



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of Human Services

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May 29, 2007

Judy Stiegler, Chair
Child Welfare Advisory Committee
c/o CASA Central Oregon
63360 Briita Street, Bldg. 1
Bend, OR 97701



Dear Ms. ~~Stiegler~~: *Judy*

Thank you for the Child Welfare Advisory Committee's (CWAC's) thoughtful recommendations on how we might prevent the need for foster care and how we might keep children safe.

One significant barrier you identified for preventing foster care is the need for A&D and mental health treatment. I absolutely agree that this is a major issue, if not THE major issue, impacting the foster care system. You recommend that information must be developed to determine the number of cases where this is the presenting problem. That information is now available and was used to support our Policy Option Package #101-7 (Improved Addictions Treatment Access). We will share this at the next CWAC meeting. You also recommend that these cases always receive priority in funding, including shifting resources to meet such needs. We share your sense of the importance of this priority and, as you know, developed a Policy Option Package (POP) to do just that. While the final funding decisions depend on the Legislative Assembly, DHS remains committed to ensuring that these critical A&D and mental health services are available to parents to ensure that their children can be safely maintained in their homes.

In regards to keeping children safe, CWAC requests that DHS increase its target for face-to-face visits between caseworkers and children from 67% to 80% over the next 12 months. You also recommend that face-to-face

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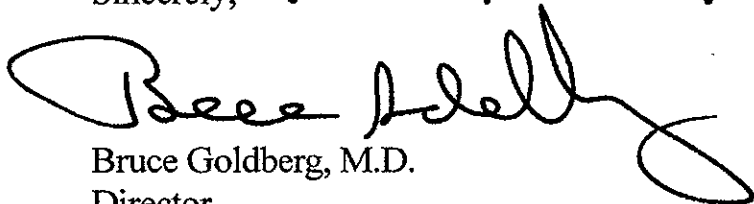
contact between parents and caseworkers increase from 53% to 65% over the next 12 months. We agree with the increased targets you have recommended and I have asked Ramona Foley and Jim Neely to work with district managers to devise an action plan. They will then present that plan to CWAC. And again, I am hopeful that the Legislative Assembly will assist us in this effort by approving our policy option package that will lower child welfare caseloads and thus afford workers the opportunity to spend valuable time with children and families.

While we await the critical decisions that will be made by the 2007 Legislative Assembly, I propose that we keep these recommendations on the CWAC agenda. I know that Ramona shares my enthusiasm for ensuring that our CAF strategies move us towards the two primary goals identified by CWAC.

Thank you so much for your work on these recommendations. I appreciate your continued efforts to improve services to Oregon's children and families.

Sincerely,

Thanks for all you do.



Bruce Goldberg, M.D.
Director

BG:pp/tem

Copy (w/ incoming):

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Mickey Serice
Jim Neely
Nancy Keeling
Pam Pearson