

Child Protection Talking Points for MACSSA Members

As the 2016 Minnesota Legislature, the Legislative Task Force on Child Protection, and the Minnesota Department of Human Services consider additional changes to Minnesota's child protection system and review counties performance under the recently passed standards and new rules, MACSSA notes that:

- In comparing county child welfare expenditures in 2015 to 2014, **county spending was \$20 million over and above the additional \$20 million received from the state** meaning counties added property tax revenues. Expenses increased include:
 - Added staffing,
 - Out-of-home placement, and
 - Additional CHIPS activity including court ordered service costs and staff time in court.
- **Counties are NOT yet fully staffed to meet the new standards.** Due to the time it takes to hire staff and shortages of qualified staff it will be take until at least the first half of 2016 before counties are fully staffed.
- **The scarcity of foster homes is making it difficult to meet the placement needs of children both in terms of shelter and longer-term placements. If placement resources are not available when needed, the safety risk for children increases.**
- **As the number of cases screened-in increases, so do the number of out-of-home placements. This fact and the increased rates for out-of-home placement providers are compounding the costs of the increased demand for services.**
- **Changes in policies and rules at the beginning of 2016 have financial implications to counties that were not factored into the funding made available in 2015** and will have a long-term operational and cost implications on the counties. New modifications impacting the counties include:
 - Changes in screening guidelines increase the volume of work to counties.
 - New interpretation of the 24/7 requirements.
 - MACSSA and DHS surveys of counties estimated the need for **approximately 140 additional FTEs and a cost of \$7 to \$11 million to implement 24/7 requirements.**
 - **Counties need clear definitions and expectations from DHS on the 24/7 standard in order to correctly implement the program.**