DATE: March 9, 2012

TO: Regional Directors
CBC CEOs
Sheriffs' Offices

THROUGH: John K. Cooper, Assistant Secretary for Operations
Debra Ervin, Acting Director Family and Community Services

FROM: Patricia Armstrong, Director Office of Child Welfare

SUBJECT: Policy Clarification and Implementation Plan for "Recording Information in Florida Safe Families Network for All Children Served" As of July 1, 2012

ACTION REQUIRED: Disseminate to Circuit Leadership, CBC Lead Agencies, CPI Supervisors and all other appropriate staff.

DUE DATE: July 1, 2012 implementation deadline.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to provide: 1) policy clarification as to when case management services must be provided and 2) implementation guidance for appropriately recording in FSFN all services funded with Title IV-E Waiver and other federal funds through Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agency Contracts. In order for FSFN to become federally certified and avoid substantial federal financial penalties, FSFN functionality must be used consistently statewide by all child welfare case management providers for children who need protective actions. All information comprising the official case record must be directly entered into and maintained by FSFN.

BACKGROUND: The statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS), known as the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) was developed with federal funds to have one statewide, uniform method of creating an electronic child welfare record that captures all investigations conducted and any services received. As recidivism rates in child welfare have traditionally been high, having one child record that captures information over time is critical to document:

- Emerging or escalating patterns of abuse or neglect.
- Services provided in the past and whether they were effective.
- Contact information for all providers, past and present.
- One consistent child welfare record, with all information necessary should the family move to another location in Florida and come to the attention of another agency.

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Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency
- One dependable case record system for all children served despite multiple providers involved and case management provider changes.

Florida’s Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver provided assurances that ongoing evaluations would be conducted to study the types of services provided and their efficacy in preventing future encounters with the child welfare system. FSFN data is used for federal and state reports to measure child welfare outcomes, to track numbers of children served, and multiple other data analyses. Florida has other federal fund sources that require tracking of children served and the service array provided, including the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) and Independent Living. It should also be noted that the equity allocation model for 25% of recurring core services funding includes a factor that derives from in-home trend reports. These reports are produced based on in-home case counts from FSFN where a living arrangement has been entered.

Currently, a FSFN Case is opened or remains open for only children and families that require traditionally defined “case management.” There is no consistency for documentation of services provided. Although functionality is available within FSFN to accommodate each CBC’s unique service array by allowing each CBC to create and maintain “Service Types” multiple other ancillary information systems have been developed. The Services module in FSFN is currently utilized only when a system generated payment is required. There are thousands of closed case records in FSFN that do not contain any information about other types of services provided with Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver funds or Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) federal funds.

An adequate federal audit trail is lacking. Reliable data is not available to accurately inform the Demonstration Waiver evaluation and the state’s request for extension of the Waiver. DCF has been found to be out of compliance with federal SACWIS requirements for certification in part due to these ancillary systems and a lack of one, statewide child welfare records system.

During the month of November 2011, five CBC Lead Agencies volunteered to participate in a pilot project to improve methods for capturing information on all children served. The pilots tested draft definitions and new FSFN functionality for recording secondary prevention services. It was learned during the pilot that many children are receiving services that are secondary prevention in nature, intended to strengthen family protective capacities through the provision of family support services. The new screen in FSFN, with modifications recommended by pilot sites, will provide a dependable method for capturing information on these family support services.

It was also learned in the pilot sites that there are at least an equal number of children receiving in-home protective interventions. These children and their families, tracked in ancillary systems are not currently in FSFN. The new screen developed for recording information about family support services is not an acceptable solution for tracking the children served who need protective actions.
 ACTIONS REQUIRED: To proceed with critical steps to improve use of the FSFN as the state’s single, official child welfare records system and conform to existing law requiring case management services in cases where children need protective interventions, the following actions are required:

1) The definitions in the attachment, “Defining and Documenting Services in FSFN for Children Receiving Family Support of Protective Actions” will be adopted for use effective July 1, 2012 to describe whether children are receiving “Family Support” or “Protective Actions.” CPIs will continue to determine whether or not with the provision of protective actions a child can safely remain at home. In all such cases where children need protective actions to remain safe at home or placement in out of home care, follow-up case management services are required. Case Transfer Staffings conducted with investigator and CBC will confirm the need for case management services and the expected level of ongoing protective oversight to be provided.

2) As of July 1, 2012, CBCs will ensure that cases involving protective actions receive case management and thus are input into FSFN and comply with all other documentation requirements. Case management models may vary, including the use of a therapist or other qualified child welfare professionals to provide case oversight including home visits. Case management responsibilities are outlined in 65C-30.007 and case managers must be certified in accordance with s.402.40, F. S. Case managers should be the Primary Worker in FSFN. Documentation will be provided as follows:
   a. Record services provided in FSFN case notes
   b. Record dates of services provided, including beginning and end date
   c. Type of service provided
   d. Person or provider providing the service
   e. A “Living Arrangement” will be created as it is linked to business rules for cases that involve case management and thirty day visits are required.
   f. Family assessments and case plans may be completed in an agency-specific format until such time as agency’s service array is captured in FSFN Services Module, not later than July 1, 2013. At a minimum, the case plan document shall meet the requirements of Section 39.601, F.S.; 42 USC § 675(1) and 42 USC § 675(5)(b).

3) As recommended by the pilot sites, the Department is making changes to the FSFN screen formerly referred to as “Secondary Prevention.” The Department will develop a Statewide Policy Guidance Workbook for use of the new FSFN functionality. Changes to the screen are:
   b. Remove the edit limiting use of this page and allow documentation of any child, regardless of maltreatment finding.
   c. Remove the automated messages indicating ineligibility for Prevention when either findings of Not Substantiated or Verified are documented.
d. Remove the requirement to document a Risk Factors summary; this will remain optional.

e. Add reference values for Assignment Types, Job Class and Case Type to support identification of Family Support cases.

4) As of July 1, 2012, CBCs will use the new FSFN functionality to capture the following information on all Family Support cases:
   a. All child and parent demographics
   b. Referral source
   c. Dates for service beginning and end
   d. Record services provided in FSFN case notes:
   e. Dates of services provided, including beginning and end date
   f. Type of service provided
   g. Person or provider providing the service
   h. Status of the child and family at closure

5) Regional Directors should alert CBCs to immediately begin activities necessary for full implementation of the new functionality for family support and the case management activities required for cases involving protective actions. CBCs should proceed with agency and organizational readiness activities including:
   a. Workflow assessments to determine how CPI referrals for Family Supports should be operationalized.
   b. Creating the new organization structures (units and workers) in FSFN that will be necessary.
   c. Developing and implementing the training needed for the purpose of documenting these services.

6) The Office of Child Welfare will develop a method for periodic audits of the information recorded using new FSFN functionality to ensure appropriate referral and use of Family Support services.

FOLLOW-UP: Counts of all children receiving "Family Support" or protective services will be available within FSFN after July 1, 2012. In order to further advance the FSFN system toward SACWIS compliance, FSFN must provide a means to support the business of conducting assessments, documenting service plans and documenting service delivery for all populations of children served. The Department recognizes that the current FSFN system provides a Family Assessment and Case Plan/Judicial Review functionality that focuses on the families involved in court ordered supervision. Over the next fiscal year, the Department, in partnership with the CBC and Provider community will develop system tools within FSFN that will support this process for all children and families served. This process will provide adequate time to design, develop and implement the tools in FSFN as well as provide the time for each CBC to transition from any ancillary system developed to fill this gap. By July 1, 2013, each CBC will fully use FSFN to record assessments, service planning, and service delivery for all families served.
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.

ATTACHMENT: "Defining and Documenting Services in FSFN for Children in Family Support, Imminent Risk of Removal, or Removal Status" (3/7/2012)