


California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

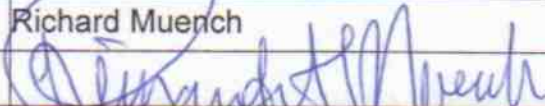
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BOS Approval Date:	Not Applicable for SIP Updates
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Tehama County Child Welfare

System Improvement Plan (SIP) 2009-2012



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SIP Narrative

1. Process for Conducting SIP

a. Team Membership

The SIP development team included the CWS Program Manager, CWS Supervisors, the Department's Staff Services Analyst assigned to CWS (who also functions as the CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Liaison), and the Juvenile Probation Division Director. The team was also informed by feedback from CWS Social Workers, and information gleaned through surveying the following stakeholders:

Required Core Representatives

- CAPC
 - Linda Kenyon Rose, President
- County Children's Trust Fund Commission (CCTF)
 - Tehama County's CAPCC acts as the CCTF Commission. See above.
- County BOS designated agency to administer CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Programs
 - Charlene Reid, Director, Tehama County Department of Social Services
- County Health Department
 - Sydnei Wilby, PHN, Director, Tehama County Health Services Agency, Public Health Division
- County Mental Health Department
 - Ann Houghtby, MFH, Director, Tehama County Health Services Agency, Mental Health Division
- CWS administrators, managers, and social workers (includes CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Liaisons)
 - See above
- Foster Youth
- Juvenile Court Bench Officer
 - Judge Edward King
- Native American Tribes served within the community
 - Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
- Parents/Consumers
 - Ronda Dougherty, CWS Parent Partner/Former Consumer
- Probation administrators, supervisors, and officers
 - Renny Noll, Interim Chief Probation Officer
 - Greg Ulloa, Juvenile Division Director
- PSSF Collaborative
 - Tehama County's CAPCC acts as the PSSF Collaborative. See above.
- Resource families and other caregivers

Recommended Stakeholders

- County Alcohol and Drug Department
 - Susan McVean, Director, Tehama County Health Services Agency, Drug and Alcohol Division
- County Children and Families Commission (Prop. 10 Commission)
 - Denise Snider, Director, First 5 Tehama
- Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Regional Center
 - Far Northern Regional Center
- Domestic Violence Prevention Provider
 - Clara Osborne, Executive Director, Alternatives to Violence
- Education
 - Tehama County Department of Education
- Law enforcement
 - Danny Rabalais, Tehama County Sheriff's Office
- Public Housing Authority
- Regional Training Academy
 - Susan Brooks, Program Director, Northern California Training Academy, UC Davis Extension, University of California
- Representatives from Businesses
- Service Providers
- Workforce Investment Board
 - Kathy Schmitz, Job Training Center, WIA Member
- County Counsel
 - Sylvia Duran, Deputy County Counsel assigned to CWS
- Various Community-Based Organizations and Other Service Providers
 - Triad Family Services
 - DayStar Ranch
 - Other anonymous respondents in these categories

b. Data Sources

Data for the CSA and SIP were gathered from SafeMeasures, CWS Outcomes System Summary Reports and other data compiled and published by UC Berkeley Center for Social Services Research, as well as from other custom reports developed in the county utilizing data from CWS/CMS in Business Objects reports and data from the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) Team Decision making (TDM) database.

c. Decision Making

The CWS Program Manager and CWS Social Worker Supervisors made decisions with the assistance of the Staff Services Analyst and feedback from the CWS Social Workers, using information from the data sources listed above, feedback from stakeholders, the CSA, and results of the PQCR. Decisions were made via a process of the Program Manager developing a draft of the SIP after discussion with supervisors and the Staff Services Analyst about SIP priorities, using feedback from the above-named sources, and then receiving feedback on the draft, and making

requested revisions. Since the Program Manager was in the process of retiring, the Tehama County DSS Deputy Director has been closely involved with this process.

2. Outcomes Identified for Improvement

a. Themes Identified in the CSA and PQCR

The following themes were identified in the CSA:

- *Youth in Care more than 24 months without a Permanent Plan:* Factors which likely influence the length of time a child/youth will be in care longer than 24 months without a permanent plan include a longer median time to reunification and/or an increased rate of failed reunification (re-entry following reunification); delays in implementing concurrent planning, and delays with finalization of adoption. Tehama County rate of exits to permanency for youth in care 24 months or longer has been declining. Court delays, delays in finalizing adoptions, and lack of early concurrent planning likely all contribute to this factor.
- *Placement Stability:* Tehama County has been improving in the area of placement stability, except in the area of children and youth in care for more than 24 months. In this area, performance has been declining. Research shows that the longer a child/youth has been in care without a permanent plan, the more likely this child/youth will suffer multiple placement changes. As Tehama County makes better use of risk of removal and emergency placement TDM's, and places more focus on initial placement with relatives and NREFM's, placement stability should improve.
- *Timely Response:* Tehama County has made good improvements with timely response, which was a goal in the county's last two SIPs. However in the past six months the figures have shown a dramatic downward shift in performance. Some factors which were discussed in the CSA were a change in unit structure, which resulted in a learning curve for three of four supervisors, in the area of monitoring emergency response. As could be reasonably expected after the first few months of learning and adjustment to this change an improvement in timely response was shown. However there has since been a sharp dip in performance over a recent two or three month period. Some factors which may have some bearing on this decreased performance are the assignment of a specific supervisor to oversee the intake screeners and this person needing to get comfortable in this new role; social worker noncompliance regarding recording contacts; and a large hit on the unit outstationed in Corning (south county) when a local task force made a sizeable methamphetamine sweep/bust in May of 2009. Corrective actions are already being put into place to resolve social worker compliance with data entry and the workload issues in the Corning unit.

- *Timely Social Worker Contacts:* Tehama County has demonstrated a decline recently in timeliness of recorded social worker contacts. This could be due to one or more of the following factors: contacts are not recorded in a timely fashion; contact waivers in case plans are not current; social workers are meeting with clients monthly, but not within 30 days of the previous contact; social workers in the Corning outstationed unit are carrying vertical caseloads, and are not able to make mandated monthly contacts due to the timeline pressures of immediate and 10-day responses required for referrals and detention/jurisdictional and dispositional reports. For a period of time, an extra-help social worker was monitoring the non-dependent legal guardian cases, and was not instructed to update case plans, thus contact waivers for those cases were not current. Measures are to correct these issues are already being initiated. They are:
 - a. Supervisors are using Safe Measures more and checking more.
 - b. Many contact were not in compliance due to an oversight on many non-dependent legal guardianship cases not having updated case plans, so the every six-month contact changed to monthly, and we were out of compliance on those.

Tehama County chose Placement Stability as the focus for its PQCR in September 2008. Findings from the PQCR included:

- Barriers to parent/youth engagement with their case plans included parents who were incarcerated, resistance on the part of parents/youth, and a lack of effective strategies being used by social workers.
- Common barriers to timely reunification included high caseloads and multiple case transfers.
- A noted barrier to effective concurrent planning was not having a concurrent plan in place at the beginning/onset of the case.
- An issue identified as contributing to lessened placement stability was that the decisions for placement were made on availability of a bed, rather than appropriateness of fit.
- Another issue identified as related to placement stability was foster parent retention, affected in part by placing children with behavioral challenges with caregivers with little to no experience.

3. Improvement Targets or Goals

a. Outcome Target Goal Selection Process

Tehama County did not use the composite planner for identifying improvement goals, as it was not found to be terribly useful in this size county with a small data set and because training on the planner was not able to be scheduled in time for application of such to the CA-CFSR CSA and SIP processes. Tehama County did use the PQCR findings and other data as mentioned above, as well as feedback from social workers and stakeholders for identifying improvement goals. As a small county, Tehama CWS is able to closely observe practice, and to relate those observations to current research, for example the research on placement stability and participatory case planning reviewed in preparation for the PQCR.

Tehama's improvement goals are centered around the county's data related to the Long Term Care and Placement Stability Composites. Tehama will be focusing on improved rates of reunification and lowered rates of re-entry, based on the belief that optimal permanency plan for children and youth is to return home and to remain home. Correct use of the Structured Decision-making (SDM) tool, including the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA), enhances the participatory case planning process, which research shows leads to better reunification outcomes. Expertise with and use of motivational interviewing helps to remove the barrier of resistance for clients, thus both speeding up the reunification process, and helping to solidify the gains made, which reduces recidivism. Another factor in reducing recidivism is connecting the family to a supportive community to help them to remain drug and alcohol free and to be able to maintain their stability as a family.

Improved use of the TDM process can help in several areas. Improved use of the risk of removal and emergency placement TDMs provide an opportunity to coordinate support around a family unit so the child(ren) can remain home, or if placement is necessary TDM provides a forum for engaging the family in the identification of a placement with a person who is familiar to the child(ren) and ideally in their own neighborhood and school district, such as a relative or non-related extended family member, which research shows can better support reunification, placement stability, and permanency for the child/youth should reunification fail.

Appropriate implementation of concurrent planning early on in a case can both support reunification efforts and support placement stability and permanence for children/youth should reunification fail.

The outcome/goal selection process revolved around Tehama's concerns regarding the numbers of children/youth in care 24 months or longer without a permanent plan. With the premise that the best permanent plan for a child/youth is to remain or return home safely, and that the next best permanent plan is permanency with a relative or other person close to the child, ideally in his or her own neighborhood, and school district, and with siblings, the improvement goals selected focus on

placement at home and/or reunification without re-entry and placement with relatives or NREFMs who can support reunification while still offering permanency. All of this is better accomplished through improved client engagement, participatory case planning, concurrent planning, and the TDM process.

4. Summary of Current Research Available

UC Davis prepared two research papers which relate to Tehama County's chosen improvement goals.

A Literature Review of Placement Stability in Child Welfare Services: Issues, Concerns, Outcomes, and Future Directions was prepared by the Northern California Training Academy, University of California, Davis, Extension, the Center for Human Services, in August of 2008. The basic findings of this research paper are:

- It is important to minimize the number of changes children experience.
- Some key components for improving practices for increasing the probability for placement stability include:
 - Strong tracking and case planning to ensure that "foster drift" is avoided to achieve permanence
 - Early intervention
 - Increasing the availability and use of placement choice
 - It is essential that children are moved because of their identified needs, not because of unavailability of placements
 - Increasing multi-agency support
 - There is strong and conclusive evidence that providing support to foster parents (and kin) reduces the likelihood that a placement disruption will occur.

Participatory Planning in Child Welfare Services Literature Review: Selected Models, Components and Research Findings, was prepared by The University of California, Davis, Extension, the Center for Human Services, in July of 2008.

This paper concludes that while there is not conclusive evidence that participatory models such as Family Group Conferencing and Wraparound services are effective in improving outcomes for children and families in the long term, there is encouraging and positive evidence. "The research generated thus far illustrates the effectiveness of the participatory planning model, mainly involving families in the decision making process for contributing to some positive outcomes for families and children." Findings are that families "...exhibit greater commitment to receiving services and feel more empowered when they are involved in contributing to decisions that affect them and their families."

TDM is one of the four core strategies of the Family-to-Family initiative, which is an evidence-based model, which has demonstrated success in the areas of out-of-home

placement prevention, better identification of needs and placement matching when out-of-home care is necessary, enhancing placement stability and permanence, and improved reunification and/or exits from care outcomes.

5. Summary of Current Activities in Place or Partially Implemented

The restructure of the units, which took place in late 2008, has positively affected the flow of cases through the units. Each unit is now a vertical unit, and all members of each unit are aware of and gain knowledge of the case as it enters the unit, so that the case transition is smooth. The ongoing social worker is informed of her/his assignment to a case at the time it is assigned to the court social worker. This way the ongoing social worker can also be involved in the development of the case plan with the client. The members of each unit team with one another on the cases, and can provide coverage for one another.

All of the social workers and all of the supervisors have been trained in motivational interviewing, which evidence shows has a positive influence in early engagement of and motivation of clients. The three court social workers in the Red Bluff office and two of the social workers in the Corning office have been assigned motivational interviewing coaches to enhance their learning of and performance in this model.

The Northern California Training Academy has assigned two trained facilitators to do case readings regarding the effective use of SDM and to then plan and conduct trainings in SDM in Tehama County. They began with the use of the FSNA tool, which is directly related to improved participatory case planning.

The CWS supervisors and program manager and California State Adoptions – Chico District Office supervisors provided a joint training to CWS and State Adoptions social workers on concurrent planning. A concurrent planning policy and procedure is being updated, and additional training on more effective use of concurrent planning is being planned.

Tehama County is one of four northern counties, along with Lake, Butte, and Trinity, who were successfully funded for the PSSF Regional Partnership Grant on methamphetamine prevention. Through this grant Tehama County CWS has had the benefit of having an on-site alcohol and other drug (AOD) counselor, who is able to provide early engagement, assessment and case management for clients with drug and alcohol issues. In addition, Tehama CWS has benefited from enhanced training from the Northern Regional Training Academy on topics such as with motivational interviewing and SDM.

Tehama County has had an active Dependency Drug Court (DDC) since 2007 and has found that our clients with Dependency Drug Court involvement have had a high rate of success with continued sobriety and successful reunification.

Tehama County CWS has had a mental health counselor from the Tehama County Health Services Agency, Mental Health Division (TCHSA – Mental Health) co-located two

afternoons each week at Child Welfare for about a year. This counselor provides assessments of foster children, which has included assessment for Medi-Cal eligibility for mental health services. Co-location has fostered increased and enhanced communication between TCHSA - Mental Health and CWS social workers, with the result of better assessments and timelier services to children.

Tehama County CWS has worked hard to ensure consistent use of TDMs, especially for risk of removal and emergency placements, in order to enhance the children's chances of either remaining safely at home or being placed in a familiar environment.

6. New Activities

Increased use of motivational interviewing and participatory case planning activities will enhance the chances of early engagement for the clients, and of better outcomes for reunification. This will help diminish the barriers which were noted in our PQCR of client resistance, and it will also likely increase the likelihood of positive expectations of the clients on the part of the social workers.

Improved use of the SDM process, such as appropriate use of the FSNA tool in relation to participatory case planning, will enable the social workers to work with the clients towards the development of more meaningful case plans, better tailored to the client, and developed to build on a client's strengths to work with their issues.

Case plan development in a team setting will enable all parties who work with the client to be in clear communication with the client and with each other as to expectations, progress or lack thereof, and continuing issues which need to be addressed.

Being able to refer clients to an established aftercare program, developed especially for child welfare families leaving the system, will allow for increased support for the families, and some continuing accountability after they leave the child welfare system, thus decreasing the chances for recidivism and re-entry.

Tehama CWS's parent partner program has been successful in terms of providing support for and a reality check to the clients, however it has not moved beyond these activities. Involving past and current clients, including parents and youth, in an advisory, training and orientation capacity will both enhance the awareness of the social workers in meeting the needs of the clients, and will change the image the community has of the CWS system as a threatening, unforgiving system, to one comprised of people who are willing to learn from the clients, and are willing to work with and be a support to the clients.

7. Link between Activities and Outcome Improvement

Tehama's goals and strategies are geared towards better understanding and engagement of clients which in turn will translate into better outcomes for children and families. Activities

directed at teaming with clients to understand their strengths and needs, valuing their participation in decision-making, and working with them to develop personalized case plans that will address their specific needs will in turn result in faster reunification while still providing adequate support to stabilize the family and prevent re-entry to the CWS system.

Being open to learning from clients and using these lessons to improve service provision and casework will improve practice in all areas of Child Welfare. Additionally, efforts to engage family members and non-related extended family members in placement of the children if out-of-home care is necessary provides for greater stability and increased well-being of the children. Similarly, support to foster care providers, whether they be foster homes, relatives, or NREFMs and effective concurrent planning are important pieces of ensuring positive outcomes for the children in the care of Child Welfare.

8. Integration between CSA, PQCR, and CWS/Probation Planning Process and CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Plan

Information gathered in the CSA, PQCR and CWS/Probation planning process have all indicated needs in terms of better case planning with clients, more comprehensive and better integrated services, which meet the clients' needs and extend beyond the time of case management by CWS/Probation. Funding from the CAPIT, CBCAP, and PSSF funding streams to community-based organizations support these goals in the following ways:

Through CAPIT Tehama County has chosen to fund home-based services for CWS clients to be provided through the local Family Resource Centers, run by Northern Valley Catholic Social Services (NVCSS runs two of the three FRCs in the county's FRC network, the third is not equipped to provide these types of services). The home visitors provide support and training services for families who need to improve their functioning in order to safely parent their children. This supports the belief that the best permanent plan and placement stability for the child is to safely remain with, or return to, their family.

Through CBCAP Tehama County has chosen to fund home-based services for families at risk of child welfare involvement, also to be provided through the local Family Resource Centers, run by Northern Valley Catholic Social Services (again, NVCSS runs two of the three FRCs in the county's FRC network, the third is not equipped to provide these types of services). The intent of these services is to decrease the numbers of children who need to come into care, and increase the numbers of healthy families who can safely parent their children without CWS intervention.

Through PSSF funding, Tehama County supports the only local domestic violence agency, Alternatives to Violence, which provides a customized program for CWS clients and also participates in Differential Response as appropriate. Further, the PSSF funds will support an Adoption Support Program to be run for the first time in many years by CWS itself, and an aftercare program at the Red Bluff Family Resource Center. There is a similar aftercare

program in the Corning Family Resource Center, which is funded through the Cowell Foundation, which is also geared to working with former CWS families.

All of these programs chosen to be funded with the CBCAP, CAPIT and PSSF funds support families remaining together if possible, which is the ultimate permanent plan for children. With these services, the hope is that there will be reduced incidences of entry into the CWS system, with resultant lessened need for placement, and/ or reduced re-entry. When a child must move to an alternate permanent plan, the added support for adoptive and kinship families helps to ensure that the placement remains stable and secure.

Attachments:

- CSA Executive Summary
- PQCR Executive Summary

Attachment 1: CSA Executive Summary

The County Self-Assessment (CSA) provided an opportunity for Tehama County to evaluate its performance on the CA-CFSR outcomes for children and families in context of data related to overall demographic and community-level information available for the county. While interesting to review there were few surprises in either the CA-CFSR or the community-level data.

Nevertheless, after reviewing the outcome measures and related data CWS tentatively decided to focus on children in long-term foster care in the upcoming SIP, since this population has the most disturbing data related to permanency, in terms of adoption, exits to permanency and placement stability. This would include a focus on the following measures:

- Adoption within 12 months (17 Months in Care) - Children in foster care for 17 continuous months who were then adopted within 12 months. (Measure C2.3)
- Exits to Permanency (24 Months in Care) - Children discharged to a permanent home (reunification with parents or primary caretakers, discharge to guardianship, or discharge to adoption) prior to turning 18, who had been in foster care for 24 continuous months or longer. (Measure C3.1)
- In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipated/Age 18) - Children in foster care for 3 years or longer who were then either discharged to emancipation or turned 18 (aka "aged-out") while still in foster care. (Measure C3.3)
- Placement Stability (At Least 24 Months in Care) - Children with two or fewer placements who have been in foster care for 24 months or more. (Measure C4.3)
- Youth Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood – Children aging-out of foster care with one or more of the following - a high school diploma; enrollment in College/Higher Education;

received Independent Living Skills Program (ILP) Services; completed vocational training; employed or have other means of support. (Measure 8A)

In addition, during a recent consultation with CDSS Tehama CWS was informed that the CDSS would likely be encouraging the county to continue to look at re-entry following reunification on the 2009-2012 SIP. If this is the case it would then be important for CWS to also look at measure C1.2 Median Time to Reunification as it may be supposed that faster reunification may mean that the family was not able to adequately make the appropriate changes in the time frame of the case and may then be more likely to become re-involved with CWS. While it is important for child well-being to reunify as quickly as possible, it is equally important that the issues which brought them into care be properly addressed so that future involvement (i.e. re-entry) be prevented.

The intent will be to put into place simple, straightforward, doable practice changes and strategies that would simultaneously make an impact on multiple focus outcomes. Tehama found that it's last SIP was too varied and lofty and thus difficult to accomplish. This method of choosing to use strategies that would affect complimentary outcomes will be a more reasonable and appropriate way to accomplish the SIP goals.

Attachment 2: PQCR Executive Summary

The Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) was an occasion for Tehama County CWS and Juvenile Probation to evaluate its practice strengths and weaknesses in qualitative format, the results of which can then be considered in compliment to the CA-CFSR outcome data. The PQCR took place between September 22-25, 2008.

The PQCR revealed that Child Welfare had strengths in making efforts to maintain educational permanency and continuity as well as general permanency planning, including such participatory case planning practices as Team Decision-making (TDM). However, it was also found that Child Welfare faces challenges in the area of placing infants in relative and/or NREFM homes rather than pre-adoptive homes that then may struggle to support reunification efforts with biologically related caregivers. On a systemic level it was noted that Child Welfare needs to better ensure that when cases are transferred that the existing social worker introduces the incoming social worker to the child/youth, foster family, education personnel, etc, as relevant to the case.

Child Welfare also faces resource issues, including transportation for children/youth and mental and behavioral health services. It was also found that while many foster children/youth receive medications there are few opportunities for caregivers to attend training on how to effectively work with these children/youth in a relationship-based way. Additionally, it was noted that addressing the characteristics of the foster home and effectively implementing "goodness of fit" practices in placement is an area for improvement.

Throughout the PQCR training needs were identified including how to use TDM and SDM appropriately and effectively; relative placement and relative location/identification including such practices as Family Finding; concurrent planning; Ways to effectively involve parents: provide training that provide more of a “hands-on” approach allowing social workers to help parents overcome resistance and noncompliance with case plan activities; making effective case transfers between social workers and other important service providers so that case management activities are not delayed; and information and training on evidence based substance abuse treatment models. Tehama CWS would likely benefit from technical assistance in several of these areas as well as in the area of the Education Passport in CWS/CMS.

Other general recommendations received and/or identified for Child Welfare during the PQCR process included the social worker visiting the youth more often to assist in developing adequate relationships, however avoid visits at the child’s school because visits at this type of location can be embarrassing for youth; when cases are transferred, having the social worker and/or probation worker meet the family with previous worker so that families do not feel that they are being passed around and to enhance more information sharing between workers; smoothing transitions for children placed in the receiving home by utilizing icebreakers and possibly having the foster family come meet the child and engage in an enjoyable activity; assisting parents/family with transportation to visit youth in juvenile hall or group homes; offer conflict mediation services to foster parents and the youth in their care to improve placement stability; clarify the purpose and procedures of the Team Decision-making process with all child welfare partners, including both the primary goals of the process and strategies for follow-through on identified activities and revisit the participants who are included in the Team Decision-making process, including those who receive information regarding TDM goals and/or outcomes; and utilize a standardized assessment protocol and tool(s) for all children/youth who enter the foster care system.

For Juvenile Probation the PQCR highlighted good support and communication as a practice strength. Probation officers were mentioned as being supportive of the youth in their case plans and for maintaining open communication. This consistent and open communication was viewed as contributing to better support for youth.

Juvenile Probation, however, does face difficulty in involving families in case planning. Both the parent who had a youth involved in probation and the probation officer mentioned that the parent and/or youth was not involved in the case planning. It appears that more support and assistance is needed for involving parents and youth in the case planning process in order to contribute to placement stability. Specifically, it was identified that Juvenile Probation would benefit from training on placement engagement and support for adolescent girls with the goal of reducing AWOLs (absent without leave or permission/run a-ways).

Additionally, Juvenile Probation faces resource challenges, namely lack of transportation. Consistent and reliable transportation is needed to better support biological caregivers in visiting youth, especially youth placed far away in group homes, which was mentioned commonly.

Through the PQCR general recommendations for improvements were made including having youth who return home receive “post-reunification” family services/more resources and support are needed for youth and families transitioning home; improving permanency and long-term placements for youth who age-out of the Juvenile Probation system, including identifying resources to assist Juvenile Probation in this effort.

Part I. CWS/Probation

a. CWS/Probation Narrative

- ***Basis for decisions made regarding outcomes selected for SIP specific to CWS/Probation***

Each of the selected themes relate to outcomes in need of improvement for Tehama County. The Program Manager and CWS supervisors made the decision to focus on improvement in the area of youth in care more than 24 months without a permanent plan, for the following reasons. The first is this is an important outcome which is declining in performance in Tehama County. It is also in line with the intended outcomes of the State PIP, which focuses to a large degree on permanence for CWS children and youth. In addition, many of the chosen strategies to achieve permanence for children are also related to improved performance in placement stability, timely response, and timely social worker contacts.

For example, Strategies 1.1 (Motivational Interviewing); 1.2 (Correct and consistent use of the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) SDM tool, in correlation with the development of the client’s case plan); and 1.3 (Use a Teaming Model in Participatory Case Planning), all relate to timely social worker visits, as they are all related to the development of the client’s case plan, which must be completed within a specific time frame, and to the monitoring of the case plan progress, which also has time regulations. To frame the goals in this way adds depth and quality to the social worker visit with the client, rather than just focusing on the contact being timely. Tehama County is committed to improving performance on Outcome Measure 2C Timely Social Worker Contacts, but will focus on this without making it a separate SIP goal.

Similarly, the above-mentioned strategies, which enhance the client’s ability to reunify, also foster the youth’s placement stability, as the most permanent and most stable placement for the child is successful reunification with their family. In addition, placement stability is enhanced by the appropriate and timely use of the Team Decision Making (TDM) process, as described in Strategy 3.1; and Concurrent Planning, Strategy 3.2. Enhanced placement stability also leads to more timely permanence for children, and is linked to enhanced performance with timely social worker contacts. Working hand in hand with the TDM process is the goal of early identification of relatives (Strategy 3.1), which research shows fosters placement stability, as well as reunification efforts, and enhanced permanence for children should reunification fail.

Also directly related to the goal of permanency for children is a desired decrease in re-entry. Improved access to supportive aftercare case management and services (Strategy 2.1) will help

families to remain stable after leaving the supportive and directive CWS system, which helps many families stay on track. This also relates to the State PIP goals of early intervention and prevention.

Regarding Outcome Measure 2B Timely Response, Tehama County has made the decision to more closely monitor this measure without adding it as a SIP goal. Having had Timely Response as a SIP goal for the last two rounds of the SIP, Tehama County has learned what is necessary to improve on this goal. Indeed, there has been marked improvement in the past on this goal, and only a very recent decline, which is in part due to some unusual circumstances, which are currently being addressed. One goal of Tehama County is to step up activities towards improved monitoring of compliance, which includes timely recording of contacts in CWS/CMS which will be addressed with all performance outcomes.

- ***Discussion of findings from the PQCR and CSA highlighting the connection to the SIP***

Outcomes selected for the Tehama County 2009-2012 SIP were related to the themes identified in the CSA and PQCR. These included the following:

- Youth in Care more than 24 months without a Permanent Plan
- Placement Stability
- Timely Response
- Timely Social Worker Contacts

- ***Description of the connection between the SIP and the PIP***

On August 15, 2008, the CWDA adopted the following PIP priorities. Listed after each PIP priority is the Tehama County SIP strategy which addresses that priority.

Participatory Case Planning

Strategies 1.1 (Motivational Interviewing), 1.2 (Correct and consistent use of the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) SDM tool), 1.3 (Use a Teaming Model in Participatory Case Planning) and 1.4 (Document effective use of team approach to case planning in CWS/CMS contacts and in the court report) all support this PIP priority.

Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support; Kinship Support

This was not directly addressed in Tehama County's 2009-2012 SIP, however Strategy 3.1 does address placement with relatives and the use of the TDM process. In the TDM process, strengths and challenges of the children/youth are addressed, and a plan is put into place to address the challenges through the enhancement of the strengths. This process does afford better support of the resource family, who is ideally a relative or NREFM of the child/youth. Strategy 3.2 (Concurrent Planning) addresses resource family support in 3.2.4 (Develop a plan to provide ongoing support and training for all Concurrent Planning Resource Families).

Education and Mental Health Services

This was not directly addressed in Tehama County's 2009-2012 SIP; however at this time Tehama County has a good plan in place to address mental health needs of children. Through participation in the PSSF Regional Partnership Grant on Meth Prevention all social workers will be trained in conducting a developmental assessment on all children entering care, via use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Also through participation in this grant, CWS has been able to have a full-time Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) counselor on-site. Thus far, this counselor has been working with the adults involved in CWS cases with alcohol and/or drug dependency issues, but this coming year there will be more emphasis on meeting the mental health and other needs of the children as well. In addition, for about 18 months, CWS has been fortunate to have a co-located Mental Health counselor, who conducts initial mental health assessments on Tehama County CWS children and youth, qualifies the child or youth for Medi-Cal eligibility for Mental Health services, and facilitates referrals to services. Thus, Tehama County did not find it necessary to add this into the SIP goals.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Tehama County implemented Differential Response in 2005. At this time, it is an established practice for Tehama County CWS. Tehama County has a well-established protocol and procedure for Path I responses, and an established relationship with our Family Resource Centers, which provide a comprehensive and effective home visiting program, as well as other FRC services for families. It would be beneficial for Tehama County to look more closely at how the use of the Path II response, to the enhancement of prevention and early intervention. However, because the Differential Response program is well-established, it was not chosen as a goal for the 2009-2012 SIP.

- ***Process used to develop outcome goals, strategies, rationales, and milestones***

This was discussed in the SIP Narrative.

- ***Address/discuss all outcomes identified as an area needing improvement in the CSA***

This was discussed in the SIP Narrative.

- ***Address/discuss outcomes which are performing below statewide standards, primarily outcomes for which quarterly data reports reflect a negative data trend***

This was discussed in the SIP Narrative, and is outlined in the SIP Matrix, under the heading Outcome/Systemic Factor and County's Current Performance.

