

Testimony of Members of Governor's Child Protection Task Force 9/28/16

1. The overall goal of the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children was to change casework practices to make children safer.
2. We want to highlight successes resulting from the Governor's Task Force.
3. Some Task Force recommendations were either not accepted or aren't on the timeline yet. As members of the Governor's Task Force we would like these to be discussed and to be included in that conversation.
4. We recommend funding the existing system in line with caseload growth, as well as investments in prevention/early intervention to reduce the need for child protection.

Overview

History of Task Force and results to date - Dr. Lisa Hollensteiner, Emergency Department Physician, Fairview Southdale Hospital

- Composition of Governor's Task Force and main thrust of recommendations
- Positive developments
 - Increased funding from legislature
 - Counties now are required by law to follow DHS Guidelines
 - More maltreatment reports are being responded to
- Members of Governor's TF haven't been included in the follow up
 - We think we can be helpful
 - We are having productive conversations with county representatives and the Department of Human Services and believe we will be involved going forward

Recommendations from Governor's Task Force not yet addressed

- Transparency and recommended reports – Dr. Hollensteiner
- Significant policy and practice issues – Dr. Mark Hudson, Director, Children's Resource Center, Children's Hospital

Current Status

How the changes have impacted counties – Michelle Zehnder-Fischer, Nicollet County Attorney

- Growth in caseloads
- Impact beyond child protection to County Attorneys and law enforcement

Next Steps

Work yet to be done – Rich Gehrman, Executive Director, Safe Passage for Children of MN

- Conversation about disparities
- The Department needs resources and authority to carry out its oversight role
- Fund prevention and early intervention services so fewer families actually need child protection services