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October 1, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

JUNE 24, 2008 BOARD MOTION FOR ESTABLISHING AN AUTOMATED SYSTEM FOR SHARING CLIENT INFORMATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT – REQUEST FOR EXTENSION

On June 24, 2008, on the heels of a case in which a five year-old child was ritualistically tortured for over a year by his mother and another woman residing in their home, your Board instructed the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in conjunction with the County Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Health Services, Mental Health, Probation, Public Health - Alcohol and Drug Services, Public Social Services (DPSS), and local and state law enforcement agencies, including the California Department of Corrections, as well as any other relevant governmental agencies to report back prior to supplemental budget deliberations with:

1. A proposal to automate information-sharing about clients served within County departments and other government agencies;

2. Recommendations for legislative changes to address prohibitions against necessary information sharing between agencies; and

3. Protocols for case management that include identification of the agency staff responsible for the information.

On July 8, 2008, the CEO convened an interdepartmental Work Group consisting of 12 departments spanning each of the five clusters to develop a set of recommendations to address your Board's directive. An aggressive pace was set over the summer months that culminated at the beginning of September.

The Work Group, consisting of approximately 65 department representatives was organized into five Task Groups: (1) *Inventory of Data Sharing Activities,* (2) *Target Populations,* (3) *Legal Issues,* (4) *Technology, and* (5) *Fiscal.* Members were asked to develop a set of recommendations for their respective Task Groups that would be integrated into a cohesive report consisting of phased (short-, mid-, and long-term) recommendations for reducing the potential of child abuse and neglect.

Preliminary efforts have been completed by the Work Group, including:

- Organizing, with the generous support of Casey Family Programs, a site visit to Allegheny County's (Pennsylvania) Department of Human Services (DHS). Allegheny's DHS' system is one of the few local government systems that has a number of useful functions that can help the County meet its objectives, such as counting unduplicated clients and importing client data from both internal and external sources. A County delegation representing two Board Offices, the CEO, DCFS, and DPSS will meet with Allegheny's DHS Director and staff on October 30th and 31st to discuss the overall vision, lessons learned, and functionalities of the system. Input received will help shape the Work Group's final recommendations.

- Developing a baseline document of existing County systems/programs/activities that facilitates the exchange of client information among departments and non County jurisdictions. This document captured 70 County activities from nine departments. It is organized using the County's Five Outcome Areas for Children and Families and four separate business functional areas. For example: 54 percent of activities were designed to support Good Health outcomes; while 44 percent targeted the Economic Well-Being of clients. The most frequently reported business function was Service Coordination (74 percent) followed by administrative functions (69 percent). This type of information was used by Task Groups to help inform their deliberations and formulate their recommendations.

- Designing *LA County Cares* as a system/approach to reduce the possibility of child abuse and neglect by proactively identifing families with unmet service needs and supports, assisting families to obtain needed services and/or supports, and taking any protective actions that may be deemed as appropriate.

- Identifying technical enhancements/legal changes related to the County's *Family Children's Index* (FCI). FCI is a computerized interagency data system supported by legislation that allows specified agencies to share basic identifying information of families "at-risk" of child abuse or neglect among specified agencies. The existing legislation allows the sharing of information and the formation of Multidisciplinary Disciplinary Teams for the purposes of identifying, preventing or treating child abuse and neglect.

- Drafting a set of preliminary legal/legislative recommendations to enhance the County's ability to proactively serve families with unmet needs and supports, which can negatively impact children and families and possibly increase children being placed at risk of child abuse and neglect.

Given the scope of the Work Group's efforts, additional time is needed to hone the recommendations more accurately define the associated costs and complete the Board letter. We anticipate filing the Board letter in time for your Board's November 12, 2008 meeting.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know, or your staff may contact Deputy Chief Executive Officer Miguel Santana at (213) 974-4530, or via e-mail at msantana@ceo.lacounty.gov.

WTF:MS:KH
CP:hn

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Centralized Case Management Work Group Department Heads
Centralized Case Management Work Group Members