SunCoast Region
Child Protective Investigations and Community Based Care
Quality Assurance Plan

The SunCoast Region Family Safety Quality Management plan for child protective investigations and community based care agencies during FY 2010-11 will focus on the quality assurance activities that will meet the statewide minimum requirement(s) to include semi-annual reviews, stakeholder surveys, specific topic reviews, circuit level discretionary reviews and continuation of the Discussion Guide for Supervisors to ensure accountability, strengthen practice and improve the timeliness and quality of child investigations and case management activities.

Child Protective Investigations Reviews/Activities:

**File Reviews**
Separate semi annual DCF CPI Quality Assurance reviews are conducted for Circuit 12 (Sarasota/DeSoto Counties) and Circuit 20 (Lee, Hendry, Glades, Collier, Charlotte Counties) DCF CPI units as part of the SunCoast Region. Half of a 90/10 sample is selected for each review and comprised of investigations closed in the prior sixty day period to ensure the findings are both recent and relevant to current practice. SunCoast Region QA staff will also coordinate with Children’s Legal Services for review of investigations within the sample that were staffed for legal sufficiency.

During case file reviews if a concern for the life, health or safety of a child is identified, the current practice of completing a “Request for Action” will be used. The “Request for Action” will state the identified concern and request a follow up response within 48 hours or immediately if necessary. QM staff will track the progress of the response until successful completion and this information will be included in the final report.

Following completion of the review, a presentation of the preliminary review findings will be conducted at an exit conference. Copies of the completed tools, key strengths and opportunities for improvement and preliminary data are provided to each of the operations managers and circuit administrator for review. During the exit conference operations managers will report on circuit progress for ongoing performance initiatives that have occurred since the last quality assurance review. Child protective investigators, supervisors, Children’s Legal Services and Region Administration are invited to attend the exit conference.
Within thirty days from the exit conference, a final report is submitted to Region Administration by the QA Manager and performance improvement plans are submitted by the Operations Manager to the Regional Family Safety Program Administrator to track performance improvement. Results of the semi annual QA reviews and performance improvement initiatives will also be provided to Headquarters Office of Family Safety in the report format specified in the DCF Windows into Practice – Regional Quality Assurance Model.

When performance deficiencies are identified, the SunCoast Region Family Safety Program Office will provide training and technical assistance to the Circuits in order to improve practice in areas identified as needing performance improvement. In addition, Program Office will continue to provide additional training to CPI pre-service staff regarding the importance of multi-disciplinary approaches to decision making and high risk case reviews.

**Stakeholder Surveys**

CPI reviews will include conducting stakeholder surveys on an annual basis. SunCoast Region QA staff will determine stakeholders that represent the population they serve and feedback will be collected through an electronic survey. The information obtained from these surveys will be reflected in the CPI quality assurance report and will help drive local quality improvement efforts. To supplement the stakeholder surveys, Regional QA staff will attend community alliance meetings, dependency court improvement meetings and community partnership meetings where they will participate in workgroups and subcommittees as assigned.

**Use of CPI Supervisory Discussion Guidelines**

CPI Supervisors will randomly choose a minimum of three cases per month per CPI and will discuss critical and qualitative aspects of the investigative process specific to the sampled case with the investigator. Supervisors will document in a case note in Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) that the discussion occurred and will summarize major points requiring further attention and identify issues to be addressed.

The supervisor will provide documentation to the Circuit Administrator that discussions occurred as outlined in the guide. This activity provides the supervisors an opportunity to review child protective investigative activities at various stages of an investigation, to better understand and integrate the quality discussion guide into the day-to-day review process and to reflect on all aspects of the investigation in order to identify and correct gaps in real time. Quality Management staff will be available to observe conferences and to provide coaching, if needed.

**Additional CPI QA Activities**

In addition to the scheduled quality assurance activities that occur, region discretionary quality reviews that are localized, time-limited, special purpose reviews that will address particular performance or management concerns within the region may be assigned. The Region Director has the discretion of assigning such reviews to the Quality Management staff, coordinating with headquarters as appropriate. Once a year per circuit, the region will conduct a discretionary review for child protective investigations to include, but not limited to, institutional investigations and responses to special conditions reports.

When time permits regional QA staff will randomly shadow child protective investigators for a day in Circuits 12 and 20. QA staff will then complete a review of the FSFN notes resulting from these investigation activities as well as the documented supervisory review of these
activities. QA staff will debrief the findings with the CPI and supervisor in order to relay the strengths and opportunities resulting from these activities. Regional QA staff will also attend CPI performance reviews during the year as available.

Regional QA staff will participate as reviewers during the annual CPI sheriff peer review in Circuits 6, 13 and Manatee County in Circuit 12.

**Community Based Care Reviews/Activities:**

**Side by Side Reviews**
Semi annual side-by-side Quality Assurance reviews will be conducted with the four community based care agencies (Hillsborough Kids, Eckerd Community Alternatives, Sarasota YMCA Safe Children Coalition and Children’s Network of Southwest Florida) within the SunCoast Region. The sample is selected by the CBC agency for each review based on a FSFN extract of children as specified in the DCF Windows into Practice – Regional Quality Assurance Model. Each CBC agency will select a sample of 16 children semi-annually and identify them in the DCF web portal for side-by-side review.

During case file reviews if a concern for the life, health or safety of a child is identified, the current practice of completing a “Request for Action” will be used. The “Request for Action” will state the identified concern and request a follow up response within 48 hours or immediately if necessary. QM staff will track the progress of the response until successful completion and this information will be included in the final report.

Following completion of the side-by-side reviews, a debriefing on each case will be conducted with the assigned case manager, supervisor and CMO administrator(s) utilizing the “Windows into Practice Debriefing Guide”. The debriefing will include an informal discussion between all participants regarding case findings and any follow-up action, if needed.

A presentation of the findings for base and side-by-side reviews will be conducted at an exit conference. During the exit conference case management organizations will report on agency progress for ongoing performance initiatives that have occurred since the last side-by-side review.

Within thirty days from the exit conference, a final report is submitted to Region Administration by the QA Manager. Results of the semi annual side-by-side review findings will be provided to Headquarters Office of Family Safety in a report format as specified in the DCF Windows into Practice – Regional Quality Assurance Model.

**In-depth Interviews**
While reviewing the side-by-side sample cases, DCF QM staff will identify three cases from the 16 side-by-side cases for in-depth interviews with the option for the CBC and DCF QM reviewers assigned to the side by side case to conduct the interviews together. During review of the case, reviewers will decide which questions to ask the participants based on the gaps/issues identified through the case file review or utilize the interview guides provided on the Center for Child Welfare, Quality Assurance website.

Results of the in-depth interviews will be included in the agency semi-annual report.
Specific Reviews for Psychotropic Medications for Children in Foster Care, Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), and Supervisory Reviews
During the month of each CBC onsite side-by-side review, DCF QM specialists will meet with CBC QM staff to review the agency’s practice and process to assure FSFN data integrity, adherence to psychotropic medication protocols, and qualitative supervisory discussions are completed. Regional DCF QM specialists will be available to assist CBC QM staff for any special reviews that may be identified.

Review of Systemic Factors
SunCoast Region QA staff will meet with the CBC Director, Circuit Administrator or Operations Manager and DCF CBC Contract Manager prior to the second fiscal year semi-annual side-by-side review to discuss which of the systemic factors, if any, they recommend undergo further review during the in-depth process. During this meeting the questions to be utilized and selection of stakeholders to be interviewed would be determined. Feedback would be provided within the semi-annual report format or as an addendum to the report.

Since a review will not be completed on each systemic factor each fiscal year, additional activities will be conducted to obtain valuable insight into how stakeholders and CBC staff function within their counties of operation. SunCoast Region QM staff will attend community alliance and dependency court improvement meetings where they will participate on workgroups and subcommittees as assigned. Other community meetings may be added as time permits.

Executive Management and Region Discretionary Reviews
In addition to the scheduled quality assurance activities that occur, region discretionary quality reviews that are localized and time-limited, and special purpose reviews that will address particular performance or management concerns within the region may be assigned. The Region Director has the discretion of assigning such reviews to the Quality Management staff, coordinating with headquarters as appropriate.

Reviews that may be warranted might include a CBC validation review to determine accuracy of QA staff inter-rater reliability or a specific file review in response to a case complaint or media issue.

Attached:
SCR QA Review Schedule for FY 2010/2011, and
Monthly Calendar of Community Meetings