



May 23, 2013

Nettie Anderson-Burrs, Chairperson
Citizens Review Board for Children
Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215

Dear Ms. Anderson-Burrs:

As you are aware, the Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) prepares an annual report providing details on the reviews done by local boards. The Social Services Administration (SSA) utilizes the report, in concert with the quarterly reports, to assess adherence to current policies, identify gaps in policy and provide feedback to LDSS management. I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know of the policy work being done that addresses recommendations resulting from reviews completed during SFY12.

The importance of placing children in their home jurisdiction, adequate service planning to youth aging out of our system and ensuring concurrent planning was highlighted throughout the year. DHR's Place Matters initiative (in place since 2007) has increased the numbers of children placed in family settings and within their home jurisdictions. DHR continues to work closely with the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to ensure adequate services are in place as youth exit foster care, especially for youth who require supportive services from DDA or DHMH. We developed an MOU and work plan with DDA to clarify roles and responsibilities which has resulted in more collaboration and better service planning between our agencies. DHR developed an initiative, "Ready by 21", which focuses on preparing youth in 5 life domains to ensure that they are self sufficient when they exit the foster care system. During SFY13, DHR made comprehensive revisions to the policy and practice for concurrent permanency planning and provided training to local department staff.

I appreciate the work done by the CRBC and the vital information that is provided by the case reviews. SSA will continue to utilize the feedback provided by the CRBC to inform practice and policy development. I am confident that the work we are doing at the central and local level will have a positive impact on cases reviewed by your volunteers. I look forward to our continued collaboration as we strive to meet the goals of safety, permanence and wellbeing for every youth in our system.

Sincerely,

Carnitra D. White
Executive Director
Social Services Administration