



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Administration for Children and Families, Region III

MAR 28 2011

Suite 864  
150 S. Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3499

Richard J. Gold  
Deputy Secretary  
Office of Children, Youth and Families  
Department of Public Welfare  
P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-2675

Dear Mr. Gold:

On March 30, 2009, the Children's Bureau (CB), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) provided the Office of Children, Youth & Families (OCYF) with the review findings from Pennsylvania's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) conducted in July 2008. As indicated in the report, Pennsylvania was determined to not be operating in substantial conformity in any of the seven outcome areas and two of the seven systemic factors. Consequently, it was necessary for OCYF to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address each outcome determined not to be in substantial conformity. The PIP developed by OCYF was approved by CB on June 30, 2010.

As you are aware an account of the progress Pennsylvania is making to implement the PIP is required each quarter. The Regional Office (RO) received a timely copy of the second quarterly progress report on February 14, 2011. All accompanying documentation of the PIP action steps was clear and well organized. The narrative report was very informative and aided in giving an overall framework of the activities in progress to complete the PIP. We look forward to reading such narratives in the future from the state and Philadelphia County as discussed on our joint teleconference on March 17, 2011.

The quarterly report demonstrates Pennsylvania's progress in meeting the requirements of the PIP, achieving many of the action steps as planned for the second quarter. Additionally, there were several action steps that were not completed as planned for the second quarter and shifted to the third quarter or later in order to ensure they are implemented in an effective manner that is feasible for the state given the many projects the state is currently administering. There were several action steps that were discussed during our March 17<sup>th</sup> teleconference that will continue to be reported on throughout the remainder of the PIP.

It is clear that Pennsylvania is moving forward with the action steps and benchmarks identified in the PIP. The development and implementation of the Safety Assessment and Management Process (SAMP) continues to be a major accomplishment. We were impressed with the information provided to us that family finding in the practice initiative counties has led to discovering a permanent resource for a significant amount of children in such a short period of time. We were pleased to learn that there have been 91 paralegals placed throughout the

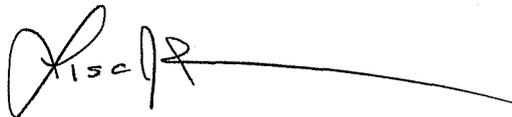
counties to assist on casework; the PIP required only 60 paralegals and this action step was not scheduled for completion until much later in the year. It also appears that Pennsylvania continues to make progress toward completing its action steps towards achieving a Statewide Information System. We commend your effort and the results of the action steps completed this quarter.

Our recent teleconference also gave us the opportunity to hear input from Philadelphia County. This was a unique, informative and necessary discussion given the large number of Pennsylvania's families involved with the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS). We were impressed with the information provided by Philadelphia DHS regarding the dependency courts moving towards hearing dependency cases on a 90 day schedule with the use of Masters. We were also pleased to hear that Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) has been implemented in Philadelphia County over the last two years and that Philadelphia is continuing to focus on FGDM. As per our discussion during our teleconference regarding action step 3.11j, we support the mentioned program for older youth but we are not able to agree to the suggested renegotiated action step at this time. We look forward to working with Philadelphia County to create an action step that is more feasible, perhaps focusing on older youth but dealing directly with the issue of termination of parental rights and how it affects permanency. Additionally, we remind you that technical assistance is available through the National Resources Centers (NRCs). If it is believed Philadelphia County, or the state, would benefit from technical assistance on issues such as the Philadelphia re-entry data, concurrent planning, barriers to permanency, or termination of parental rights, please let us know and we can assist you in accessing assistance from the NRCs.

Enclosed is a copy of CB's comments on Pennsylvania's second quarterly PIP report. As you will see, the comments are embedded in the matrix. Any outstanding items noted should be addressed in the next quarterly report. This assessment is designed to identify action steps and benchmarks that are overdue or are not on track to be completed timely in accordance with the approved PIP as well as to ascertain what action steps and/or benchmarks have been renegotiated and completed during the quarter.

Please have your staff review the enclosed information and provide the necessary response in the next quarterly report which is due to the Regional Office on May 15, 2011. If you or any of your staff have any questions about this report, please contact Jesse Wolovoy, Children and Families Program Specialist, at 215-861-4014 or [jesse.wolovoy@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:jesse.wolovoy@acf.hhs.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa J. Pearson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lisa J. Pearson  
Regional Program Manager  
Children's Bureau, Region III

Enclosures

Richard Gold  
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cc: Cathy Utz, Bureau Director, OCYF; Harrisburg, PA  
Don Adams, Child and Family Services Review Unit; CB; Washington DC  
Jesse Wolovoy, Child and Family Program Specialist; CB, Region III; Philadelphia, PA