

**UNION COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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News Release

DSS Receives Report from NC Division of Social Services

June 1, 2015, Monroe, NC – The Union County Department of Human Services Division of Social Services (UCDSS) has received the report from the North Carolina Division of Social Services (Division) follow up review of its Child Welfare Program in November 2014.

The purpose of the follow up review was to examine progress on its response plan to a program review conducted Jan. 6-9, 2014. According to the North Carolina Division of Social Services, UCDSS "...has made very substantial progress in correcting the issues identified in the original review, completing many of the outlined tasks."

The report encompassed seven areas of focus, each having its own *Findings and Observations* and *Recommendations* sections. The seven focus areas of the follow up visit were:

1. Agency Leadership
2. Quality Assurance
3. Child Protective Services Intake
4. Timing and Thoroughness of Child Protective Services Assessments
5. Outcomes of Child Protective Service Assessments
6. Supervision of Frontline Staff
7. Conflict of Interest (COI) Protocols

Some of the key *Findings & Observations* include:

- Since November 2013, UCDSS has experienced a 31percent turnover among workers and supervisors on the 42 member Child Welfare staff.
- Much of the turnover can be attributed to improving the quality of work and re-defining expectations with a mix of voluntary and involuntary departures.
- Child Welfare staff now use an organized, facilitated group staffing process to transfer cases from Assessment to In-Home Services.
- The Human Services Evaluator has established a protocol for reviews and reporting the results to the Program Administrator, Child Welfare Services' Intake Supervisor, and Agency Director.

- A new after-hours (Intake) plan was implemented in April 2014 in which all after-hours reports screened through the CPS Intake screening team with an on call assessor initiating contact when the report warrants it.
- UCDSS requires all Social Workers to meet with their supervisors and review audit findings and suggestions and then provide a written response to the audit tool. The written response is reviewed with the Human Services Evaluator to assure the response meets policy and practice standards.
- A unified supervision tool was developed and implemented.

The overarching next steps according to the State report are the following:

- Union County Division of Social Services updating the current work plan with the goal of sustaining improvements in practice with a timetable for periodic evaluation of the plan.
- The North Carolina Division of Social Services will establish a timetable for a review of data and processes with Union County Division of Social Services, which will include record reviews of the child welfare program areas.
- Expansion of the Quality Assurance staff to additional service areas in child welfare would be a positive step to reinforce and sustain service delivery improvements.
- The North Carolina Division of Social Services will provide technical assistance to address any identified needs as well as to the Union County Division of Social Services Quality Assurance Team.
- The North Carolina Division of Social Services will provide staff to work with UCDSS to develop further plans and implement them as part of the Reaching for Excellence and Accountability in Practice project.

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