



October 18, 2018

Legislative Task Force on the Protection of Children  
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Legislative Task Force members:

This summary is provided to highlight priority areas of focus within the 93 recommendations generated by the March 2015 Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children.

**Training:**

Recommendations 65 to 74 address training for the child welfare workforce. Department staff believe the recommendation for development of a Child Protection Training Academy (65) is a foundational priority for the overall development, well-being, and stability of Minnesota's child welfare workforce. Developing a stable, well-trained workforce is essential to improving decision making, outcomes, and ensuring the safety of the state's most vulnerable children and families.

**Oversight:**

Recommendations 75 to 80 are related to Department oversight of local agency child welfare practice. This continues to be an area of significant focus for the Department. Staff have been working closely with the founders of Collaborative Safety, LLC, since 2016 to develop a critical incident review and mapping process. (This work specifically addresses recommendation 75.) The process has been implemented and is currently being utilized to review child fatalities and near fatalities due to maltreatment. The critical incident review process is a by-product of broader system changes to create a safety culture throughout Minnesota's child welfare system. This involves moving from a system of blame to one of accountability, and one through which those involved learn about the systemic influences that impact decisions and actions of front-line workers daily. Approximately 2,000 child welfare staff and stakeholders have been trained in the Collaborative Safety Model, including individuals from all levels of local social service agencies (e.g., front-line workers, supervisors, managers and directors), county commissioners, county attorneys, judges and other court personnel, senior leadership from across the Department and legislators. Ongoing efforts include providing information and training to child welfare staff and system stakeholders on the model, and expand how the model is utilized across Minnesota.

Department staff is currently working with the Capacity Building Center for States to re-vision and redesign the continuous quality improvement (CQI) system (recommendations 76, 77 and 79). Department goals in working with the Center for States are to modify existing and/or create new CQI processes that will result in improved and sustainable outcomes for children and families served by the

child welfare system. As a component of this redesign, Department staff is planning to develop a CQI Advisory Committee to assist staff in analyzing results of CQI processes, prioritizing areas needing improvement, and implementing targeted strategies toward improvement.

Specific to recommendation 79, Department staff continue to review local agency screening decisions on a statewide random selection of screened out reports of child maltreatment. Results of the reviews have been incorporated into Minnesota's Child Maltreatment Report, published annually.

It is important to highlight recommendation 80 because it suggests changing and expanding the role of the Minnesota Office of Ombudsperson for Families. It is believed that this recommendation is outside of the Department's scope of authority. It seems that Legislative Task Force on the Protection of Children may be best aligned for implementation of this recommendation.

**Transparency:**

Recommendations 81 to 85 are specific to transparency, primarily through the release of data and data reports. All of the recommendations in this section have been addressed, or are currently being addressed.

The Department has made significant efforts to include additional data elements in existing reports and/or develop additional venues for sharing data. The annual Child Maltreatment Report has been modified to include the majority of data elements in recommendation 83. Department staff continue to develop new, and to enhance existing Dashboards, that allow sharing of aggregate information with the public, as well as more in-depth data being shared with local agencies, assisting in improved decisions regarding child protection work.

A public dashboard that includes a number of data elements referred to above will provide better information to the public on a more regular basis is in the final stages of development.

Due to current Minnesota data privacy laws, recommendation P85 cannot be implemented.

Sincerely,

**Jamie Sorenson**

Director, Child Safety and Permanency