

**Department of Human Services  
Children, Adults, and Families Division  
and  
Addictions and Mental Health Division**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
Mental Health Assessments for Children Placed in DHS Substitute Care**

Meeting the mental health needs of children placed in substitute care with the Department of Human Services (DHS) is a priority for the Department. 2007 data demonstrated that as few as 26% of children over the age of three (3) received a mental health assessment within 60 days of DHS substitute care placement. Federal and state policy requires that children placed in substitute care receive a mental health assessment and the associated treatments.

The Department standard is now that a mental health assessment will be completed for 100% of the children placed in DHS substitute care within 60 days of that date. This can only be met by direct collaboration between child welfare and mental health at the state and local levels.

The following actions will be taken for children in DHS substitute care:

- Children, Adults and Family (CAF) will adopt a policy stating that children will be referred to a public mental health system, coordinated by the Community Mental Health Program (CMHP), within 21 working days of a child being placed in substitute care.
- Mental health system will prioritize referrals for services to children in placed in substitute care with DHS.
- As defined in contract, mental health will respond to requests for emergency services within 24 hours, urgent services within 48 hours, and for non-emergency or non-urgent requests within two calendar weeks.
- Children under age three (3) will be referred to Early Intervention (EI) and then for a mental health assessment if recommended by EI.
- A standardized process and protocol to meet this directive will be agreed to in writing by local CAF and CMHP.
- A reporting tool such as an Excel spreadsheet will be used locally to track referral, appointments, and the completion of assessments. Data will be analyzed by local child welfare and mental health leadership on a regular basis defined in the local protocol.

- A state level CAF and Addictions and Mental Health Division (AMH) workgroup will review data and information on a monthly basis. A quarterly report will be distributed to the CAF and AMH Assistant Directors.

We stress that collaboration between child welfare and mental health at local and state levels is critical to meeting these directives. Each Division has identified a staff in leadership positions to implement these directives. Ryan Vogt [ryan.vogt@state.or.us](mailto:ryan.vogt@state.or.us) 503-945-6120 from CAF and Bill Bouska [bill.bouska@state.or.us](mailto:bill.bouska@state.or.us) 503-945-9717 from AMH will take the lead on developing implementation and quality improvement strategies.



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12/4/08

Date



Richard Harris  
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12/8/08

Date