



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

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Janet Napolitano
Governor

David A. Berns
Director

May 19, 2005

Debra K. Davenport, CPA
Auditor General
2910 North 44th Street Suite 410
Phoenix, AZ 85018

Dear Ms. Davenport:

The Office of the Auditor General provided a revised preliminary draft report of the performance audit of the Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), Data Integrity Process on May 12, 2005. Following is the Department's response to the seven recommendations that were made.

Recommendation 1:

The Division should develop formal division-wide data monitoring and correction policies and procedures that:

- a. Identify the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in the exception reports and online alerts;
- b. Develop performance measures for timely exception report data correction and online alert resolution; and
- c. Provide for monitoring staff's performance.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

The Division will work with the six district program managers, the six district automation liaisons, the six district practice improvement specialists, the reports and statistics staff and the CHILDS automation team to develop corrective policies and procedures. Included as part of the policies and procedures, we will be defining staff's roles and responsibilities with regards to the exception reports and the online reports. The procedures will include performance measures for the timely exception report data and online alert resolution which will allow for monitoring of staff's performance.

Recommendation 2:

Division and district management should evaluate district automation liaisons' (DAL) duties and prioritize them, as appropriate. In addition, the Division should provide additional training to give the

DAL's a better understanding of how it expects them to perform their data monitoring and follow-up responsibilities.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

The Division has already started to evaluate the duties of the district automation liaisons. Currently, the six district automation liaisons are updating their Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ's) and will be working on developing new performance expectations for their positions.

In addition, the Division is working with our National Resource Center to provide some training to our district automation liaisons, district practice improvement specialist and our reports and statistics staff.

Recommendation 3:

The Division should explore ways to streamline the case record review process and make it more efficient and strengthen the effectiveness of supervisory review for ensuring quality case data.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

The State's Practice Improvement Case Review (formerly Peer Record Review) was significantly changed beginning with the July 2004 review. The new Practice Improvement Case Review process differs from the former Peer Record Review in the following ways:

- The period from which cases are randomly selected and the period under review are more current, so the information gathered describes current practice.
- Each district participates in a case review annually, as opposed to the prior schedule of quarterly statewide reviews. This schedule gives districts more time to analyze data and make improvements between reviews.
- The number of cases reviewed has been adjusted to be both manageable and informative. In rural districts, the number of cases reviewed increased from four to fifteen of each case type. Twenty cases of each type will be reviewed in District II (Tucson), and thirty of each type will be reviewed in District I (Phoenix/Maricopa County).
- The Practice Improvement Case Review Instruments were revised to include greater rating standard guidance. The instruments continue to include the items and instructions from the CFSR On-Site Review Instrument. Guidance based on State policy and best practices has been added to clarify when a case should be rated strength versus area needing improvement.
- The initial review of each case can be conducted by any DCYF district or central office employee, including case managers, supervisors, policy specialists, or program managers. Expanding the pool of reviewers allows the workload to be shared, and allows a greater number of staff to become familiar with the outcomes and practice standards assessed during the case review. The initial review also provides opportunities for supervisors to increase their knowledge about case review and worker expectations.
- The hard copy records are reviewed and all item ratings are finalized during an on-site review week. In advance of the on-site review week, staff search the automated record and contact

case participants to fill gaps in the initial review and read the completed instruments to ensure accuracy and consistent application of the rating standards. At the end of the on-site review, the district is provided the final data and an exit teleconference is held to discuss the findings and begin the practice improvement plan phase. This process provides the district immediate feedback and provides maximum time for action planning and practice improvement.

- Following the on-site review week, the district develops a practice improvement plan to address areas needing improvement identified during the case review. These plans are developed with district case-carrying staff input, using the CQI Team process and other staff meetings. Implementation of each district practice improvement plan is monitored by a district Practice Improvement Specialist, who reports progress and barriers to central office practice improvement staff.

In addition to revising its case record review process, from March to May 2005, the Division provided a series of three (3) Critical Decision-Making Seminars to all supervisors and others through the National Resource Center for Child Maltreatment. The purpose of the seminars was to provide key safety decision-making concepts and processes and enhance supervisors' abilities to coach their staff in the safety decision-making process. The seminars were led using case examples developed by the trainer and case examples submitted by the participants. In addition, Training of Trainer sessions were held to enable the Division to further enhance Critical Decision-Making skills and practice with supervisors and staff.

The Division will explore other ways to strengthen the effectiveness of supervisory review for ensuring quality case data. This will include exploring the feasibility of using the new computer reporting tool referred to in the Auditor General's draft report; assessing other automated options for supervisors to obtain needed information to monitor critical case data; determining the possibility of streamlining the process to make supervisory review more efficient; and, assessing whether additional training of supervisors in the completion of the record review tool will increase the completion rate.

Recommendation 4:

The Division should evaluate the consistency of CHILDS field training throughout the State, develop an action plan to make field training more consistent state-wide, and implement the plan by July 2005.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to. The same method of dealing with the finding will be implemented; however, the date for implementation will be September 2005.

Recommendation 5:

As part of the continuing professional education recommended by the Governor's Office action plan, the Division should provide mandatory refresher trainings focused on significant changes to CHILDS.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

Recommendation 6:

The Division should administer its training assessment tool at least four times within the first year of doing so, determine if the skills and knowledge that case managers learn during classroom and field training are transferred to the job, and revise and enhance its training based on the results.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

Recommendation 7:

To help division staff better manage their workloads, the Division should:

- a. Conduct a comprehensive and systematic review of all its CPS processes to identify and address processes that can be streamlined or eliminated.
- b. Implement the CHILDS changes, scheduled for 2005, to facilitate easier navigation of CHILDS and to reduce data entry requirements, and review the process it uses to identify and implement additional changes that would further improve CHILDS' functionality and user-friendliness.

DES Response:

- a. The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

The Division will develop a plan for a comprehensive and systematic review of its CPS processes in coordination with its current plans for a comprehensive review and revision of its CPS processes to include family centered principles and practices.

- b. The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

The Division has already completed some of the changes in CHILDS scheduled for 2005 and will continue to review and implement changes throughout the year.

The Division will review the process it uses to identify and implement additional changes to CHILDS.

The Department of Economic Security appreciates the opportunity to respond to the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's Report. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Lou Hanley, Deputy Director for the Division of Children, Youth and Families at (602) 542-3598, or me at (602) 542-5678.

Sincerely,

David A. Berns