



News for Immediate Release

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New Child Welfare Project to Improve Outcomes for At-Risk Children

Harrisburg – The Department of Public Welfare will be participating in a new federal project that will invest child welfare dollars into preventative and intervention services for almost half of the state’s at-risk children and families.

Allegheny, Dauphin, Lackawanna, Philadelphia and Venango counties were selected to participate in the project, representing 45 percent of all Pennsylvania children in placement.

In the past, the department was limited to how the funds were used and distributed for child welfare services. This project will give these five counties flexibility to use funds to assess children’s and family’s needs, as well as develop and expand effective services.

“We know that children who come into the child welfare system can often face many struggles beyond their youth,” Secretary of Welfare Gary Alexander said. “Flexibility with federal and state funds will allow us to change the outcomes for these at-risk children and their families by directing funding toward preventative services.”

The department was selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to participate in the project this federal fiscal year. The project will allow greater flexibility over the use of Title IV-E federal funds that have traditionally only supported out-of-home placement costs.

Through this initiative, the department will be able to reinforce its goal to reunite children safely with their families or find them a permanent and loving home. It will build upon proven programs by reducing the use of out-of-home care and the rate of children returning to foster care and by improving the way the child welfare system engages families and assesses children’s needs.

Improved flexibility and expansion of programs will also allow the department and the participating counties to reinvest savings from successful prevention efforts into other child welfare services such as child abuse prevention and other community-based services and support.

“At-risk children deserve our very best effort because their future and Pennsylvania’s future depends on it,” Alexander said. “A renewed focus on our child

welfare services is something that we can all stand behind as a critical investment that will result in meaningful change.”

For more information about the Department of Public Welfare, visit the department’s website at www.dpw.state.pa.us

Pennsylvanians who suspect welfare fraud should call 1-800-932-0582.

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