DATE: October 17, 2011

TO: Regional Directors

THROUGH: John Cooper, Assistant Secretary for Operations

FROM: Jamie Self, Ed.D., Executive Director, Family and Community Services
       Christie Ferris, Director, Office of Child Welfare

SUBJECT: Documentation of All Children in FSFN – Phase One

PURPOSE: This memorandum provides the plan and schedule for implementation of a FSFN enhancement that allows for child specific documentation of secondary prevention services funded by the Department. This plan results from significant work by the Department, the Florida Coalition for Children and community-based care entities to 1) develop a common set of definitions for secondary prevention and diversion, and 2) agree on the basic information about secondary prevention cases that a FSFN record will capture.

BACKGROUND: FSFN data is used for several federal and state reports to measure child welfare outcomes, track numbers of children served, and multiple other data analyses.

Florida’s Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver was obtained with assurances to the federal Children’s Bureau that:

- the number of children in out-of-home care would be reduced;
- a broad array of new child welfare services would be created with funds saved from more costly out-of-home care;
- with funding flexibility, more children and families would be served; and
- ongoing evaluations would be conducted to study the specific types of services provided and their efficacy in preventing future service encounters with the child welfare system.

While the data on the number of children served in out-of-home care has decreased, the data on the full number of children served, including those who have been diverted from removal and out-of-home care, is not currently captured in a uniform way and is not accurately reported to the federal agency providing the funds.

Currently, a FSFN case is opened or remains open primarily for children and families that receive traditional “case management.” There is no consistency for documentation of Secondary Prevention or Diversion cases. There are thousands of closed case records in

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency
FSFN that do not contain support for use of Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver funds or Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) federal funds. This creates several challenges including:

- an adequate state and federal audit trail is not available;
- reliable data is not available to accurately inform the Demonstration Waiver evaluation and the state's request for extension of the Waiver; and
- new investigations or services provided may not be well-informed about cases handled by Lead Agencies in the past. This may lead to interventions that are poorly matched or inappropriate to the needs of the child and family.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

1) **Definitions adopted for use as of January 1, 2012**

   Common definitions for secondary prevention, diversion and removal intended to reflect State and Federal language will be used to determine a child's status. These definitions are not intended to change a local service array or how service decisions are made.

2) **Documentation required effective January 1, 2012**

   All currently active and new cases involving children are required to be documented in FSFN.

Implementation of new functionality for documentation of services for children with secondary prevention status will be in two phases. Phase one will involve implementation by five Lead Agencies (Bid Bend Community Based Care, Kids Central, Inc., Partnership for Strong Families, Heartland for Children and Brevard Family Partnership) with evaluation of functionality and business rules to follow. Phase two will comprise the remaining Lead Agencies.

The remaining Lead Agencies and Regions will identify one person to be the point of contact for their agency/region and participate in the implementation of the FSFN system enhancement. This person's name, phone number and email address shall be provided to Linda Radigan (linda_radigan@DCF.state.fl.us) by November 1, 2011.

**IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE:**

10/12/11: Entry conference call with Phase One Lead Agencies.
10/19/11: System Demo with Phase One Lead Agencies.
10/24/11: Phase One Lead Agencies begin documenting all Secondary Prevention cases.
10/31/11: Conference call with Phase One Lead Agencies.
11/01/11: Begin evaluation of functionality and business rules.
11/07/11: Conference call with Phase One Lead Agencies.
11/30/11: Complete Phase One evaluation and develop recommendations.
12/01/11: Lead Agencies provide the Department with an estimate of total Secondary Prevention cases to be entered by 01/01/12.

12/05/11: Conference call with Phase Two Lead Agencies; Begin documenting Secondary Prevention cases.

01/01/12: All active Secondary Prevention cases are entered in FSFN. Maintenance of existing cases and entry of new cases are required from this point forward.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions, or for additional information please contact Linda Radigan at linda_radigan@dcf.state.fl.us or 850-717-4679.

cc: Community-Based Care Lead Agencies
    Sheriffs’ Offices