



State of Delaware

*The Department of Services
for Children, Youth and Their Families*

Press Releases for 1998

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*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

For release: December 29, 1998

Contact: Sherese Brewington-Carr
(302) 633-2620

Wilmington, DE - The Secretary of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Thomas P. Eichler today announced the termination of three New Castle County Detention Center employees. The three employees were on duty on December 17, 1998 when a 17-year old youth, who was classified by medical staff as needing intensive observation, attempted to hang himself. The youth was taken to the hospital where he later died. All three employees were grossly inattentive to their duties and at least one was clearly asleep.

"It is apparent to me that these three individuals made a conscious choice to totally disregard their responsibilities. They were immediately relieved of their responsibilities while we completed an internal investigation and carried out appropriate and fair employment practices," said Secretary Eichler. "Anything short of termination would be an affront to the commitment and performance of remaining staff who have earned accreditation for providing safe and appropriate services in this facility."

"The performance of these individuals in no way reflects the standards or general practice at the Detention Center," said Sherese Brewington-Carr, Director of Youth Rehabilitative Services. "Three people, who knew what was expected of them, chose not to fulfill their duties, compromising the safety and security of the unit. Termination is the appropriate action in this case." The Director has indicated that Division safety policies have been reaffirmed with staff at the New Castle County Detention Center, particularly those pertaining to the practice of Intensive Observation. These include that a staff member with no other duty assignments must be within arm's reach of the resident and maintain visual supervision at all times.

The staff members were temporarily relieved of duty pending the results of an internal investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the three were suspended without pay pending today's pre-decision termination meeting. The meeting was an opportunity for the employees to hear the information gathered in support of a personnel action, and allowed the employees another opportunity to present their versions of events and/or objections to the proposed action or its severity.

The New Castle Detention Center serves pre-adjudicated youth, who have been arrested and detained under security pending court appearances. The facility is located on Route 141 south of Route 48 outside the City of Wilmington. Detained youth receive a program of education, professional counseling, and recreational activities. The facility is accredited by both the American Correctional Association and the Middle States School Association.



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

For Immediate Release
November 16, 1998

contact: Trish Hearn
(302) 633-2504

DSCYF Budget Request Focus on Quality

Dover - The Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families today presented its FY2000 budget request to the State Budget Director. The request amounts to a 2.7% increase over FY 1999, for a total of nearly \$121 million in total funds.

“Our budget request reflects our focus on quality in services,” said DSCYF Secretary Thomas P. Eichler. “It will allow us to introduce a new component to our continuum to better address the needs of children involved with more than one of our divisions. It will support the group homes, and foster parents who provide care for children in the State’s custody, as well as those who offer a family life to children through adoption. It will allow us to improve the data collected by and shared among our workers in the daily provision of services, and now used by management to track the quality and timeliness of services.”

The FY 2000 budget request includes the following new initiatives:

- FACTS Support
- Interdivisional Cases
- Department Client Records Management
- Mental Health Services - YRS
- Group Home Medications
- Foster Care/Adoption
- Group Home Rate Increase

“The support of the Administration and the General Assembly has enabled us to grow our budget substantially in years past. This request will enable us to build on the significant improvements we have made in quality of services, work force and management,” concluded Secretary Eichler.



*The Department of Services
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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 13, 1998

CONTACT: Trish Hearn
(302) 633-2504

***** PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE *****

WHAT: Meeting of the Independent Review Panel, appointed by Secretary Thomas P. Eichler of the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, to look into the circumstances surrounding the death of Dejah Foraker.

WHEN: Thursday, November 19, 1998 , 8:30AM - 1:00PM
Friday, November 20, 1998, 8:30AM - 11:30AM

WHERE: The Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Delaware Youth and Family Center
1825 Faulkland Road, Conference Room 199
Wilmington, Delaware

PRELIMINARY MEETING AGENDA:

1. Convening of the Panel.
2. Executive Session, to discuss and receive testimony regarding case documents, according to 29 Del. C. §10004(b)(3) and (b)(6).

NOTE: This meeting is open to the public, in accordance with 29 Del. C. §10002 and §10004. The Executive Session of this meeting is closed to the public in accordance with 29 Del. C. §10004, 29 Del. C. § 9016; and 16 Del. C. §905(c).
This session is scheduled in accordance with 29 Del. C. §10004(e)(3).



*The Department of Services
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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 13, 1998

CONTACT: Trish Hearn
(302) 633-2504

***** PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE *****

WHAT: Special Meeting of the Independent Review Panel, appointed by Secretary Thomas P. Eichler of the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, to look into the circumstances surrounding the death of Dejah Foraker.

WHEN: Today, Friday, November 13, 1998
3:00pm

WHERE: The Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Delaware Youth and Family Center
1825 Faulkland Road, Conference Room 199
Wilmington, Delaware

PRELIMINARY MEETING AGENDA:

1. Convening of the Panel by Secretary Eichler.
2. Introduction of Members/staff.
3. Orientation of members to the operating procedures for the Independent Review Panel.
4. Election of Chair by Panel members.
5. Executive Session, as necessary, according to 29 Del. C. §10004(b)(3) and (b)(6).

NOTE: This meeting is open to the public, in accordance with 29 Del. C. §10002 and §10004. The Executive Session of this meeting is closed to the public in accordance with 29 Del. C. §10004, 29 Del. C. § 9016; and 16 Del. C. §905(c).
This special session is scheduled in accordance with 29 Del. C. §10004(e)(3).



*The Department of Services
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NEWS

For release November 13, 1998

contact: Trish Hearn
(302) 633-2504

INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL APPOINTED

The Secretary of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Thomas P. Eichler today named a six-member Independent Review Panel to review the circumstance associated with the death of Dejah Foraker. Her mother, Marsha Foraker, has been charged with first degree murder for the cocaine related death of the five-month-old girl on October 27, 1998. A list of the panel members is attached.

It is the policy of the Department for the Secretary to appoint an independent review panel in situations where abuse or neglect is the cause of death of a child involved with the Department. The Panel's assignment is to determine whether applicable Department policies and procedures were followed, whether appropriate services were provided, and to make any recommendations for improvements in policies and services. The Panel is expected to report to the Secretary within 30 days of its first meeting.

"The death of any child is a tragedy. What I ask of the Panel is a thorough and objective report, so that we may continue to improve our system of child protection in Delaware," said Secretary Eichler. "The members of the panel are recognized for their expertise and leadership in various areas important to an objective and comprehensive review of the case. I appreciate your willingness to serve."

The Panel convened it's meeting at 3:00PM in Rooms 198-199 at the Family and Youth Center, 1825 Faulkland Road, Wilmington. All meetings are open to the public in accordance with 29 Del. C. §10002 and §10004. The Executive session of any meeting is closed to the public in accordance with 29Del. C. §10004, and §9016; and Del. C. §905 (c).

Independent Review Panel Members

Malcolm Cobin, Esquire

Assistant State Solicitor, Office of the Attorney General, State of Delaware

Allan R. De Jong, M.D.

Director, Children At Risk Evaluation Team, A.I. duPont Hospital for Children
Nationally recognized, 20 years in the medical evaluation of suspected child abuse
Member, Child Protection Accountability Commission

Matthew P. Denn, Esquire

Chair, Child Protection Accountability Commission

Renata J. Henry, M.Ed

Director, Alcohol and Drug Services, Division of Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and
Mental Health, Delaware Health and Social Services
20 years in direct service, management and administration of alcohol and drug
treatment services
Officer, Board of Directors, National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Directors

Janice L. Lingan, MSW retired

Member, National Association of Social Workers
40 years experience in the child welfare and family services

The Honorable Vincent J. Poppiti

Chief Judge, Family Court of Delaware



*The Department of Services
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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, September 30, 1998

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONTACT: Trish Hearn (302) 633-2500

BREWINGTON-CARR APPOINTED TO LEAD YOUTH REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Thomas P. Eichler, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, announced the appointment of Sherese Brewington-Carr as Director of the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services, effective October 26. Sherese Brewington-Carr is presently Warden of Gander Hill.

In announcing the appointment, Secretary Eichler said "We have made great strides toward our goal of having the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services be a pacesetter in working with delinquent youth for positive outcomes while protecting public safety. Warden Brewington-Carr's experience and accomplishments in criminal justice make her an excellent choice to lead the Division."

Warden Brewington-Carr's leadership at Gander Hill has allowed it to be recognized for its Youthful Offender Program for 16 to 18 year old youth who have been convicted as adults, as well as the widely recognized Key Drug Abuse Treatment Program. Brewington-Carr also is widely respected for her work in fostering positive relations between Gander Hill and the surrounding community.

Warden Brewington-Carr succeeds Guy H. Sapp, who successfully led the Division through five years of significant improvements including the building of a new facility, designing a new program and upgrading the work force at Ferris School; American Correctional Association Accreditation at New Castle County Detention Center and Stevenson House; Middle States Association Accreditation for education programs at NCCDC and Ferris School; provision of a more comprehensive continuum of care including expended community-based services. These accomplishments were achieved while the division has absorbed significant increases in both the number of youth requiring YRS services and the complexity of their needs.



*The Department of Services
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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, September 17, 1998

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONTACT: Trish Hearn
(302) 633-2500

GOVERNOR CARPER ANNOUNCES SERIOUS JUVENILE OFFENDER PROGRAM

*Repeat juvenile offenders to receive increased sanctions,
including long-term commitments to secure care facilities*

Governor Thomas R. Carper and Secretary Thomas P. Eichler today announced the start of the Serious Juvenile Offender (SJO) program for the State of Delaware. The program will target violent juvenile offenders who have received previous opportunities at rehabilitation from the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS) and are on probation in the community. This effort maximizes public safety by holding serious juvenile offenders accountable for every requirement of their probation and any new criminal offenses.

“This program will crack down hard on serious juvenile offenders who violate the terms of their probation and put them on notice that we are watching carefully. If they are not prepared to take advantage of rehabilitative programs offered and start to turn their lives around, we stand ready to make sure they do,” said Governor Carper.

"There will be a very low tolerance for violations of the conditions of juvenile supervision or criminal acts. Violators will be subject to a range of immediate sanctions, including short-term detention to long-term residential placement. Youth sanctioned will have already received repeated traditional rehabilitative services but continued to re-offend," said Secretary Eichler.

The program, funded with a nearly \$900,000 grant from the Criminal Justice Council, will work cooperatively with law enforcement across the state to ensure compliance of supervision conditions among this population. Violations of probation conditions for youth under the purview of this program will result in increased sanctions up to and including commitments to secure care facilities for extended periods of time. The Division will meet with and establish strong liaisons with police departments across the state to ensure the program's effectiveness.

In September of 1997, the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services conducted a review of statewide probation services to determine whether the existing continuum of services addressed the current needs. Of particular interest was the examination of probation services provided to serious, violent and chronic offenders. At the conclusion of this process, it was deemed necessary to modify the service delivery system to provide intensive supervision services to a portion of youth on aftercare with a shift in philosophy that stresses compliance monitoring.

The program was piloted through the Operation Safe Streets program which targets convicted felons in the City of Wilmington with zero tolerance enforcement of probation conditions. Operation Safe Streets, which combines the resources of city and state law enforcement agencies, is credited with helping to reduce the number of shootings in Wilmington this past year.



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

THOMAS R. CARPER
GOVERNOR
LEGISLATIVE HALL
DOVER, DELAWARE 1 9901
(302) 739 - 4 1 0 1
(302) 577 - 32 1 0

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 12, 1998

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT: Sheri L. Woodruff
(302) 739-4101 Dover
(302) 575-6800 Beeper
Trish Hearn, DSCYF
(302) 633-2504 Wilm

CARPER CABINET MEMBER SNAGS NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

-- Tom Eichler Honored for Sustained Public Service Career --

(Wilmington, Del.) -- Governor Thomas R. Carper today announced that Thomas P. Eichler, Secretary of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, is receiving the 1998 National Public Service Award. The American Society for Public Administration and the National Academy of Public Administration jointly sponsor the award as a tribute for "exemplary public management, communicating professionalism, encouraging excellence, and promoting positive awareness of public administration." Secretary Eichler is one of five recipients nationwide, selected from all levels of government.

According to Carper, "Tom Eichler has spent 30 years excelling at the management of troubled or complex organizations -- a good portion of those years here in Delaware. He takes on tough issues, looks for solid solutions, and focuses on excellence in service. His efforts have made us better stewards of the environment; leaders in the areas of health care and welfare reform; and, more recently, in providing quality services to our most vulnerable children. His primary motivation is a deep concern for our residents."

Secretary Eichler was nominated for the award by Robert Denhardt, policy fellow at the University of Delaware's Institute of Public Administration, who referenced Eichler's leadership in the following areas:

- positioning the State to address unforeseen environmental issues, as exemplified by activation of the Inland Bays Task Force;

-- more --

- providing welfare recipients training and support services through the First Step program -- to get them off public assistance and into gainful employment;
- improving child support enforcement;
- improving mental health programs for adults and children;
- creating a health statistic center, enabling the State to better plan and target services;
- focusing on “one-stop shopping” for people in need of State services; and
- moving DSCYF to new standards of performance, as demonstrated in the rebuilding of the Ferris School and accreditation of child mental health services.

“I have been fortunate in knowing that I wanted to pursue a career in public service. I’m grateful to Governor Carper and other elected leaders for the confidence they have placed in me over the years and the opportunity to be a public servant,” said Secretary Eichler.

Career Summary:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (1973 - 1979)
 Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (1979 - 1983)
 Region III, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (1983 - 1985)
 Delaware Health and Social Services (1985 - 1993)
 Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (1993 - Present)

Community Involvement:

Central Delaware Chapter, Habitat for Humanity
 Delaware Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews
 Delaware Nature Society



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

THOMAS R. CARPER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, April 23, 1998

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONTACT: Thomas P. McGonigle
(302) 577-8640 Wilm

CARPER UNVEILS LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE CHILD ABUSE
INVESTIGATIONS, HELP RETAIN QUALITY STAFF
-- Receives Early Support from Kids' Department, Law Enforcement --

(Wilmington, Del.) -- To help protect Delaware children from abuse and neglect, Governor Thomas R. Carper today unveiled legislation that more clearly defines roles and responsibilities for caseworkers and law enforcement investigators; mandates cooperation between law enforcement and child abuse investigators; increases the penalty for causing physical injury to a child under age 3; creates subpoena powers for the Division of Family Services to compel cooperation in investigations; and takes steps to attract and retain experienced investigators by providing a salary supplement for qualified employees who take on additional responsibilities.

According to Governor Carper, "While government and law enforcement agencies cannot be in every home to protect every child at every moment, we have an obligation to make the child protective system in our state as solid and fail-proof as possible. By more carefully outlining duties and responsibilities of investigators and law enforcement personnel, providing financial incentives to attract and retain the most experienced staff available, as well as increasing penalties for intentionally causing harm to our youngest and most vulnerable children, we are further bolstering the system we began to overhaul more than a year ago."

Carper's proposed legislation would make the following improvements to the investigative process:

- Clearly define the roles of law enforcement and the Division of Family Services (DFS) by mandating a complete criminal investigation with law enforcement working concurrently with DFS in any child abuse case where the allegations, if true, constitute criminal conduct. The legislation also mandates that all such investigations be treated initially as felony investigations and that the law enforcement agency and DFS enter into a joint action plan -- in writing -- within 12 hours of receiving any report that results in a determination that a criminal investigation is warranted. The legislation also requires the law enforcement agency conducting the criminal investigation to inform DFS upon making an arrest or upon otherwise closing the criminal investigation.
- Make it a felony assault to recklessly or intentionally cause physical injury to a child under age 3. Under current law, such an offense is treated as a misdemeanor -- except when the victim is a police officer or a senior citizen. This legislation will extend heightened protection to Delaware's most vulnerable children.
- Allow DFS to conduct more thorough investigations by enhancing the Division's investigatory powers, including subpoena power and authority to take emergency temporary custody in serious cases where the child is at a day care center or school. The legislation also requires agencies such as schools and hospitals to share any records relevant to an investigation. Subpoena power would be limited to the Secretary and Division of Family Services Director and temporary emergency custody could be exercised for up to four hours.

According to New Castle County Police Colonel John Cunningham, "The measures proposed in this bill serve to protect the most innocent and defenseless among us -- our children. At the same time, this legislation provides for a natural progression of the relationship between law enforcement and the Division of Family Services."

Delaware State Police Colonel Alan Ellingsworth agreed, "This legislation will help law enforcement and child abuse investigators do the best job possible in investigating and solving cases where children's lives and safety are at stake. We look forward to working even more closely with the Division of Family Services, as well as other law enforcement agencies statewide, to help protect Delaware's families and children."

Carper's legislation would also make the following improvements to help the Division to attract and retain experienced investigators:

- Enhance quality and retention of DFS child abuse workers by providing a \$5,000 salary supplement to experienced investigators and treatment workers who meet certain qualifications and take on additional responsibilities. Currently, many investigators and treatment workers transfer to other jobs within the Department or leave state service due to the difficulty of child abuse cases compared to other positions at the same pay grade.

- Better ensure continuity in the Division's investigative response by requiring investigators who receive the supplement to be "on call" during weekend hours to investigate serious cases. Currently, child abuse cases reported during the weekend are initially handled by weekend workers who pass the case along to weekday workers. Under Carper's proposal, investigators who make the initial response to the hospital would be responsible for the case until it is closed.

The legislation will complement administrative improvements announced yesterday by the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.



*The Department of Services
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NEWS

For Release: April 22, 1998

contact: Trish Hearn
302-633-2500

ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

As Secretary of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Thomas P. Eichler appointed an Independent Review Panel on March 6, 1998 to look at the circumstances surrounding the March 1, 1998 death of Tytyana Kennedy. The following members comprised the seven - person panel:

The Honorable **Peggy L. Ableman**, Family Court

John N. Austin, Ph. D, Chair of Social Work Studies, Delaware State University

Matthew P. Denn, Esquire, Chair, Child Protection Accountability Commission

Mary Lou Edgar, LCSW, Family Therapist, Tressler Center
Past Vice President, Delaware Coalition for Children

Keith I. Faulkner, Chief of Dover Police Department
President, Police Chiefs Association of Delaware

Susan P. Greenstein, ACSW, Director of Programs, Children and Families First

Richard W. Henderson, M.D. Practicing physician, member, Delaware Perinatal Board

The panel was chaired by Judge Ableman.

The Independent Review Panel met six times to review the case, interview medical, police and DSCYF Division of Family Services professionals involved with the family since a December 26, 1997 incident where abuse was suspected, and to develop recommendations to Secretary Eichler. On Wednesday, April 22, 1998, the Panel presented its report to Secretary Eichler, concluding that the Division of Family Services was not the direct cause of this tragedy and recommending changes in the following areas:

- **Collaboration between the Division of Family Services and Police Agencies**
- **Joint Investigations**
- **Safety Plans**
- **Continuity in Investigations**
- **Caseloads**
- **Training**

“The loss of a child is a tragedy, felt by us all,” said Secretary Eichler. “I thank the panel members for their commitment to the protection of children, and for their recommendations focusing on our performance with our partners. Through this community response, the protection of children will be enhanced.”

DSCYF ACTION PLAN

The Department appreciates the Panel's recommendations for improving services, and has developed an Action Plan to address these concerns:

⇒ **ACTION # 1 Collaboration between DFS and Police**

Completion Date: March 31, 1998

The Division of Family Services and New Castle County Police Department signed a written agreement on 4 key points, which was forwarded to the Abuse Intervention Committee with a request that it be incorporated in the statewide Memorandum of Understanding pertaining to police agencies:

- Each agency named liaisons to facilitate communication.
- DFS will provide NCCPD with a copy of our disposition of all cases within 45 days of completion.
- NCCPD will provide DFS with copies of initial reports as soon as possible, forwarding copies of completed reports to DFS within 30 days.
- Both agencies will participate in joint training (see #6).

The Office of the Governor is preparing legislation in this area, and will announce details later this week.

⇒ **ACTION # 2 Formal routine procedures for the outset of joint investigation.**

Completion Date: May 1, 1998

- DFS staff are being instructed to reach at least a verbal agreement with police of what actions will be taken before they leave the scene, and that agreement will be incorporated into worker's progress notes.

The Office of the Governor is preparing legislation in this area, and will announce details later this week.

⇒ **ACTION # 3 Written and verified safety plan**

Completion Date: Policy by June 1, 1998

Training by August 1, 1998

- At the first face-to-face meeting, a safety plan is developed, documented and signed by all parties (parents, guardians and other responsible parties). Workers' supervisors will verify that the safety plan is implemented through weekly case review conferences.
- To assure that workers have the skills necessary to develop a safety plan in this tighter time frame, workers will undergo new training specifically designed to achieve this.

This policy will take effect June 1, 1998 --- with the understanding that training of all staff will not be completed until August 1, 1998.

⇒ **ACTION # 4 Ensure Staff Continuity in Child Abuse Investigations**

Completion Date: May 1, 1998

- To enhance communication among workers, effective May 1, all weekend, holiday, second and third shift workers will be required to make contact with the assigned investigation worker. This contact must take place within 72 hours, and the content is to go beyond the factual information and include impressions of what was seen and heard in the initial response.

⇒ **ACTION # 5 Reduce Caseloads of Urgent Response Workers**

Completion Date: Fiscal Year 1999

- DSCYF received a significant number of new positions this year, and these 16 worker and 2 supervisor positions would be sufficient to maintain caseload standards set by the State, were it not for turnover. In the first 8 months of this Fiscal Year, turnover was 33% in investigations. Secretary Eichler has set an objective of having at least 90% of DFS staff at full performance, with two years experience or more. The Office of the Governor is preparing legislation in this area, and will announce details later this week.
- The Independent Review Panel has recommended that DSCYF reevaluate the 20-day urgent response policy put in place last year. In reviewing this policy, DSCYF found that labeling cases as urgent or routine at the time of the initial phone report results in many cases being inappropriately assigned to an urgent investigation.

DSCYF recommends implementing a two-tiered investigation response and classification system that involves:

1. making in-person contact with the family and ensuring the child's safety (assess safety and develop a written safety plan to support the child remaining at home safely, or remove the child from the home temporarily);
 2. based on preliminary findings, determining if the case will be classified as high risk (20 day completion) or standard (45 day completion).
- DSCYF is developing a Quality Assurance system which will enable management to better track when a worker's caseloads exceed the standard, whether cases are meeting timelines, and whether cases are handled appropriately.

⇒ **ACTION # 6 Additional Training for DFS and Police**

To Be Scheduled

The American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI) offers Basic Training for Child Abuse Prosecutors and Investigators. This training provides theory followed by rigorous practical application in the nuances of investigation techniques. The session, to be scheduled, will involve members of DFS and police. It is the intent of DSCYF to invite members of law enforcement to training, as appropriate.



*The Department of Services
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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 21, 1998

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Trish Hearn, (302)633-2500

DIVISION OF CHILD MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES RECEIVES JCAHO ACCREDITATION

(Wilmington, DE) Governor Thomas R. Carper joined Thomas P. Eichler, Secretary of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families in celebrating the Division of Child Mental Health Services' (DCMHS) accreditation as a managed behavioral health care organization. DCMHS is the first public agency and the first child system in the nation to be accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO) in this category. The DCMHS service and delivery system were measured against more than 800 standards in a dozen different areas of performance (see attachments).

"in eleven years, we have grown from a psychiatric hospital and a few residential treatment centers to a full range of community-based, family-centered mental health and substance treatment services. Our growth has been guided by our commitment to continuously improving the system in order to provide the best services in the best way," stated Secretary Eichler. "This accreditation recognizes our commitment to standards of excellence as we provide child mental health services to over 500 children each month."

According to Governor Thomas R. Carper, "This accreditation shows others what we've known all along ---that our Division of Child Mental Health Services is a model of excellence. When it comes to protecting our most vulnerable populations, Delaware has again shown it is second to none."

Thomas Kozlowski, Ph.D., Associate Director for Behavior Health Accreditation for JCAHO, stated, "Delaware has set a precedent. It is the only state to offer a fully accredited statewide network with the unique and highly desirable integration of services for Medicaid and uninsured clients and integration of mental health and substance abuse services. Governor Carper and the Medicaid Office were wise when they selected DCMHS to provide managed behavioral health care for children in the Diamond State Health Plan. In doing so, they have not only assured high quality care, they have also set a national benchmark."

DCMHS Division Director Julian Taplin, who spearheaded DCMHS' accreditation initiative, said that he is proud of his agency' accomplishments, but that more work lies ahead. "DCMHS employees have reason to be proud of a decade of continuous progress. Several of our accomplishments have gathered national attention, and JCAHO accreditation is a significant milestone in this continuing growth. We are already looking ahead to new challenges such as expanding substance abuse services and therapeutic foster care."



*The Department of Services
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NEWS

For release: March 16, 1998

contact: Trish Hearn
302-633-2504

Governor Recognizes DuPont Company for HOSTing Ferris Students

Governor Thomas R. Carper joined Secretary Thomas P. Eichler today in commending the DuPont Company for its initiative in funding and providing mentors for the students at Ferris School, a 66-bed secure care facility for juveniles. The DuPont Company initiative is the latest contribution to the Total Learning Environment* envisioned by Department leadership.

"We are making tremendous strides in my effort to recruit an 'army' of 10,000 mentors to serve at-risk students statewide," said Governor Carper. "I thank the DuPont Company, and Willie Martin in particular, for putting us closer to achieving that goal."

Willie C. Martin, Vice President with the DuPont Company, came to Ferris School as part of "Principal For A Day 1997," a State Chamber of Commerce program that places business and government leaders in the shoes of principals at schools across the state. Mr. Martin was impressed with the new Ferris School, which opened its doors shortly before his visit. "More than seeing the bright, fresh building, I learned about the department's focus on providing a Total Learning Environment, with a normative culture and a therapeutic community," said Mr. Martin. "I asked if there was anything else they needed to assist them in their efforts to help ensure success for these students after their Ferris School experience."

With a \$69,800 investment, the DuPont Company purchased the training and materials needed to fund the Help One Student To Succeed (HOSTS) mentoring program at Ferris School. Through the HOSTS program, community volunteers assist students who are having difficulty in language arts (reading, writing, thinking, listening and speaking) and mathematics. Recruitment for mentors began in January and by February, mentors were working with students. Today, DuPont employees provide mentoring in language arts on a weekly basis.

"We have worked hard to put the school back in Ferris School: we have rebuilt structure and program, we have achieved Middle States Accreditation, and now – as in many Delaware schools, we have members of our community coming into our school to help the students succeed," said Secretary Eichler. "It is one thing to boost the self-esteem of a second grader in the public school down the road, and quite another to choose to work with troubled teens who are incarcerated. We are pleased that the experience of mentors in our program is similar to that of other programs. We thank Willie Martin for his leadership, the DuPont Company for its investment, and the individual mentors for their time and commitment to our students."

- end -

* See attachment



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

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SECRETARY EICHLER APPOINTS INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL

Work Begins March 13, 1998

Wilmington, DE - The Secretary of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Thomas P. Eichler today announced the appointment of a seven-member Independent Review Panel to analyze the circumstances associated with the death of Tytyana Kennedy. Her father, Tyrone Kennedy has been charged with first degree murder for allegedly shaking to death the six-month-old girl on March 1, 1998.

The death of a child is a saddening and traumatic event for everyone. It is the policy of the Department for the Secretary to appoint an independent review panel in situations where abuse or neglect is the cause of death of a child who has been involved with the Department. The Panel's assignment is to determine whether applicable Department policies and procedures were followed, whether appropriate services were provided, and to make any recommendations for improvements in policies and services. The Panel is expected to report to the Secretary within 30 days of its first meeting.

The members of the panel are recognized for their expertise and leadership in various areas important to an objective and comprehensive review of the case:

The Honorable Peggy L. Ableman
Family Court Judge and Member, Child Protection Accountability Commission

John N. Austin, Ph. D
Chair of Social Work Studies, Delaware State University

Matthew P. Denn, Esquire
Chair, Child Protection Accountability Commission

Mary Lou Edgar, LCSW
Adoption Case Manager, Family Therapist, Tressler Center
Past Vice President, Delaware Coalition for Children

Keith I. Faulkner
Chief of Dover Police Department
President, Police Chiefs Association of Delaware

Susan P. Greenstein, ACSW
Director of Programs and Services, Children and Families First

Richard W. Henderson, M.D.
Practicing physician and member, Delaware Perinatal Board

“The caliber and commitment of members assures the quality of review deserving of this matter,” said Secretary Eichler. “We appreciate their willingness to serve.”

The Panel will convene it's first meeting on March 13, 1998, at 2:30 P.M., in Rooms 198-199 at the Family and Youth Center, 1825 Faulkland Road, Wilmington. All meetings are open to the public, in accordance with 29 Del. C. §10002 and §10004. The Executive Session of any meeting is closed to the public in accordance with 29Del.. C. §10004, 29Del. C. §9016 and 16Del. C. §905 (c).