

MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT

Caseload Management Measures - Office of Children's Services

#44(Sent 12/4)

Impact

Quality Enhancement **Improve quality of family interventions by reducing average caseload sizes for Investigation and Treatment Services to meet Division of Family Services and Child Welfare League of America standards.**

THE ISSUES

- Unmanageable caseloads limited the ability of caseworkers to provide effective and efficient services
- Investigation backlog increasing; ongoing efforts to reduce backlog insufficient with increasing reports
- Workers' morale, effectiveness and professional development compromised by excessive caseload demands

THE GOAL

- Bring caseloads closer to standards of 14 in Investigation and 18 in Treatment
- Eliminate investigation and treatment backlogs.
- Improve morale and effectiveness of caseworkers by maintaining manageable caseloads

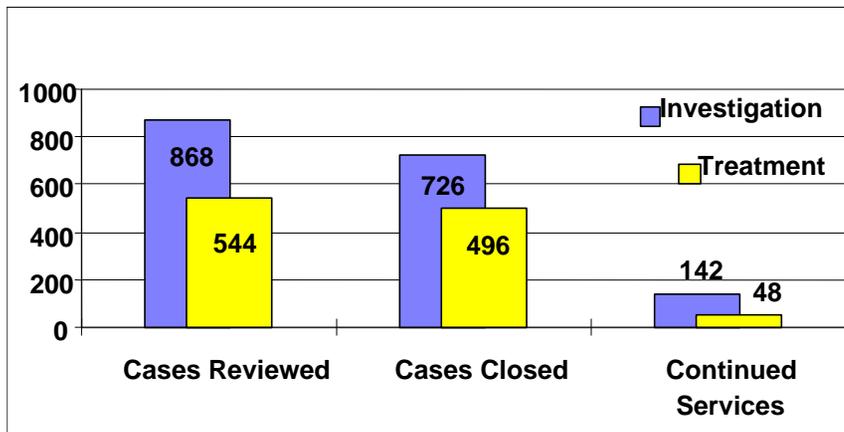
THE INTERVENTION

- Identify eligible cases for review based on criteria
- Four review teams representing Regional Operations, Central Office, supervisor, and worker
- Consensus process; decision and appropriate action recorded in FACTS.

THE RESULTS

- Statewide average caseloads were 14 for investigation and 17 for treatment after review process
- Investigation backlog dropped from 553 cases on Aug. 1 to 114 on Oct.1. Backlog as a percent of total cases dropped from 46% to 23%.
- Office of Children's Services closed 1,222 cases or 87% of 1,412 cases reviewed

OCS Caseloads - FY 97 to date



Narrative Summary

Caseload size has been an ongoing problem in the Division of Family Services. DFS caseload standard are 14 Investigation cases and 18 Treatment cases per worker. Many workers' caseloads have significantly exceeded those standards over the past four years. Under a backlog reduction plan initiated in July 1995, investigation cases in process for more than 45 days declined from 505 in July 1995 to 205 in October 1996. Due to a variety of factors, including a significant increase in reports, the number of cases in backlog increased from 205 to 598 in July 1997, nine months later. At the start of FY98, the average investigation caseload was 45.3 cases, and 48% of all DFS investigations had been in process for over 45 days.

At the same time, treatment caseloads were too high to allow adequate face-to-face contact with families or adequate service planning and monitoring. As FY98 began, treatment caseloads were 31.3.

The failure of ongoing efforts to get and keep the backlog under control and to maintain treatment caseloads at a manageable level, led management to consider more fundamental changes in the way DFS manages child protective service caseloads.

FACTS was used to generate a list of cases for review. These cases included all backlogged investigations. Treatment cases for review met the following criteria: no face-to-face contact within the last 60 days, identified for closure by worker, no children in care, no Family Preservation services being offered.

Review teams consisting of the case worker, supervisor, one central office staff, and one regional operations manager reviewed a total of 1,412 cases and closed 1,222 or 87% of those cases. Post-review average caseloads were 14 for investigation and 17 for treatment.