IN THIS ISSUE

• Which critical legislation could impact DHS?
• How OSR leads the nation in qualitative reviews
• Why should you lock your car at work?
• And more...

Employee Survey Results - Statistical Infographic inside
LEADERSHIP MESSAGE:
DHS SETS FY17 COURSE

I recently had the opportunity to visit with frontline staff in Richfield. They shared impressive solutions of partnership, positive tools and helpful resources that many of you apply everyday. One example that stood out was a staff member’s determination against discouraging odds to bring DSPD and DCFS together and preserve the adoption of multiple children in one family.

As the conversation turned to the difficulties of supporting another family’s safety and healing because of Medicaid gaps, one team member thoughtfully said, “I just wish they would stop telling us what we can’t do and start with what we can do.”

I am grateful for her courage to share candidly. While some federal and state regulatory barriers will take time to overcome, we can be a solution first organization. If we want lives sustainably improved after DHS engagement, then flexible, innovative practice focused on positive results is essential. I encourage you to challenge mandates or protocols that limit your ability to best help individuals and families thrive in their homes, schools and communities. I believe that a system of care approach to serving families is critical and I am determined to address the gaps you’ve highlighted.

Our DHS-wide Fiscal Year 2017 Strategic Plan has measurable targets to achieve the outcomes you have voiced are important.

The plan uses the Model of Care framework to align actions within each of the Strategic Pillars from all of our Divisions and Offices. You can view the plan here and will soon have access our new online Data Dashboard along with progress updates throughout the year.

Please continue to push forth on what can be done to advance our shared purpose. I’m confident we’ll continue to see lives changed for the better and am grateful for your dedication.

Have a story idea or feedback on DHS Homefront?

Contact the editor, Allie Jurkatis ajurkatis@utah.gov

Ann Williamson
Executive Director
Utah Department of Human Services
MODEL OF CARE IN ACTION: HOMEWORKS

The DHS Model of Care strategic framework is backed by proven principles and philosophies. But without implementation into our work, our strategic focus means little to those we serve. The HomeWorks program is one way the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) has put the Model of Care and our Strategic Pillars of Prevention and Self-Reliance into action.

HomeWorks is an early intervention approach that uses evidence-based strategies to keep families safely together, reducing foster care and trauma often associated with out-of-home placements. Caseworkers focus on bolstering evidence-based protective factors like parental resilience, social supports and knowledge of parenting and child development. Services like substance abuse treatment, relapse prevention support, mental health therapy, skill development and housing and financial resources are also coordinated with the family’s community as an effort to cultivate communal ownership for a child’s wellbeing. Since its launch in 2013 under a Title IV-E Waiver, HomeWorks has served thousands of children and families in their homes. 

GET TO KNOW OSR

The Office of Services Review (OSR) fulfills legislation that requires DHS to annually report how well outcomes are being achieved within the child welfare system. To do this, OSR conducts qualitative case reviews and case process reviews for DCFS and the Division of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS), reviews complaints and fatalities, conducts conflict investigation and reports accurate data. OSR’s qualitative review is one of the best in the country and has helped Utah’s child welfare system become a national leader. Legislators, outside agencies and others across the nation often join OSR’s reviews to better learn their practices.

OSR accomplishments from FY15 include:

- 15,000+ Case entries reviewed each year
- 450 Investigations of child abuse and neglect for children in custody
- 356 Complaints reviewed by Child Protection Ombudsman
- 150 Randomly selected DCFS cases for Qualitative Case Review in FY15
- Overall Child Status score exceeded the standard for the 15th consecutive year

YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS

30 Years
Dirk Murdock
Kimberly Schultz

20 Years
Tracy Bessinger
Kerri Burns
Karen Despain
Eric Jenkins

Harold Jernigan
Randy Jernigan
Dayna Martinsen
Kari Smith
YOUR VOICE HEARD

Our annual employee survey, DHS Voices, started with a simple question: “Are you happy in your job?” Research shows this yes or no question reveals everything from productivity to your likelihood to stay. While nearly 90 percent of you said you are happy, we know it doesn’t come without a commitment to listen and act.

We are grateful to the nearly 1,600 of you who took the 10-minute survey and shared your voice to help guide the Department in actions that will benefit you. We have aligned your feedback with targets in our DHS FY17 Strategic Plan, and will be sharing our progress throughout the year with emails, video and on the new online Data Dashboard.

Here are some of the highlights of your input:

- **70%** Feel they have the tools they need
- **87%** of Employees are happy at work
- **89%** Use best practices and/or evidence-based approaches

**Employees are concerned about**
- Overwhelming workload (64%)
- Work is reactive, not proactive (33%)
- Lack of career growth opportunities (66%)

**Employees are not as concerned about**
- Lack of flexibility in practices/policies (55%)
- Difficulty collaborating with teams/divisions/offices (34%)
- Inadequate training/professional development (32%)

In the News

- [When can you leave kids home alone?](#)
- [Op-ed: Hatch’s ‘Family First’ bill will help keep families intact and successful](#)
- [Out of juvenile correction, poems of fury, loss—and lingering beauty](#)
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE FAMILY FIRST ACT

Recent bipartisan legislation critical to keeping families safely together is gaining momentum at our nation’s capitol. The Family First Prevention Services Act was recently introduced to the U.S. Senate by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and other legislators from Oregon, Iowa and Colorado. The bill is the Senate companion to legislation reported by the House Ways and Means Committee in June and will help combat the opioid addiction crisis while keeping more children safely in their homes, schools and communities. More information is available here.

THE FAMILY FIRST ACT STRENGTHENS FAMILIES AND REDUCES INAPPROPRIATE FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS BY:

- Increasing flexibility to use federal foster care dollars for upfront, evidence-based prevention services
- Supporting family members who unexpectedly assume responsibility for a child by providing important resources
- Encouraging states to replace outdated child placement systems with a more efficient electronic system
- Ending federal reimbursement for inappropriately placing children in non-family settings

Each year DCFS regions partner with the Utah Foster Care Foundation to recognize outstanding foster parents around the state. Foster mothers from several regions are selected in May around Mother’s Day and the following month, five foster dad’s are awarded in conjunction with Father’s Day and the Chalk Art Festival. Congratulations to this year’s winners!
Around DHS

Want to stay up to date with everything going on around DHS?
Follow us on Twitter!

DCFS Director Brent Platt presented Sen. Orrin Hatch with an award on behalf of the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators for championing child, youth and family well-being.

JJS staff gathered to participate in a drum circle, a common team building experience for youth in care. The activity not only brought staff together, but helped them better understand how activities like this can benefit youth.

The Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) held its annual APS Conference in conjunction with Elder Abuse Awareness Month in June. Local advocates, along with legal, health, financial and other partners came together to discuss and learn of new ways of protecting the aging population.

Brent Kelsey, DSAMH deputy director, traveled to Washington D.C. to educate legislators on drug treatments for inmates with substance use disorders as part of Justice Reinvestment Initiative.

DSPD hosted its annual provider conference where organizations and providers gathered to learn of data and updated findings that will improve services for clients and individuals with disabilities.

Safety Counts

With recent vehicle thefts and break ins at our properties, please be cautious about leaving visible valuable items in your vehicles and suggest locking your car doors and windows while parked at work.

August Calendar

Child Support Awareness Month
National Truancy Prevention Month
Aug. 21 — Senior Citizens Day
Aug. 30-Sep. 1 — Transition Academy

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