

**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN RESOURCES
BUREAU FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
CPS RE-DESIGN OVERVIEW
2009**

WELCOME TO West Virginia Safety Assessment and Management System

A new child protective service model has been designed by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Children and Families along with the Federal National Resource Center for Child Protective Services. The NRCCPS began working with the CPS Steering committee at BCF in August of 2007 and continues to provide guidance and direction through the implementation process. NRCCPS is operated by ACTION for Child Protection Inc.

West Virginia's redesign of our child welfare model is tied to a federal demonstration project involving Alabama, South Dakota and Wisconsin. West Virginia is a "shadow district" of the primary state, Alabama. West Virginia will have access to everything developed with Alabama and the other states. The outcomes of the project are being measured by the University of Maryland.

The new child welfare model for West Virginia is an integrated safety system: Safety Assessment and Management System, or **SAMS** for short that is projected to be implemented statewide in 2009. **SAMS** is a comprehensive assessment process from intake to closure. It is a more precise way to determine safety and respond to unsafe children. It will provide a clearer way to work with families if used as designed.

This major initiative will move the state from being concerned with risk assessment exclusively (the likelihood that a child may be maltreated in the future), to a more exact understanding of family conditions that may or may not exist that have an effect on the safety of children.

If you are part of the community that makes referrals to CPS such as hospitals, doctors, family courts, schools, family, friends and neighbors you might like to know that

From intake (the referral) to case closure and at every decision point in between safety assessment and management of safety will be the focus of the DHHR.

If you are part of the legal community that works with CPS, you might like to know that

The new assessments will work with the new Supreme Court case plan. Most of the information entered by DHHR staff will automatically populate to the case plan.

*For families involved under court jurisdiction the courts can expect CPS to be able to clearly identify reasons the child is unsafe, how **the Safety Plan (In Home or Out of Home)** will control the safety threats, the behavioral progress or lack of progress being made regarding safety; and the reasons that a child placed out of the home can now return to the family or the reasons another permanent placement is required.*

*Rather than focusing on compliance, that is, did the family cooperate, the essence of the **Safety Assessment and Management System – SAMS** will be what changes have occurred and have the safety threats been eliminated or can the enhanced protective capacities of the caregiver and community and family supports control the threats without outside intervention.*

If you are CPS staff member, you might like to know that

From the intake phone call until the case is closed in on-going CPS, the CPS Model will consist of four assessments and three possible plans that are incorporated. This appears like a significant amount of work; however it is one less assessment than what is currently being completed and involves less documentation as well. Several of the assessments and plans are only completed if required. The assessments are integrated from the first phone call to closure. See CPS Staff Notes for more detail.

If you are part of the provider community who works along with CPS you might like to know that

*When CPS asks your agency to be part of a **protection plan** or an **in home safety plan** you will be told specifically what the safety threat (present or impending danger) is and what aspect of the safety threat your agency is being asked to help control.*

*When the case moves beyond the investigation – which is **the family functioning assessment and safety evaluation** into ongoing services in the DHHR you will know that a **safety plan** has been developed and what your agency is being asked to do to continue to control the safety threat.*

As part of ongoing services a **protective capacity family assessment** and a **child and family case plan** will be developed. The focus of this assessment and plan will be to identify what diminished caregiver protective capacities exist that need to be enhanced (in order to remove or eliminate the safety threats). If your agency is being asked to be involved as a community partner with this family, you can expect to know exactly what CPS is asking you to do with the family and/or its members either in continuing to control the safety threat or in focusing treatment and support on enhancing the diminished caregiver protective capacities.

Every 90 days or more frequently if needed a **child and family case plan review** will occur that will involve the family, community partners and providers and CPS. The purpose of these reviews are to determine whether the safety threats still exist, to what extent the caregiver protective capacities have been enhanced and what if any changes in the **child and family case plan** or the **safety plan** are needed.

What everyone might like to know about the implementation plan ...

As noted earlier the expectation is the CPS re-design – **SAMS** will occur during 2009. Initially, intake and initial assessment (investigation) processes and components will begin to be used. The second phase or ongoing services will begin implementation as soon as the front end implementation occurs. As you know from major organizational changes you have experienced in your agency, implementation does not mean mastery. Mastery of a new system of decision making and delivery occurs over time with focused consultation, supervision and quality improvement. It is for this very reason that we will have in place a strong and ongoing quality assurance component so we can build upon our advances and improve our decision making and planning to continue to insure the safety of the children in the families we serve.

Should you have questions or comments regarding the information in this release, local CPS Supervisors and CSM's will take questions & comments.