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**State of Wisconsin**

**Department of Children and Families  
Division of Safety and Permanence**

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Vicki Tylka, Director  
Marathon County Department of Social Services  
400 E. Thomas St.  
Wausau, WI 54403-6498

Dear Ms. Tylka:

The Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) received the 2008 Marathon County Citizen Review Panel (CRP) annual report and will include this information in the 2009 Federal Children and Family Services Plan. This is the written response required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act that DSP must provide regarding the recommendations of the panel.

***The Marathon County Citizen Review Panel recommends that the DSP continue improvements of eWiSACWIS***

Efforts to improve eWiSACWIS continue on an ongoing basis and are a high priority for the DSP. As you know from previous years, the DSP continues to use the eWiSACWIS Advisory Group, which primarily consists of county representatives, as consultants for improved system usability. We receive and respond to requests from system users regarding system changes and improvements and a large part of the eWiSACWIS maintenance budget is dedicated to addressing these requests. The DSP also uses the PAW/TAW meetings as another mechanism to gather feedback to improve and streamline the automated system. Additionally, the eWiSACWIS program staff work closely with DSP policy staff to assure that any system changes support case practice requirements.

***The Marathon County Citizen Review Panel proposes that the DSP conduct an evaluation of revenues to replace anticipated decrease in IV-E funding***

Federal government policy changes and increased audit activity have resulted in a decrease of close to \$25 million annually of foster care revenue in Wisconsin. The DSP is committed to seeking alternate ways to earn IV-E funding. The Levels of Care licensing proposal, for example, is one way that will assist Wisconsin in earning back some of the lost revenues. Major improvements in IV-E revenue depend on the federal government abolishing the linkage between IV-E and the old AFDC income limits. The Marathon County Citizen Review Panel along with the other state CRPs can advocate with the Wisconsin congressional delegation regarding the need to reform the IV-E program. As a result of the Fostering Connections Act, the federal government is phasing out the AFDC linkage for adoption assistance. The CRPs advocacy could also support phasing out the AFDC linkage for foster care.

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***The Marathon County Citizen Review panel would like the DSP to identify 2-3 statewide issues for CRP's to focus on and provide the State with comprehensive feedback and recommendations***

Several statewide issues the Wisconsin Citizen Review Panels may want to focus on include the following:

1. Developing recommendations and assessment guidelines for the types of cases (e.g. drug exposed infants) that could be handled as an alternative response as DSP works on implementing the Alternative Response program in the budget process.
2. Developing strategies to promote awareness of the dangers of caregivers co-sleeping with infants and small children.
3. Developing recommendations regarding how and what child protective services information should be shared for background checks. This issue becomes particularly important in light of 1) DCF interest in using CPS information in eWiSACWIS for background checks on child care employees and 2) the growing trend for states to create a CPS registry that can be accessed nationally.

The CRPs may want to consider discussing and prioritizing these issues at the Annual Citizen Review Panel meeting on July 30, 2009 at the Wintergreen Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

***The Marathon County Citizen Review Panel requests the onsite presence of the DSP at its quarterly meetings.***

The DSP intends to continue its support of the local panels by dedicating a staff position as the liaison to the panels. This staff person will continue to work directly with the panels through attendance at local meetings and other CRP activities, including the national CRP conference. Due to changing priorities and demands, however, it may not be possible to have DSP staff onsite at each meeting.

***The Marathon County Citizen Review Panel requests that the DSP provide information to all its panel members so they are able to review CPS standards and statutes, DCF policies, and the CAPTA plan.***

It is a priority for the DSP to assure that each member of the CRP is informed and is able to provide feedback on state and federal policies and statutes. The Case Practice Review Specialist will work with the Marathon County CRP to distribute this information.

Please contact me or the Case Practice Review Specialist if you would like additional support or if you need assistance with specific CRP activities. We value our citizen review panels and the important work that we do in partnership to enhance child protective services for Wisconsin's children and families.

Thank you for your timely submission of this annual report, and your continued dedication to the Citizen Review Panel.

Sincerely,

Cyrus A. Behroozi, Administrator  
Division of Safety and Permanence

