



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families, Region III

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Philadelphia, PA 19106-3499

OCT 10 2012

Beverly D. Mackereth, Deputy Secretary
Department of Public Welfare
Office of Children, Youth & Families
625 Forster Street
131 Health & Welfare Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Ms. Mackereth:

On March 30, 2009, the Children's Bureau (CB), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) provided the Office of Children, Youth & Families (OCYF) with the review findings from Pennsylvania's Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) conducted in July 2008. As indicated in the report, Pennsylvania was determined to not be operating in substantial conformity in any of the seven outcome areas and two of the seven systemic factors. Consequently, it was necessary of OCYF to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address each outcome and systemic factor determined not to be in substantial conformity. The PIP developed by OCYF was approved on June 30, 2010.

An account of the progress Pennsylvania is making to implement the CFSR PIP is required each quarter. The Regional Office received a timely copy of the eighth quarterly progress report on August 13, 2012. All accompanying documentation of the PIP action steps was clear and well organized. Enclosed is a copy of our comments on this final PIP quarterly report. Pennsylvania is commended for successfully completing all of the benchmarks and actions steps associated with the strategies included in the PIP as well as meeting all of the goals measured through the PIP.

On September 14, 2012, we had the opportunity to attend the CFSR PIP and Five Year Child and Family Services Plan meeting in Mechanicsburg, celebrating the completion of your round 2 CFSR PIP. This event marked the occasion to acknowledge the important work of OCYF staff, counties and your partners. Presenters related how the CFSR PIP helped move practice towards improved outcomes for children, youth, and families in Pennsylvania. It was also highlighted through the presentations that this has been an inclusive process with counties and internal and external partners involved in the identification, development and implementation of challenges and solutions. The presentations from the workgroup panels on *Sustaining Change*, *Timely Permanence*, *Enhancing Assessments* and *Child, Youth & Family Engagement* summarized not

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only the accomplishments and impact of these efforts but plans for how the work will be sustained to continue systemic change.

During the PIP implementation period, Pennsylvania continually assessed and re-evaluated practices, recognizing the importance of focusing on 'the front end' for successful implementation. This was seen in the revised approach to concurrent planning and the additional time taken for the establishment of the GPS response time frames. There was genuine, careful consideration of the state's county administered system, and how to best implement and sustain changes within this organizational structure.

Although not required by the CFSR findings, Pennsylvania opted to implement a revised quality assurance program through the PIP to capture practice on an individual case level and systemic basis. This Quality Service Review (QSR) process incorporated case record review and stakeholder feedback on individual cases to determine the level of practice. This approach provided information and valuable feedback to the agency regarding practice in the reviewed county and assisted in identifying areas of strengths and challenges. In addition, this process was used to measure all the item-specific measurement goals included in the PIP.

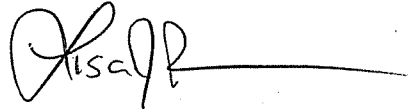
With the eighth quarter submission, you provided the evidence of completion for the remaining benchmarks of the PIP. The eighth quarter teleconference was held on September 6, 2012 to discuss the State's completion of the remaining activities in the PIP and to learn more about OCYF's steps to sustain progress moving forward. During this call we also had the opportunity to hear from the leadership staff from Philadelphia County. The involvement and commitment of Pennsylvania's major metropolitan area in the development and implementation of the PIP was commendable. We hope that this collaborative relationship continues beyond the PIP and is a model for other counties statewide.

There were over 250 action steps in the PIP, many of which were ongoing throughout the two-year period. Pennsylvania's completion of such a substantive PIP demonstrates a commitment to creating and sustaining a culture of continuous improvement. In the PIP close-out meeting it was noted by OCYF staff that continuous improvement has no beginning and no end, and while it is important to celebrate the completion of the PIP, the work must continue through a plan for future sustainability. We commend you for your diligent work on completing these action steps in the two-year PIP period, and for your commitment to sustainability and continuous quality improvement.

Congratulations again on the completion of Pennsylvania's CFSR Program Improvement Plan. Support and technical assistance are available through the Children's Bureau Regional Office as the State works toward sustaining the improvements that have been made as a result of the PIP.

We look forward to our continuing collaboration with OCYF. If you have any questions or we can be of assistance, please contact me at (215) 861-4030. You or your staff may also contact Jesse Wolovoy, Children and Families Program Specialist, at (215) 861-4014 or jesse.wolovoy@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Lisa J. Pearson
Regional Program Manager
Children's Bureau, Region III

Enclosure

cc:

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