JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Child Welfare Updates

Susan Perry-Manning, Deputy Secretary for Human Services
Michael Becketts, Assistant Secretary for Human Services
Sam Gibbs, Deputy Secretary for Technology and Operations

Oct. 10, 2017
Overview

• Implementation of the Federal Program Improvement Plan

• NC FAST Implementation of the Child Welfare Case Management System

• Planning for Implementation of the Family-Child Protection and Accountability Act/Rylan’s Law
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Implementation of the Federal Program Improvement Plan
S.L. 2017-57, Sec. 11C.7

Susan Perry-Manning, Deputy Secretary for Human Services
Michael Becketts, Assistant Secretary for Human Services

Oct. 10, 2017
Child Welfare Overview – Key Legislation

• Federal Legislation
  – Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act – 1974
  – Adoption and Safe Families Act – 1996
  – Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act – 2008

• Major State Legislation
  – Fostering Success Act - 2015
  – Foster Care Family Act – 2015
  – Family-Child Protection & Accountability Act 2017/Rylan’s Law
Scope of the Child Welfare System

All child welfare agencies in the U.S. have four core mandates from federal laws and regulations:

1. Respond to reports of child maltreatment
2. Serve families in their homes and help them overcome difficulties and keep their children safe
3. Provide alternative, safe living environments when children cannot be maintained safely in their homes
4. Provide a safe, permanent home for children as quickly as possible
Flow of Child Welfare Services

- Maltreatment Report
- Child Protective Services Investigation
- In-Home Services: Case Management & Ongoing Safety Assessment, Reunification, Adoption, Guardianship Assistance
- Foster Care
- Case Closed
Children are placed in foster care when safety at home cannot be assured.

Increase is due to a variety of issues including:

- Parental opioid use
- Parental mental health
  - Impacts the severity of child neglect and abuse
Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

• Federal performance review of child welfare services conducted in 2015
• Review included a sample of child welfare cases from 10 counties
• Rated on 7 outcome measures and 7 systemic actors
  − Outcome measures focus on child and family well-being
  − Systemic factors focus on staff training, monitoring and quality assurance, and availability and provision of appropriate services
CFSR: Program Improvement Plan

- North Carolina failed to meet expectations in each of 14 CFSR areas requiring a federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP)
- DHHS, county DSS departments, stakeholders and ACF worked together to develop PIP
- PIP is a 2-year plan that began January 2017 and will conclude December 2018
- PIP is designed to improve statewide performance
PIP: Progress & Next Steps

- Met all PIP activities to-date within agreed upon timeframes
- Appointed new leadership in DHHS Division of Social Services and Child Welfare Section
- Working to revise PIP to focus on outcomes and measure progress quarterly
- Incorporating PIP activities into broader child welfare reform effort
- Continuing implementation of NC FAST Child Welfare module to ensure accountability and improve performance
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

NC FAST Implementation of
Child Welfare Case Management

Sam Gibbs, Deputy Secretary for
Technology and Operations

Oct. 10, 2017
NC FAST Overview

North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST)

• Developed as a tool to improve eligibility determination and service delivery for:
  – Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid, Work First, Child Care Subsidy, Child Welfare, etc.

• Benefits include real-time sharing of client and case information across programs and counties and support for an integrated, cross-functional service delivery approach
NC FAST Child Welfare Update

- On schedule for final completion in December 2018
- August 2017: 5 pilot counties began using Release 1 functionality
- 1,200 intakes entered in system; almost 700 family and investigative assessments
- 25 system enhancements identified as high priority items by pilot counties
- January 2018: Go-live for additional counties to provide time to deploy high priority enhancements
- June 2018 (extended from April): Completion of statewide implementation with enhancements
- Mobility functionality pilots: Allows case workers to input information in field via iPads
- As previously requested, additional funding needed for on-site support to help county child welfare staff incorporate use of NC FAST to streamline and improve how they do their work
Current NC FAST Child Welfare Timeline

* Denotes phase has been completed
Family-Child Protection and Accountability Act Overview

Law requires a reform of social services and child welfare system

Provisions of Act include:

1. Convene a Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group to:
   - Create regional supervision structure of county social services departments
   - Recommend any regulatory or legislative changes necessary to improve collaboration between counties in administration of social services
   - Identify potential benefits and challenges for transitioning state from county-administered to regionally administered system
Family-Child Protection and Accountability Act Overview

2. Reform State supervision and accountability of the existing social services system
   • Issue a Request for Proposals by 9/30/2017
   • Contract with an expert, third-party organization to work with DHHS to develop a recommended reform plan for social services and child welfare

3. Establish written agreements between county DSS and DHHS for all social services programs, except medical assistance
   • Focus on mutual accountability and corrective action
   • Includes performance and administrative measures
4. Establish a Child Well-being Transformation Council

5. Implement specific policy and regulatory changes to improve the well-being of children and youth in foster care

- Implement a driver’s license pilot project for foster youth
- Pilot an intensive family treatment program for foster youth
- Establish 90-day timeframe for processing foster home applications
- Change policy regarding termination of parental rights
- Change procedures related to returning physical custody to parents
## Key Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MILESTONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07/01</td>
<td>Rylan's Law went into effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/29</td>
<td>RFP for third-party organization issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/03</td>
<td>Working group convened by the School of Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/15</td>
<td>Contract award for third-party organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/15</td>
<td>Working group 1st report to NCGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/01</td>
<td>Written agreements between DHHS and DSS effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/01</td>
<td>Reform legislation recommendations to JLOC by DHHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15</td>
<td>DHHS regional supervision plan due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/01</td>
<td>TPR statute effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/01</td>
<td>Working group 2nd report due to JLOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/01</td>
<td>Regional supervision implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/02</td>
<td>Project end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress To-Date

• DHHS meeting timeframe for processing foster home applications

• DHHS/AOC issued guidance to counties and courts regarding changes in procedure for returning physical custody to parents

• RFP for the third-party organization issued on 9/29/2017

• Working Group’s first meeting held 10/3/17

• DHHS-DSS written agreements under development with input requested from each county social services Director