

Executive Summary:

July 1, 2012 marked the official start date of Oklahoma’s Pinnacle Plan. The final draft of the Pinnacle Plan was “endorsed” by the co-neutrals on July 27, 2012. A proposed plan for baselines, targets, and measures was submitted on October 8, 2012. Although official “approval” has not been granted, diligent and thoughtful work to implement the plan and to achieve targeted outcomes has begun.

The commitments and initiatives outlined in Oklahoma’s Pinnacle Plan represent a significant shift in how the OKDHS workforce will operate. The initiatives are based on a set of new core commitments that represent the foundation of reform. The newly created Child Welfare Services Executive Team is committed to unifying all of Child Welfare Services as one team working together towards common goals. The Executive team commits to clearing the path of artificial barriers to positive outcomes for children and families created by boundaries between districts, regions, programs, etc.

This is a significant time of change for the agency, and change of the magnitude that we are seeking to accomplish will not happen overnight. While we have experienced some “quick wins” such as an increase in reimbursement rates for resource families and a pay increase for child welfare staff, it will take a longer period of time for progress on other major initiatives to build. Our goal is to achieve positive outcomes that are sustainable over time. In order to do so, we must lay the necessary foundation for sustainability. For this reason, a significant amount of time has and will continue to be devoted to building the child welfare leadership team. Some of the most significant decisions made to date involve decisions regarding filling key management positions. Getting people into positions where their strengths are maximized requires a thoughtful and strategic approach. As of October 16, 2012, all child welfare staff is now aligned into one division under the newly created Child Welfare Services. We are confident that that the newly created child welfare leadership team, that is comprised of the Division Director, Deputy Directors, District Directors, and Program Leadership will move the child welfare team forward over the next several years. Vertical integration of child welfare staff marks a major milestone in Pinnacle Plan implementation.

The next several months will involve a focus on several key strategies, the first being a focus on building our workforce. In order to achieve outcomes that are sustainable, we must employ a competent, committed, trained, and resourced child welfare workforce that is supported by the community and held accountable by the agency. We have been allocated 100 new child welfare specialist positions as well as new supervisory positions that will be allocated to the districts within the next 30 days. Allocation will be based on assessment of need that also takes into account district capacity to support, supervise, and train additional staff as well as available workspace within the districts. While increasing the number of staff on the ground performing the work will create an impact on workloads, productivity, and ultimately outcomes, increasing the number of staff alone will not be sufficient. Our ongoing efforts of developing and refining performance expectations for staff at all levels of the division will assist

in building our workforce. It is imperative that each individual knows his or her role as it relates to achieving positive outcomes that performance expectations are clearly defined, and that the



in building our workforce. It is imperative that each individual knows his or her role as it relates to achieving positive outcomes, that performance expectations are clearly defined, and that the highest levels of accountability are achieved at every level. We have several major initiatives related to building our workforce that will be developed and implemented within the next year. The first completed initiative involves administering of and successful completion of competency assessments for new child welfare staff prior to caseload assignment. A major focus internally continues to be on caseload size. While we are cautious to expect to see a significant impact on caseload size immediately, it is our goal that through a gradual building of our workforce that caseload size will begin to trend downward. This will take time, as the necessary supports to increase workforce capacity need to be in place before the workforce size can grow to an adequate number.

Another key focus will continue to be expanding quality placement options and supports to ensure safety of children in out of home care and reduce shelter usage. These efforts have produced an increase of 55 traditional foster homes since July 1, 2012. Work on specific initiatives has progressed as well. A Request for Proposal (RFP) for public-private partnership of the recruitment and retention of foster homes is anticipated to be released for proposals by October 31, 2012. As of August of 2012, resource family assessments are now being sent to private providers for completion. Additionally, this month The Administration on Children and Families, Children's Bureau awarded \$3.2 million to OKDHS to support a Oklahoma Trauma Assessment and Service Center Collaborative (OK-TASCC) that focuses on embedding trauma services into children's shelters in Oklahoma converting the two OKDHS operated shelters to assessments centers. Community partners are actively engaged with us to achieve our targeted outcomes related to expanding quality placement options and supports.

Safety of children is paramount. Securing and supporting appropriate placements is the first step. An additional and equally important step involves ensuring reports of abuse or neglect of children in out of home care are responded to swiftly and thoroughly. First year initiatives involve aligning the Office of Client Advocacy and Child Protective Services systems. November 1, 2012 is the target date for all reports of child abuse and neglect regardless of placement setting to be sent through the abuse and neglect Hotline and screened according to CPS guidelines.

Lastly, we can't do it alone. In order to ensure children are safe and families are well served, we must effectively partner with key stakeholders. Several initiatives to purposefully engage community partners across the state are underway. Work continues on the Oklahoma Trauma-Informed System Implementation Plan to enhance practice with trauma informed initiatives; The OKDHS/ODMHSAS System of Care contract was reviewed and renegotiated to work to increase the number of children involved in child welfare services who are also served through Systems of Care; Plans to assess possible service and quality gaps for particular districts are underway; and Youth Services Agencies statewide are looking at innovative ways to enhance the services they already provide in their communities. These are just a few of the initiatives in progress. The community support for Oklahoma's Pinnacle Plan has been overwhelming. OKDHS embraces this opportunity to work together with our community partners in a focused and coordinated way to benefit the children and families we serve.

