordination, continuity and communication among the multiple caseworkers and casework assistants assigned to work on this foster care case.

Recommendation: Central office program staff will work with Clackamas County child welfare to strengthen and reinforce communication, coordination and delineation of caseworker assignment, role and responsibility. These issues will be evaluated statewide.

Action Taken:

- Clackamas has implemented a branch protocol that requires review by all involved supervisors of any new CPS calls or safety concerns on all open cases. Branch management shared this protocol with all child welfare staff in December 2004.
- Clackamas supervisors will review and determine whether more than one worker should be involved with a client family, such as when case plans of individual children in a family require that separate workers be assigned. Supervisors will require that all involved workers participate in critical case staffings, family meetings, and court hearings. This expectation has been reinforced by a written communication to Clackamas child welfare staff on February 15, 2005.
- An in-service practice forum for Clackamas staff will address stronger communication and teamwork.
- In order to assess statewide implications, CAF program staff will work with the national experts on review of case assignment practice. Expert review is scheduled to be completed in April 2005.

2. **Finding:** Screening coordination between the Multnomah County Hotline and the Clackamas County office on this foster care case may have contributed to inadequate review of information.

Recommendation: Central office program staff will examine child welfare practice and the Office of Information Systems will examine the related information system. Technical assistance will be provided to the Multnomah County Hotline and Clackamas County child welfare office, including review of existing protocols and child welfare information system limitations, identification of areas for improvement, and development of an action plan.

Action Taken:

- Screening supervisors, from the counties served by the Multnomah County Child Abuse Hotline (Clackamas, Columbia, Washington, Multnomah) will create a protocol for assuring that new safety concerns reported on open cases are communicated to all appropriate staff and supervisors. These screening supervisors will provide the protocol and training to screening staff by April 1, 2005.
- Effective February 11, 2005, CPS screening supervisors statewide are required to review all screening decisions, including “logged calls”, to assure the appropriate response, communication and notification. This information has been shared in meetings with all SDA managers and Child

Welfare Managers. A memo confirming this expectation was sent to all child welfare staff on February 10, 2005.

- CAF program staff will provide training for screeners and their supervisors. The focus will be the revised policy related to screening decisions with emphasis on how to handle subsequent reports of abuse and neglect on open cases. This training will be completed by May 1, 2005.
- CAF program staff will convene a work group by March 1, 2005, to revise policy to eliminate “logged” as a category and to clarify screening decisions. Revised policy will be reviewed by and coordinated with the findings of the national experts.
- Communication and coordination between child abuse hotline staff and other DHS staff will be regularly addressed as an agenda item at quarterly hotline meetings.

3. **Finding:** The records in this foster care case were incomplete and were not well organized.

Recommendation: Central office program staff will work with the local office to assure that case records are complete and well organized.

Action Taken:

- Direction and clarification has been given to Clackamas office support staff concerning case filing duties. The office manager has developed a protocol and covered this information in detail at a business support staff unit meeting on February 10, 2005.
- The Clackamas office manager is developing a plan to verify that all records are organized. The office manager will review a random sample of cases by March 1, 2005, to analyze the extent and nature of the issue. Training will be developed and provided by June 1, 2005, to all Clackamas staff to outline casework and support staff responsibilities in maintaining records.
- Clackamas supervisors will conduct quality assurance reviews of case record files during regular case conferences with staff.
- CAF program staff will work with the national experts to identify the most critical information to be stored in the case record. Implementation of changes will occur once recommendations from the national experts have been received and considered.

4. **Finding:** CPS screening decisions in this foster care case appear to be inconsistent with policy.

Recommendation: The completion of staff interviews will determine the extent of this apparent inconsistency.

Action Taken:

*Please see action taken for # 2.

5. **Finding:** Frequent and announced visits were made with the foster children. However, documentation in case notes regarding face to face contact in this case was too limited to determine the quality, content and detail of the visits.

Recommendation: DHS will review current policy to clarify the documentation requirements for face-to-face contact.

Action Taken:

- A formal policy transmittal memorandum will be issued to child welfare staff on March 1, 2005, clarifying and providing direction in regard to the quality and content of face-to-face contacts as well as documentation requirements of existing policy. Clarification is also being provided that unannounced visits to foster homes are recommended.

6. **Finding:** The foster care case review indicated that responsibility for mandatory reporting was unclear or was not accomplished in a timely manner.

Recommendation: Central office program staff will assure that mandatory reporter training for local office and community partners occurs.

Action Taken:

- Clackamas CPS supervisors will review mandatory reporter responsibilities with all Clackamas staff during March 2005.
- Clackamas County MDT has historically made a focused outreach to school principals and has begun tracking schools that have received mandatory reporter training.
- Beginning March 2005, Clackamas foster parent training will include a video component of the role of mandatory reporters in child abuse cases and foster parents will be required to sign a statement confirming that they have read and understand their obligation as mandatory reporters.
- CAF program staff will send a memorandum to all the local DHS Child Welfare offices reminding them of the resources available for Mandatory Reporter Training. Resources include a pamphlet, "What You Can do About Child Abuse" and a corresponding videotape.

7. **Finding:** Medical follow through on the foster children was delegated to the foster parents. The lack of caseworker knowledge of and access to medical concerns and records impacted adequate treatment planning for the foster children.

Recommendation: Central office program staff is assessing the adequacy of current rules to ensure that medical information for foster children is in the case record.

Action Taken:

- CAF Program staff completed a review of existing policies concerning staff responsibilities for medical needs of children and is consolidating and revising the medical information policies.
- Three new reference tools for caseworkers are being developed to provide guidance as to when a foster child may require medical screening and follow up. These tools will be available to casework staff by March 1, 2005. Training will accompany the implementation of the policy revisions referenced above.
- Clackamas child welfare supervisors and/or CETs will review medical information and well being of children at all regular staffings and at six-month plan reviews. The individual medical needs of foster children may require that there be more frequent review by the child welfare supervisor.

8. **Finding:** Treatment providers' recommendations were not implemented, and therefore, not documented in the child's file. Plans for health care were not documented.

Recommendation: Central office staff will develop procedures to assure that the recommendations of treatment providers are documented and implemented.

Action Taken:

- Clackamas County provided a practice forum on February 2, 2005, for branch staff on the Safety Plan Review administrative rule. Staff were directed to include recommendations from evaluations and treatment providers in case notes and case narratives.
- By March 15, 2005, all Clackamas child welfare supervisors will have discussed reviewing, implementing, and documenting evaluation and treatment recommendations with their units.

- Clackamas child welfare supervisors will review treatment recommendations from providers with caseworkers to assure that recommendations are followed or that exceptions are documented.
- From May through June 2005, CAF program staff will provide statewide training for all child welfare staff and contracted family based treatment providers. This training will provide guidance to ensure that evaluations and treatment recommendations are clearly communicated, considered, and implemented. This information will also be incorporated into the curriculum of casework practice training.
- Family based services provider contracts will require that the provider implement treatment recommendations and provide progress reports to DHS.
- CAF program staff will revise the Safety Plan Review administrative rule to require caseworkers to request written treatment updates when making critical safety decisions. Caseworkers will be required to document how treatment updates were considered in safety planning. A temporary rule revision will be implemented in April 2005 and final rule revision will be completed by September 2005.

National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS):

A review of the Oregon safety intervention system by the NRCCPS is continuing. One site visit to Oregon has been completed. Experts are currently reviewing policy and the caseworker-training curriculum. Surveys and focus groups with front line workers and supervisors will be conducted during the second on site visit scheduled for March 2005. A report will be completed and a debriefing held with CAF administration by April 2005.

Next Steps:

Clackamas Child Welfare will devote the entire agenda of its next two staff meetings following the release of this report to the implementation plan of all local CIRT action steps.