

Assembly Bill No. 363

CHAPTER 296

An act to amend Section 10601.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

[Approved by Governor September 22, 2005. Filed with
Secretary of State September 22, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 363, Chu. Child and Family Service Review System.

Under existing law, the State Department of Social Services oversees the administration of county public social services, including child welfare services. Existing law requires the department to establish, by April 1, 2003, the California Child and Family Service Review System, in order to review, commencing January 1, 2004, all county child welfare systems. Existing law requires the department, beginning with the 2002–03 fiscal year, to report to the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees and appropriate legislative policy committees regarding the department's progress relating to federal and state child and family service reviews.

This bill would revise the department's duty to report the above information to instead require the department to provide information to the designated legislative committees. The bill would add to the information required to be provided, to include findings and recommendations for child welfare system improvements identified in county self-assessments and county system improvement plans, including common barriers that inhibit system improvements, and recommendations to overcome the barriers.

This bill would, to the extent that funds are appropriated in the annual Budget Act to enable counties to improve their performance on child welfare service outcome indicators provided for under existing law, require the department, in consultation with counties, to establish a process for allocating those funds to counties, and would require a county, to the extent possible, to use those funds in a manner designed to access additional federal, state, and local funds.

This bill would also require the department to include information regarding the allocation and use of the funds as part of its reporting requirement under existing law, as discussed above.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 10601.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

10601.2. (a) The State Department of Social Services shall establish, by April 1, 2003, the California Child and Family Service Review System,

in order to review all county child welfare systems. These reviews shall cover child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation, family support, and independent living.

(b) Child and family service reviews shall maximize compliance with the federal regulations for the receipt of money from Subtitle E (commencing with Section 470) of Title IV of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 670 and following) and ensure compliance with state plan requirements set forth in Subtitle B (commencing with Section 421) of Title IV of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 621 and following).

(c) (1) By October 1, 2002, the California Health and Human Services Agency shall convene a workgroup comprised of representatives of the Judicial Council, the State Department of Social Services, the State Department of Health Services, the State Department of Mental Health, the State Department of Education, the Department of Child Support Services, the State Department of Justice, any other state departments or agencies the California Health and Human Services Agency deems necessary, the County Welfare Directors Association, the California State Association of Counties, the Chief Probation Officers of California, the California Youth Connection, and representatives of California tribes, interested child advocacy organizations, researchers, and foster parent organizations. The workgroup shall establish a workplan by which child and family service reviews shall be conducted pursuant to this section, including a process for qualitative peer reviews of case information.

(2) At a minimum, in establishing the workplan, the workgroup shall consider any existing federal program improvement plans entered into by the state pursuant to federal regulations, the outcome indicators to be measured, compliance thresholds for each indicator, timelines for implementation, county review cycles, uniform processes, procedures and review instruments to be used, a corrective action process, and any funding or staffing increases needed to implement the requirements of this section. The agency shall broadly consider collaboration with all entities to allow the adequate exchange of information and coordination of efforts to improve outcomes for foster youth and families.

(d) (1) The California Child and Family Service Review System outcome indicators shall be consistent with the federal child and family service review measures and standards for child and family outcomes and system factors authorized by Subtitle B (commencing with Section 421) and Subtitle E (commencing with Section 470) of Title IV of the federal Social Security Act and the regulations adopted pursuant to those provisions (Parts 1355 to 1357, inclusive, of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations).

(2) During the first review cycle pursuant to this section, each county shall be reviewed according to the outcome indicators established for the California Child and Family Service Review System.

(3) For subsequent reviews, the workgroup shall consider whether to establish additional outcome indicators that support the federal outcomes

and any program improvement plan, and promote good health, mental health, behavioral, educational, and other relevant outcomes for children and families in California's child welfare services system.

(e) The State Department of Social Services shall identify and promote the replication of best practices in child welfare service delivery to achieve the measurable outcomes established pursuant to subdivision (d).

(f) The State Department of Social Services shall provide information to the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees and appropriate legislative policy committees annually, beginning with the 2002–03 fiscal year, on all of the following:

(1) The department's progress in planning for the federal child and family service review to be conducted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and, upon completion of the federal review, the findings of that review, the state's response to the findings, and the details of any program improvement plan entered into by the state.

(2) The department's progress in implementing the California child and family service reviews, including, but not limited to, the timelines for implementation, the process to be used, and any funding or staffing increases needed at the state or local level to implement the requirements of this section.

(3) The findings and recommendations for child welfare system improvements identified in county self-assessments and county system improvement plans, including information on common statutory, regulatory, or fiscal barriers identified as inhibiting system improvements, any recommendations to overcome those barriers, and, as applicable, information regarding the allocation and use of the moneys provided to counties pursuant to subdivision (i).

(g) Effective April 1, 2003, the existing county compliance review system shall be suspended to provide to the State Department of Social Services sufficient lead time to provide training and technical assistance to counties for the preparation necessary to transition to the new child and family service review system.

(h) Beginning January 1, 2004, the department shall commence individual child and family service reviews of California counties. County child welfare systems that do not meet the established compliance thresholds for the outcome measures that are reviewed shall receive technical assistance from teams made up of state and peer-county administrators to assist with implementing best practices to improve their performance and make progress toward meeting established levels of compliance.

(i) (1) To the extent that funds are appropriated in the annual Budget Act to enable counties to implement approaches to improving their performance on the outcome indicators under this section, the department, in consultation with counties, shall establish a process for allocating the funds to counties.

(2) The allocation process shall take into account, at a minimum, the extent to which the proposed funding would be used for activities that are

reasonably expected to help the county make progress toward the outcome indicators established pursuant to this section, and the extent to which county funding for the Child Abuse, Prevention and Treatment program is aligned with the outcome indicators.

(3) To the extent possible, a county shall use funds allocated pursuant to this subdivision in a manner that enables the county to access additional federal, state, and local funds from other available sources. However, a county's ability to receive additional matching funds from these sources shall not be a determining factor in the allocation process established pursuant to this subdivision.

(4) The department shall provide information to the appropriate committees of the Legislature on the process established pursuant to this subdivision for allocating funds to counties.