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DCYF Takes Action in Response to Child Advocate's Report

DCYF Director Piccola announces preliminary action plan to address concerns raised by the report

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (April 6, 2016) – Today, DCYF Director Trista Piccola announced four immediate actions at the Department of Children, Youth & Families in response to the Office of the Child Advocate's recent report.

These action items will focus on filling frontline vacancies throughout the Department, evaluating leadership in the Child Protective Services unit, strengthening the Child Protective Services Unit, and improving assessments on the safety and risk of children.

"DCYF is committed to protecting our state's most vulnerable children," said Dr. Trista Piccola, Director of DCYF. "Injuries to a child or the loss of a child are tragedies that our staff work to avoid day in and day out."

There has been a great deal of progress at the agency, from reductions in the use of congregate care, including group homes, and the purchase of new home-based and community services to assist children and families, to the implementation of stronger financial controls. However, there are still critical challenges that need to be addressed immediately.

The needs highlighted in the preliminary action plan were identified by Director Piccola, who came to Rhode Island in February. These action steps also address some of the recommendations made in a recent report from the Office of the Child Advocate. Director Piccola plans to release a full response to the Child Advocate's report by May 31st.

"I have held several meetings with the Child Advocate, both before and after the release of her report," said Piccola. "I look forward to continuing to build our relationship so we can address the needs of the children and families in our care."

The immediate action plan can be viewed on DCYF's website at www.dcyf.ri.gov.

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