

**California's Outcomes and Accountability System
System Improvement Plan Update 2008**

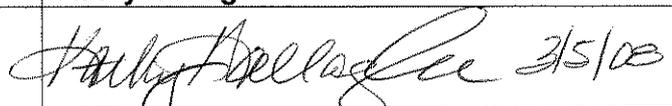
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| County: | Santa Barbara |
| Responsible County Child Welfare Agency: | Department of Social Services |
| Period of Plan: | March 2007 thru March 2010 |
| Period of Outcomes Data: | CWS Outcomes System Summary for Santa Barbara County – January 2008 |
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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

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California's Outcomes and Accountability System
(COAS)

[Formerly known as the California Child and Family Services Review]

System Improvement Plan Update

Santa Barbara County
March 2008

Kathy M. Gallagher, Director
Department of Social Services

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Executive Summary

The Santa Barbara County 2007 System Improvement Plan (SIP) for Child Welfare Services (CWS) and the Probation Department created a roadmap to improve outcomes for children and families in our service systems. The journey over the past year has been fast paced and exciting, as new programs and service supports were implemented in accordance with the SIP. Completing the SIP Update provided an opportunity to reflect on the journey and view our accomplishments as a whole. Reflecting on the initiatives completed, those that are in progress, and our creativity in achieving a similar outcome within current resources is a testament to a plan that adequately reflected the mission of our departments – to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of those children served by CWS and Probation.

The 2007 System Improvement Plan proposed some good operational strategies and a few ambitious strategic projects. CWS and Probation are pleased to report that many of our strategic goals were completed and/or are now moving into an oversight status to address some of the finer details. Operational strategies accomplished include Strengthening and Improving Partnerships to Enhance Service Provision (Improvement Goal 1) through new Memorandums of Understanding (1.1) and contracts; Expansion of Services/Supports to the Family Preservation Program (2.1) by utilizing new funding resources and contracted services; developing a Parent/Child Visitation Program (4.2); and Expanding Supports to Relative and Non-related Extended Family Member Caregivers (5.1). In addition and after many years of planning, CWS and Probation finally implemented SB 163 (6.2) and have already expanded the program to additional youth and their families. One area of significant need for both CWS and Probation youth centered upon preparing youth for self-sufficiency and providing them aftercare services, which is now supported through the implementation of the Transitional Housing Placement Program (7.1) and the Transitional Housing Placement Program-Plus (7.2). It is with great pride and a sense of accomplishment that CWS and Probation can report the completion of the plan's most ambitious project with the opening of La Morada (7.3) in November of 2007 (a year and a half ahead of schedule) as a Transitional Housing Placement Program-Plus facility.

In addition to our SIP accomplishments, the Outcome Measure Data continues to show promise that our strategies for improvement over the last few years are truly making a difference. The Outcome Measures on the initial SIP have been changed to reflect the Transitional Data Indicators for the purposes of this SIP Update and a brief analysis of the new measures has been provided for contextual relevancy. After having experienced a rather marked rise from 2002 through 2005 in both Entries to Care and In Care Rates, there appears to be a leveling off in the number of children entering foster care and a slight decline in the total number of children placed in foster care. This change is reflective of the implementation of the Family Preservation Program and speaks to the need for continued expansion of the program, as supported by Strategy 2.1. Other measures that support current successful program practices include meeting the national standard for Adoptions within 24 months (C2.1), the new measure for Median Time to Adoption (C2.2) and Adoption Completions within 12 months of being legally free (C2.5). County CWS has also shown significant improvement by exceeding the State compliance measures for Referral Investigation Responses (2B) and are slightly higher than the State average for Timely Social Worker Visits (2C).

While our successes are celebrated and promoted as promising practices, there continues to be additional areas of high priority needs as identified in the 2007 SIP and supported by the January 2008 Outcomes System Summary Data. Recurrence of Maltreatment (S1.1) continues to be a challenging measure for Santa Barbara County. Recent data reports show a fairly consistent pattern of progress until about Spring of each year, marked by a period of rapid decline. This pattern clearly bears more analysis, but it is encouraging that about the time Structured Decision Making (SDM) was implemented the period of decline was not as drastic as in previous years. Thus, utilization and close monitoring of SDM and Safe Measures tools may continue to support improved performance on this measure. In addition, County CWS has experienced an ongoing decline in the Reunification Composite Measures. While there are many theories contributing to this decline, timeliness of treatment remains a major barrier towards reunification efforts particularly for substance abuse and mental health services. Given pending fiscal challenges in the years ahead, CWS and Probation working with our community partners may be forced to get even more creative than in previous years with the limited resources.

Given our relatively small overall population, it is recognized that slight variances in actual numbers will have a significant impact on performance generating volatility in the success or failure of the measures overall. This highlights the importance and continued need for data diligence and further analysis of potential data trends as we prepare for the Peer Quality Case Reviews (PQCR) in September 2008. While there remains work to be done in order to achieve the remaining strategies and further analysis to determine if our plan is truly achieving intended outcomes, CWS and Probation are genuinely pleased with the accomplishments to date and move forward into the second year of our SIP with renewed energy and commitment to increasing safety, enhancing stability, and improving well-being for the children and families served by our departments.

System Improvement Plan (SIP) - Update 2008

[All updates to the SIP are noted in blue]

Measure: SAFETY – S1.1 No recurrence of Maltreatment

Formerly the Outcome Factor: SAFETY - 1A. Recurrence of Maltreatment, 2A: Recurrence of abuse or neglect in homes where children were not removed.

County's Current Performance: 1A. Our current rate is 9.9%¹ compared to the State average of 8.0% and the Federal standard of 6.1%. (4/1/05-3/31/06)
Our rate at the time of the previous SIP was 13.1% (7/1/02-12/31/02)

2A. Our current rate is 14% (4/1/04-3/31/05) State data from this time period is not currently available. There is no Federal standard for this measure. Our rate at the time of the previous SIP was 11.5% (10/1/01-9/30/02)

SIP Update 2008:

S1.1 Our current rate is **91.0%**² compared to the State average of **92.5%** and the National standard of **94.6%**. (7/1/06-6/30/07)

The beneficial direction of this measure is an increase in the percentage with No Recurrence of Maltreatment. The County is slowly improving our overall progress on this measure, yet continues to have rates slightly under the State average and Federal standard. The most recent data report shows the County declining in performance from a previous period of progress. It has been interesting to note a fairly regular period of improvement followed by a decline during the Spring of each year. County CWS typically considers Spring to be one of our busiest times of year. While there are several working theories about factors contributing to our increased workload during the Spring, it appears that as CWS gets busier our performance on related measures declines. However, it was promising to see that the period of decline did not drop as low as in previous years and was followed by a rise to 92.5%, which is our highest level of performance on the measure to date. Our small populations are readily reflected in the data's volatility on this measure. Had the outcome been different for 21 children, the County would have achieved the National Standard. Thus, further analysis continues to be warranted in order to determine potential patterns contributing to the recurrence of maltreatment.

Although the County has improved in the area of recurrence of maltreatment, the rate of recurrence continues to be higher than the State average. Moreover, the rate of subsequent substantiated referrals for those children who remained in their homes after an initial substantiated or inconclusive referral has increased during this cycle. These two safety measures continue to be of high priority for Santa Barbara County Child Welfare Services (CWS) and the County has initiated several strategies to address these outcomes. In March of 2006, CWS implemented the Structured Decision-Making Assessment tool (SDM) to strengthen safety and risk assessments, as well as improve consistency and accuracy in decisions related to safety and risk. Supervisors, managers and social workers have access to the Safe Measures program to monitor staff's performance and responsibilities, including monitoring the consistent use of the tool. Another strategy employed was to provide Family Preservation Services countywide. The Assessments and Investigations units in each region were assigned a social worker dedicated to a Family Preservation caseload. In order to address drug-exposed infants earlier and more consistently, CWS collaborated with local hospitals and public health clinics on developing a protocol for referrals regarding babies born with positive toxicology. The 2006 Self-Assessment process identified resources, including financial supports, housing, childcare, and substance abuse treatment programs are limited, as is knowledge of available resources, supports, and services. A common concern communicated in the Self-Assessment process was the lack of knowledge regarding child development and general life management skills in the client population. Systemic issues thought to inhibit child safety tended to focus heavily on the rising CWS workload. Social workers have multiple demands on their time, which results in a decreased amount of face to face time spent with children and families.

¹ All statistics are from the CWS Outcome and Accountability County Data Report of October 2006 (<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports>)

² All SIP Update – March 2008 statistics are from the CWS Outcomes System Summary Report Jan 2008 (http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare)

Improvement Goal 1: Strengthen and improve the utilization of partnerships to enhance service provision to children and families

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| <p>Strategy 1.1 Expand the use of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: Ongoing initiative as new MOUs are being established and existing MOUs are being expanded to maximize service delivery.</p> | | <p>Strategy Rationale: Maximizing the established relationships with partners and removing potential barriers through expanded/new MOUs will enhance service delivery to children and families.</p> | | | |
| Milestones | 1.1.1 Review existing MOUs to address confidentiality, communication, and service provision | Timeframes | Summer 2007 | Assigned to | CWS Team County Counsel |
| | 1.1.2 Identify additional MOUs needed | | Summer 2007 | | CWS Regional Meetings Management Meetings CWS Team |
| | 1.1.3 Disseminate information on existing MOUs and needed MOUs via an excel spreadsheet at CWS regional meetings | | Fall 2007 | | CWS Team |
| | 1.1.4 Establish needed MOUs | | September 2008 Winter 2008 | | CWS County Counsel Identified Community Based Organization (CBOs) or county agency |
| | 1.1.5 Maintain a current listing of existing MOUs | | December 2008 June 2008 | | CWS |
| | 1.1.6 Evaluate effectiveness of MOUs considering input from the following: Staff feedback Team Decision Making (TDM) attendees Number of services available for families CBOs/Partner agencies | | 2009 | | CWS staff Clients MOU partner agencies |

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| <p>Strategy 1.2: Utilize established MOUs to more creatively maximize resources that meet specific family needs</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: This continues to be an operational strategy, particularly given fiscal constraints.</p> | | <p>Strategy Rationale: Community resources are limited requiring creativity to ensure services address the strengths and needs of individual families</p> | | | | |
| Milestones | 1.2.1. Identify needed resources | Timeframes | June 2007 | Ongoing | Assigned to | CWS |
| | 1.2.2. Develop needed resources | | Ongoing | CWS Probation County Agencies CBOs and Community Partners | | |
| | 1.2.3 Knowing available resources and partnerships, match families' needs to resources that meet those needs | | Ongoing | CWS Probation | | |
| | 1.2.4 Train CWS staff on developing individualized case plans that are written with the family | | January 2008 | Summer 2008 | | CWS Training Supervisors CWS Supervisors |
| | 1.2.4.5 Operationalize the 60 day case plan | | | | | |
| | 1.2.5 Identify stipends, scholarships, etc. to assist in funding services to families | | Ongoing | CWS Probation County Agencies CBOs | | |

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| <p>Strategy 1.3: Develop Resource Lists</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: Utilize existing resource directories like 211 Helpline, Foster Youth Services, etc.</p> | | <p>Strategy Rationale: Reduce barriers to locating and time spent researching needed resources by having a listing available to social workers and families.</p> | | | |
| Milestones | 1.3.1 Inventory existing resources – KIDS Network, CAPC, CWS, First 5, Human Services Commission, FSA (211) Helpline | Timeframes | December 2007 | Assigned to | KIDS Network CWS staff CBOs |

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| 1.3.2 | Develop a list for SW's and a user friendly, personalized list for the family. Multiple lists should be developed in the languages of the populations served. | | June 2008 | | KIDS Network CWS Staff CBOs |
| 1.3.2.5 | Provide SWs with a listing of current contracted vendors and the services provided by those vendors to maximize use of existing resources. | | | | |
| 1.3.3 | List will include resources by region and category | | December 2008 | | KIDS Network |
| 1.3.4 | Compile lists in variety of mediums with CWS mission statement on it. – card, list, handout, electronic, website | | December 2008 | | KIDS Network CWS |
| 1.3.5 | Distribute and use | | December 2008 | | CWS Probation KIDS Network Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) |

Improvement Goal 2: Expand the Family Preservation Program

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| <p>Strategy 2.1: Expand the Family Preservation Program to provide additional services to more families</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: Absent of securing additional funds to expand staff positions within the program, services to families in this program are presently being expanded through new contracts/MOUs for in-home education/mentoring services. Moreover, analysis of the program has proven successful in deterring foster care entries.</p> | | <p>Strategy Rationale The Family Preservation program has been highly effective in preventing removal of children from their families and in ameliorating conditions requiring further CWS intervention that may have otherwise led to a subsequent substantiated referral. Expanding the program will lead to fewer children being removed, resulting in less children entering the foster care system.</p> | | | |
| Milestones | 2.1.1 Identify a permanent funding source to expand services and staff positions. | Timeline | December 2007 | Ongoing | Assistance CWS Management Team Community Partners |

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| 2.1.2 | Examine the existing program for gaps in services and identify three to implement. Suggestions for such services are: establishing a mentoring program for biological families, establish homemakers, in home or center based parenting coaching, increase availability of residential substance abuse programs, expand Hope services to biological families, utilize interns in the program. | -December 2007 | Ongoing | CWS Management Team CBOs Workgroup |
| 2.1.3 | Identify funding sources to enhance program services | -December 2008 | Ongoing | CWS Management Team CBOs |
| 2.1.4 | Implement expansion of the program and monitor progress. | -December 2009 | Ongoing | CWS CBOs |

Improvement Goal 3: Expand early intervention/Differential Response to a larger population of the community

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| Strategy 3.1: Enhance Differential Response (DR) services to families in Santa Barbara County | | Strategy Rationale: Additional early intervention services are needed to support the demand and deter children and families from becoming involved in the Child Welfare System | | | |
| SIP Update 2008: Prevention services have been expanded through the work of existing Family Resource Centers and changes to current MOUs allowing more referrals to the DR program. | | | | | |
| Milestones | 3.1.1 A taskforce has been established to enhance Differential Response services by gathering detailed community input regarding needs for the service, the current service delivery model, and ideas for future service delivery | Timeframes | Ongoing | Assigned to | KIDS Network CWS CAPC DR Taskforce First 5 Human Services Commission |
| | 3.1.2 Taskforce will write an operational plan at the end of the project period | | May 2007 | | Taskforce |

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| 3.1.3 | Develop resources to operationalize the taskforce plan, considering specific community needs | May 2008 | KIDS Network CAPC CWS First 5 Human Services Commission |
| 3.1.4 | Implement and/or expand recommendations of the taskforce | June 2008 | KIDS Network CAPC CWS CBOs |

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| <p><i>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for additional alcohol and drug (AOD) services especially in the West and North County regions. Expansion of these services should target residential programs that provide family focused services. Such expansion will require maximizing collaborations between CWS, AOD services, and the community based treatment providers to secure funding and creatively maximize existing resources to meet the growing needs of our communities. • Service providers need advanced training in trauma treatment to effectively serve the high risk/high needs CWS/Probation population. • Supportive services that teach basic life skills and child development to parents are needed to reduce risk to children in our community. |
| <p><i>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our County Self-Assessment identified community training needs regarding Mandated Reporting and the parameters under which CWS operates to assist in holding the community accountable for service delivery systems to at risk children and families. • There continues to be a need for increased training and information regarding available services and programs. • The State could provide information and technical assistance on AOD screening instruments. |
| <p><i>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADMHS and AOD services play a critical role in the expansion of additional resources for our substance abusing/affected children and families. • The Methamphetamine Prevention Network has been established which includes a specific taskforce charged with maximizing current treatment resources with a long term goal of resource expansions. • Community organizations play a vital role in educating the community regarding impacts of substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, and poverty on children/families and then linking them to corresponding resources to assist families in overcoming these challenges. |
| <p><i>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State could expand or remove the regulatory 12-month eligibility on Family Maintenance Services, as many families struggle with multiple, complex issues that require supportive services and oversight for longer than one year or periodic services over a longer time period. |
| <p><i>Additional Notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups identified the need for a continuum of prevention, early intervention, and relevant after care supports to mitigate safety concerns for children. Developing such a continuum of care depends on future funding sources, as presently there are limited resources for prevention, intervention, and after care supports. |

Measure: PERMANENCY – C1.3 Reunification within 12 months (entry cohort)

Formerly the Outcome Factor: PERMANENCY AND STABILITY- 3A Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Reunification

County's Current Performance: 3A. Our current rate is 26.6%, compared to the State average of 38%. (4/1/04-3/31/05) Our rate at the time of the previous SIP (10/01/01-9/30/02) was 39.8%. There is no Federal standard for this measure.

SIP Update 2008:

C1.3 Our current rate is 27.0%, compared to the State average of 41.1% (1/01/06-6/30/06). The National standard for this measure is 48.4%.

In Santa Barbara County, the percentage of children who reunify within 12 months has decreased, rather than increased. CWS is conscious that this shift is the result of 3 children, which may in effect have been one family. Yet, the rate of first entries into foster care has doubled in Santa Barbara County from the previous self-assessment, reflecting a 94% change in the total number and rate of children in foster care. Such a drastic rise in children entering foster care taxes not only the available foster care resources, but those resources available to families to support reunification. Over the past two years, there has been a significant rise in the number of families, served by CWS, who require substance abuse treatment without a corresponding rise in additional treatment services. CWS clients are generally referred to the Provider Network, which is a list of community service providers operating under a MOU with ADMHS in order to meet the alcohol, drug, and mental health needs of our clients. In-patient services are available; however, demand far exceeds supply and waiting lists create additional delays in service delivery, impacting reunification outcomes for children. Moreover, there is considerable disparity in the availability of these services in northern Santa Barbara County, where there appears to be the greatest need as evidenced by the rise in referrals and caseloads in the Santa Maria region. Real solutions to timely and successful reunification must include increased treatment capacity and appropriate treatment programs that are accessible. In addition, recovery time frames do not align with the legal time frames for Family Reunification creating additional challenges for these families. It is hoped that the implementation of Structured Decision Making may assist in identifying family strengths and needs earlier in the intervention process. CWS has also secured CWSOIP funds to pilot a Substance Abuse Recovery Advocate program that is designed to engage parents and youth in drug treatment services and the recovery community from the onset of CWS intervention.

Santa Barbara County continues to face significant challenges in achieving this measure as indicated above. Although the most recent quarterly report shows a slight upturn in progress from the previous reports, treatment capacity and timeliness continues to be a significant barrier to achieving positive outcomes towards reunification requiring ongoing collaboration and creativity in supporting families.

Improvement Goal 4: Increase support to biological families to strengthen their skills, establish relationships in the community, and increase their capacity to provide adequate care and parenting for their children on a permanent basis.

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| <p>Strategy 4.1 Establish multi-purpose community Family Resource Centers that will provide a family focused, integrated service delivery system.</p> <p>SIP Update 2008 Modification: Integrate more abuse prevention, CWS services, and aftercare supports into the existing Family Resource Centers</p> | | <p>Strategy Rationale: A community-based resource center would be a method of providing family centered, integrated services that are conducive to building strong, safe parent-child relationships. The center would serve as a central point of contact and connections for families and adopted or emancipated youth who are no longer receiving formal CWS, as well as for the general public needing information regarding resources and services.</p> | | | | |
| Milestones | 4.1.1 | Identify the partners who will be participants in the collaborative. | Timeframes | December 2007 | Assigned to | KIDS Network CAPC First 5 CWS Probation CBOs |
| | 4.1.2 | Explore and identify the vision, goals, and services for the center | | June 2008 | | The Collaborative |
| | 4.1.3 | Assess the functioning and possibility for expansion of the current Family Resource Centers or the Workforce Resource Centers to incorporate the identified concepts | | December 2008 | | The Collaborative |
| | 4.1.4 | SIP Update 2008 Modification: Pursue and obtain funding for the expansion of services in existing Resource Centers project. | | June 2009 | | The Collaborative |
| | 4.1.5 | SIP Update 2008 Modification: Identify and secure a location for the Resource Center | | June 2009 | | The Collaborative |
| | 4.1.6 | Establish a system of procedures and accountability for all participating agencies through contracts/MOUs | | December 2009 | | The Collaborative |
| | 4.1.7 | SIP Update 2008 Modification: Open the Family Resource Center and Commence monitoring services delivery for successes and challenges. | | December 2009 | | The Collaborative |

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| <p>Strategy 4.2 Develop a parent/child visitation program that enhances the parental role with the children and supports utilization of the skills learned in treatment services.</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: <u>Completed</u> with contract initiated on February 1, 2008. Will be maintained and evaluated through ongoing monitoring.</p> | | <p>Strategy Rationale: Parent/child visitation programs that afford parents the opportunity to provide for their children's needs and utilize newly learned skills in a supervised setting are more conducive to building strong parent-child relationships. Assessing parental readiness to safely care for the children while continuing to participate in other services may support earlier reunification.</p> | | | | |
| Milestones | 4.2.1 | Research parent/child visitation programs | Timeframes | September 2007 | Assigned to | CWS CBOs |
| | 4.2.2 | Identify a program for implementation | | June 2008 December 2007 | | CWS CBOs Workgroup |
| | 4.2.3 | Collaborate with treatment providers on the new visitation program to ensure skills learned in parenting classes and/or treatment services are utilized during parent/child visits. | | December 2008 Ongoing | | CWS CBOs Workgroup |
| | 4.2.4 | Train Case Aides, Social Workers, Community Partners, Court personnel to support implementation in the new program philosophy and strategies | | June 2009 Ongoing | | CWS Training Supervisors |
| | 4.2.5 | Implement new parent/child visitation program | | June 2009 February 2008 | | CWS CBOs |
| | 4.2.6 | Monitor program efficacy | | Ongoing | | CWS |

Measure: PERMANENCY– C4.1 Placement Stability

Formerly the Outcome Factor: PERMANENCY AND STABILITY– 3B Multiple Foster Care Placements

County's Current Performance: 3B Our current rate is 83.5% compared to the State average of 84.7% (4/01/05-3/31/06). The Federal standard is 86.7% Our rate at the time of the previous SIP was 85.6% (10/1/02-9/30/03)

C4.1 Our current rate is 77.9% compared to the State average of 82.4% (7/01/06-6/30/07). The National standard is 86.0%.

The beneficial direction of the measure is now an increase. The most recent data report shows the County declining in performance from a previous period of progress. It has been interesting to note a fairly regular period of improvement followed by a decline during the Spring of each year. County CWS typically considers Spring to be one of our busiest times of year. While there are several working theories about factors contributing to our increased workload during the Spring, it appears that as CWS gets busier our performance on related measures declines. This emerging trend will continue to be investigated along with business practices, like placement in a 30 day shelter care home, that contribute to multiple placement moves within the first year of entering care.

The beneficial direction of this measure is a decrease. To increase the stability of the County's children in care, CWS obtained funds in 2005 and 2006 for placement assistance staff, referred to as Home Connection Finders. This service sought relatives and connections for children in out of home care with the goal of providing relative placements, long-term connections, and permanency for the children. The project was very successful, which is reflected by the fact that at the time of the 2006 Self-Assessment, 43% of Santa Barbara County's children were in relative or non-related extended family placements. Currently, SB County has obtained CWSOIP funds for the 2006/2007 fiscal year to continue the project. With the rising number of children in care, comes the continuing challenge of maintaining sufficient placement resources to meet the needs of our children. SB County CWS hired a Foster Parent recruiter in 2006 in order to expand our placement resources. Additionally, the Hope program was expanded to be able to provide supportive, therapeutic services to all substitute care providers 24/7 and to provide additional stability to youth in placement. Currently, SB County CWS is collaborating with ADMHS, Probation, and CBOs to implement SB 163 in order to reduce the overall number of youth in group home care, and return them to their communities.

Improvement Goal 5: Increase support to relative/non-relative extended family members to increase their skills and ability to provide more stability and permanency for children placed in their care.

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| <p>Strategy 5.1 Increase the number of relative and non-relative extended family homes and the support they receive to care for children.</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: <u>Completed</u> and will be maintained through ongoing monitoring.</p> | | <p>Strategy Rationale: Children placed with relatives or non-relative extended family members are more likely to reunify with their parents than those placed in licensed foster homes, and they are more likely to experience stable placements. Relative and non-relative extended family caregivers are currently not receiving standardized orientations, assessments, or training, all of which will enhance their abilities to care for the children placed with them. They would be better informed and would receive services based on their identified needs. The HOPE program has been very effective in coaching relative/non-relative extended family members, resulting in less placement moves for children. The foster care newsletter will keep the relative/non-relative extended family caregivers informed of resources and services available to them. Additionally, the re-establishment of the Foster Parent Association will serve as another source of support to caretakers.</p> | | | |
| Milestones | 5.1.1 | Increase referrals to the Hope Program for children in relative/non-relative extended family homes. | April 2007 | Assigned to | CWS Probation |
| | 5.1.2 | Include relative/ non-relative extended family caregivers on the mailing list for the foster care newsletter. | June 2007 | | Foster Parent Recruiter Foster Parent Association |
| | 5.1.3 | Establish a stable, permanent funding source for the Home Connection finders and have their responsibilities expanded to include completing the relative placement paperwork. | July 2008 | | CWS Probation CBOs |
| | 5.1.4 | Provide standardized orientations, assessments of needs and strengths, and training and supports for relative/non-relative extended family homes | May 2008 | | CWS Probation Licensing CBOs |
| | | Timeframes | | | |

Improvement Goal 6: Increase support for children in Permanency Planning to promote permanency and stability in placement.

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| <p>Strategy 6.1 Create more in county placements for older children, especially teenagers.</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: Recruitment efforts have not targeted particular populations of youth given the need to expand caregivers for all children.</p> | <p>Strategy Rationale Children who are placed close to their connections are more likely to experience placement stability.</p> |
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| Milestones | 6.1.1 | Recruit for and identify in-county placement homes that will serve teenagers. | Timeframes | November-2007 | Fall 2008 | Assigned to | Foster Parent Recruiter |
| | 6.1.2 | Evaluate the use of Specialized Care Increments to care providers accepting teenagers for placement. | | December-2007 | Ongoing | | CWS Staff CWS Supervisors |
| | 6.1.3 | Increase focus on permanency for teens, using the Home Connection Finders as part of the identification process of relatives or connections who would be interested in providing permanency for teens. | | July 2008 | | | CWS Staff HCF Staff |
| | 6.1.4 | Increase focus on adoption and guardianship as a permanent plan for youth post .26 hearing | | Ongoing | | | CWS Permanency Unit |

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| <p>Strategy 6.2 Establish the SB 163 WrapAround program in Santa Barbara County</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: <u>Completed</u> and program expansions initiated. Will move to ongoing program monitoring.</p> | <p>Strategy Rationale: The SB 163 program will provide funding for services targeted to return and maintain youth in group home care to family like settings in their communities, either with family, non-related extended family members, or foster care.</p> |
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| Milestones | 6.2.1 | Develop Policy and Procedures for Implementation of SB 163 in Santa Barbara County | Timeline | April 2007 | Assigned to | CWS Probation Alcohol Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) |
| | 6.2.2 | Establish a tracking mechanism for youth involved in SB 163 to include fiscal resources and progress updates | | April 2007 | | CWS |
| | 6.2.3 | Participate in the State Wraparound/SB 163 Implementation Training | | Spring 2007 | | California Department of Social Services (CDSS) UC Davis CWS Probation ADMHS Community Partners/Contractor |

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| | 6.2.4 Initiate enrollment of youth into the SB 163 Wraparound Program | May 2007 | Wraparound Implementation Team (WIT) |
| | 6.2.5 Monitor and make adjustments to policy and procedures as needed to ensure a smooth implementation/operation of the program | Ongoing | WIT CWS Probation ADMHS Casa Pacifica |

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| <p><i>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with the Juvenile Court, examine the use of continuances to ensure timeliness for reunification/permanency for children in foster care. • Inherent conflict between legal mandates/regulations and the reality of overcoming complex familial issues. |
| <p><i>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State sponsored training regarding SB 163 Wraparound • Educating caregivers regarding permanency options for youth. • Providing caregivers with comprehensive training regarding the complex behavioral/emotional issues of traumatized children and where to seek supportive services when needed. |
| <p><i>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource gaps in the area of residential drug treatment programs, intensive in-home services, and more effective visitation arrangements were identified during the Self-Assessment process. |
| <p><i>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inherent conflict between regulatory reunification timelines and the substance abuse recovery timelines. |
| <p><i>Additional Notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions made during the Self Assessment process included conducting targeted recruitment of caregivers for specific populations of youth, additional support for caregivers, such as assistance with child care, more in-home services, and interagency case management teams. |

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| <p>Measure: WELL-BEING 8A</p> <p>Formerly the Outcome Factor: WELL-BEING 8A</p> |
| <p>County's Current Performance: There is limited data collected to know specifically for Santa Barbara County how well youth are doing in transitioning to adulthood. Based on the limited data, County CWS and Probation appear to be performing well, yet as the research indicates, foster youth emancipating from care do not fare well in health,</p> |

education, employment and housing arenas. Therefore, improving well-being for youth while in care and as they transition to self-sufficiency remains a high priority for Santa Barbara County. Anecdotally, CWS has learned of 6 youth who emancipated in 2006 that have now become homeless reinforcing the need to develop programs that enhance preparation for living independently and after care support for this population of youth.

Improvement Goal 7: Develop Transitional and Emancipating Youth Housing

Strategy 7.1 Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP)

Strategy Rationale: Utilizing THPP for youth preparing for emancipation will assist them in gaining independence needed to succeed upon termination of dependency/wardship.

SIP Update 2008: THPP available to youth in the North County region, expansion options for west and south county are currently being explored.

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| Milestones | 7.1.1 | State approval on THPP Plan | Timeframes | July 1, 2007 if approved | Assigned to | CDSS |
| | 7.1.2 | Develop referral process for entry to THPP | | July 2007 | | CWS Family Care Network (FCN) |
| | 7.1.3 | Educate CWS and Probation staff on the program and referral process | | August 2007 | | CWS ILP Program Coordinator CWS Training Supervisors |
| | 7.1.4 | Implement THPP | | September 2007 | | CWS Probation |
| | 7.1.5 | Develop data system to collect outcome measures for youth in THPP – Pending direction from the State | | December 2007 Pending | | CWS |
| | 7.1.6 | Expansion countywide by Family Care Network (FCN) | | January 2008 – Lompoc Region Summer 2008 | | FCN |
| | 7.1.7 | County to look at host family/other models if property in the Santa Barbara region is not available | | June 2008 | | CWS |

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| <p>Strategy 7.2 Transitional Housing Placement-Plus (THP-Plus)</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: <u>Completed</u> with services available in the south county region. Expansion to north county planned for Spring 2008</p> | | | <p>Strategy Rationale: Youth transitioning into adulthood after having resided in foster care historically have difficulty securing affordable housing. This program would assist youth with housing needs once they have emancipated from the juvenile court system.</p> | | | |
| Milestones | 7.2.1 | State approval of THP – Plus plan | Timeframes | July 2007 | Assigned to | CDSS |
| | 7.2.2 | Secure THP-Plus beds through Family Care Network | | January 2008 | | CWS Probation Family Care Network (FCN) |
| | 7.2.3 | Develop Host Families for emancipated youth | | February 2008 | | CWS |
| | 7.2.4 | Develop referral process for entry to THPP | | July 2007 | | CWS Probation Family Care Network |
| | 7.2.5 | Educate CWS and Probation staff on the program and referral process | | August 2007 | | |
| | 7.2.6 | Develop data system to collect outcome measures | | Three months from implementation | | |

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| <p>Strategy 7.3 Develop the LaMorada facility into a transitional or emancipated youth housing program</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: <u>Completed</u> as a THPP – Plus facility that opened as an 8 bed residence in November 2007.</p> | | | <p>Strategy Rationale: Transitional housing is needed in our communities to help support the youth emancipating from the foster care system to ensure that they do not end up as part of our homeless population.</p> | | | |
| Milestones | 7.3.1 | Decide on the design of housing program – THPP or THP-Plus and the feasibility of developing the program at the LaMorada facility | Timeframes | July 2007 | Assigned to | CWS Probation |
| | 7.3.2 | Secure funding needed to renovate the facility and sustain the housing program | | March-2008 2007 | | CWS Probation Community Partners serving and/or interested in the transition aged youth population |
| | 7.3.3 | Locate a provider to operate the housing program | | May-2008 July 2007 | | CWS |

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| 7.3.4 | Develop criteria for entrance which includes a screening and assessment of support services | September-2008- 2007 | CWS Probation Interested Community Partners |
| 7.3.5 | Educate youth, Social Workers, Probation officers, Independent Living Program (ILP) involved parties, and community members dealing with foster care youth | February 2009 September – November 2007 | CWS Probation |
| 7.3.6 | Housing program should include aftercare supports like an aftercare case manager, family planning, mental health services, and education regarding utilizing Medi-Cal and health care services | March-2009 Ongoing | CWS Probation Interested Community Partners CBOs |
| 7.3.7 | Open the LaMorada Facility | May 2009 November 2007 | CWS Probation Interested Community Partners CBOs |
| 7.3.8 | Develop a system for tracking and monitoring outcomes for youth in the program | August 2009 June 2008 | CWS Probation |
| 7.3.9 | Monitor program/facility operations | Ongoing | CWS Probation |

Improvement Goal 8: Perform a comprehensive assessment of emancipation preparedness beginning at age 15 ½ - 16

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| <p>Strategy 8.1 Develop and Implement the use of a comprehensive assessment tool to identify strengths and needs of youth preparing for emancipation.</p> | <p>Strategy Rationale: A comprehensive assessment of a youth’s preparedness for emancipation will assist staff in developing TILPs that target the individual needs of the youth, allow service providers to work with the youth on those needs, and better support the youth in preparing for emancipation.</p> |
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| Milestones | 8.1.1 | Identify what assessments are currently being done by all parties serving this population | Timeframes | August 2007 | July 2008 | Assigned to | CWS Probation ILP Contractor Foster Youth Services |
| | 8.1.2 | Explore, identify, and evaluate additional assessment tools | | October 2007 | September 2008 | | CWS Probation ILP Contractor Foster Youth Services |
| | 8.1.3 | Establish a protocol for who will conduct the assessment, when, how often, and for what purpose to include an assessment schedule. | | December 2007 | December 2008 | | CWS Probation ILP Contractor Foster Youth Services |
| | 8.1.3 | Select assessment tool for implementation | | February 2008 | January 2009 | | CWS Probation ILP Contractor Foster Youth Services |
| | 8.1.5 | Train identified assessors in the use of the assessment tool | | April 2008 | February 2009 | | CWS ILP Program Coordinator CWS Training Supervisors |
| | 8.1.6 | Educate all staff and youth regarding the tool | | April 2008 | February 2009 | | CWS ILP Program Coordinator CWS Training Supervisors ILP Contractor Foster Youth Services |
| | 8.1.7 | Implement use of the tool | | May 2008 | March 2009 | | CWS Probation |
| | 8.1.8 | Involve youth in the assessment process so they know the purpose of the assessment and are informed of the results to assist with goal development | | May 2008 | March 2009 | | CWS Probation |
| | 8.1.9 | Utilize information from the assessment tool to write a targeted TILP | | May 2008 | Ongoing March 2009 - Ongoing | | CWS Probation |

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| | 8.1.10 Link the youth to resources that will assist them with areas of identified need and support areas of identified strengths | May 2008 – Ongoing March 2009 - Ongoing | CWS Probation ILP Contractor Foster Youth Services |
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Improvement Goal 9: Enhance Aftercare Support to Emancipated Youth

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| Strategy 9.1 Develop a Comprehensive Aftercare Support System for Emancipating Youth | | Strategy Rationale: Youth emancipating from foster care need a continuing support system (like the families of youth in the general population) to assist them with knowledge and resources to enhance their successful transition into adulthood. | | |
| Milestones | 9.1.1 Research and secure financial resources to support an aftercare program | Timeframes | September-2007 2008 | CWS Probation Interested Community Partners |
| | 9.1.2 Invite interested parties to develop, create, and implement an after care program (Youth Aftercare Support Workgroup) | | October-2007 2008 | CWS |
| | 9.1.3 Establish Aftercare Coordinators | | January-2008 2009 | CWS Youth Aftercare Support Workgroup |
| | 9.1.4 Identify key support people in each region from service delivery systems to serve as the main contact for aftercare coordinators and the youth | | February-2008 2009 | Youth Aftercare Support Workgroup |
| | 9.1.5 Develop a youth peer support network | | February-2008 2009 | Youth Aftercare Support Workgroup ILP Youth |
| | 9.1.6 Link youth and aftercare coordinators to the 211 information line, ILP website, and contact phone numbers for vital resources | | February-2008 2009 | Youth Aftercare Support Workgroup |
| | 9.1.7 Implement use of the STEP ILP | | March-2008 June 2007 | CWS Probation |

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| 9.1.8 | Educate staff, CBOs, youth on what supports are available for aftercare | March 2008 | 2009 | ILP Program Coordinator CWS Training Supervisors Aftercare Coordinator |
| 9.1.9 | Implement aftercare program countywide | January 2008 | 2009 | Youth Aftercare Support Workgroup |
| 9.1.10 | Expand aftercare program to individual regions | January 2009 | Summer 2009 | Youth Aftercare Support Workgroup |

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| <p><i>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections for youth often cease when the funding provided by CWS and Probation ceases upon emancipation. |
| <p><i>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating care providers on their role in preparing emancipating youth for adulthood. • Educating staff regarding tools, resources, and supports developed with the new programs. |
| <p><i>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with Family Care Network’s 5 year Santa Barbara County expansion plan to provide THPP and THP-Plus services to youth • Continued development of collaborations with community members, agencies, and service organizations that are interested in serving the transitioned age youth population. • New collaborations with ADMHS targeting the Transitioned Age Youth (TAY) programs funded by Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) monies. |
| <p><i>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</i></p> <p>None</p> |
| <p><i>Additional Notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWS and Probation acknowledge the need to finish the initial work started with the transitioned age youth population to ensure that they are well prepared for adulthood and have the necessary supports as they test the waters of independence to support them in becoming self-sufficient adults. |

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| <p>Systemic Factor: Medical and Dental Care in Child Welfare Services</p> |
| <p>County’s Current Performance: County CWS has found it challenging to meet our children’s medical and dental needs, due to the shortage of medical and dental providers willing to accept the County’s contracted Medi-Cal program, Health Initiative, or provide treatment to children in care.</p> |

Improvement Goal 10: Expand resources available to foster youth for medical and dental care to ensure receipt of timely CHDP medical and dental exams

Strategy 10.1 Collaborate with the Children's Health Initiative, Medical/Dental Providers, and other entities pursuing the expansion of services to Medi-Cal eligible youth.

Strategy Rationale: There are not enough Medi-Cal providers to meet the demands of the community resulting in appointments not being scheduled for many months.

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| Milestones | 10.1.1 | Identify collaboratives focused on meeting the medical and dental needs of youth in Santa Barbara County. | Timeframes | September 2007 | Assigned to | CWS DART Oral Health Initiative Health Linkages Children's Health Initiative |
| | 10.1.2 | Participate in a collaborative to share the challenges facing foster youth, to learn of new resources, and to partner in resource development | | December 2007 | | CWS DART Oral Health Initiative Health Linkages Children's Health Initiative |
| | 10.1.3 | Explore and identify creative ways to expand medical/dental services to foster youth | | January 2008 June 2008 | | KIDS Network Oral Health Initiative Health Linkages Children's Health Initiative |
| | 10.1.3.5 | Evaluate the unmet need by following denials for service or delayed time frames for securing appointments | | | | |
| | 10.1.4 | Educate all staff on the resources/strategies available to support youth in having their medical/dental needs met | | June 2008 | | Community Collaboratives |
| | 10.1.4.5 | Provide all caregivers with an updated listing of Medi-Cal providers | | | | |
| | 10.1.5 | Implement new strategies | | July December 2008 | | CWS Staff |
| | 10.1.6 | Monitor progress | | Ongoing | | CWS |

Systemic Factor: Data Management in Child Welfare Services / Case Management System (CWS/CMS)

County's Current Performance: Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) is a statewide database that was implemented in Santa Barbara County in 1997 to handle the data and business process needs of CWS. The CWS/CMS system is one of the largest Windows based applications created outside of the US military. The complexity of the system often presents challenges to staff effectively and efficiently utilizing the application, which is compounded by the relatively new workforce within CWS. CWS acknowledges the critical need to improve CWS/CMS data entry and will be implementing a focused improvement effort targeting data completion, data integrity, and timely data entry to provide better information to all levels of CWS staff, DSS management, State CDSS, and external agencies.

Improvement Goal 11: Promote "Data Diligence" in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to improve accuracy, consistency, timeliness, and completeness of data.

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| <p>Strategy 11.1: Consistently meet mandatory timelines for investigations and monthly contact requirements</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: Recent data shows that Santa Barbara County has been achieving this strategy. Will move to ongoing monitoring/oversight.</p> | <p>Strategy Rationale: In most instances the social worker has met with the child/family; however, documentation in CWS/CMS is often delayed resulting in poor outcomes.</p> |
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| Milestones | 11.1.1 | Encourage staff, supervisors, and managers to utilize Safe Measures to monitor timely entry of referral investigations and contacts. | Timeframes | June 2007 | Assigned to | CWS Staff, Supervisors, & Managers |
| | 11.1.2 | Educate staff on recording contacts in CWS/CMS and utilization of Safe Measures to monitor their own work | | September 2007 | | CWS Supervisors CWS Training Supervisors |
| | 11.1.3 | Distribute monthly Safe Measures Report to Managers and Supervisors for additional monitoring | | Spring 2007 | | CWS Operations & Support Division |
| | 11.1.4 | Monitor progress and identify areas requiring further training and oversight | | Ongoing | | CWS Operations & Support Division |

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| <p>Strategy 11.2: Educate, train, and support staff in data diligence efforts</p> <p>SIP Update 2008: This process was initiated with development of regional and placement reports to ensure accuracy of the data in multiple systems. It will now be expanded to cover additional identified data fields.</p> | | <p>Strategy Rationale: Consistent standards for data entry related to specific responsibilities, tasks, and/or job functions are needed to support the goal of data diligence. In addition to improving Outcome Measures, CWS has become more focused on utilizing data for practice and process improvements.</p> | | | | |
| Milestones | 11.2.1 | Develop a new prioritized list of data diligence needs for distribution to CWS managers, supervisors, and staff | -June-2007 | Ongoing | Assigned to | CWS Operations & Support Division |
| | 11.2.2 | Develop policy/procedure for key areas of data entry to ensure consistency | -August-2007 | Spring 2008 | | CWS Operations & Support Division CWS Supervisors |
| | 11.2.3 | Provide necessary technical assistance and/or training on policies, procedures, or practices related to data entry | -October-2007 | Summer 2008 | | CWS Operations & Support Division CWS Team CWS Training Supervisors CWS Regional Training Academy |
| | 11.2.4 | Develop data reports that reflect regional performance for monitoring and tracking of data diligence efforts | Ongoing | | | CWS Operations & Support Division |
| | 11.2.5 | Monitor progress and confer regarding corrective actions | Ongoing | | | CWS Operations & Support Division CWS Team |
| | | | Timeframes | | | |

Systemic Factor: How to Best Utilize Existing Staffing Resources to Meet Workload Demands

County's Current Performance: Child Welfare Services has experienced significant staff turnover in the past few years, as indicated by the fact that roughly 60% of our current workforce has less than 5 years experience in the Child Welfare field. Furthermore, the demands on staff time continue to grow as a result of new legislation, the complex needs of the families served, the limited resources in our communities, the requirements of additional stakeholders, etc. Yet, workload standards have not kept pace with the multiple demands on staff time, resulting in too few staff resources to fully meet the demands.

Improvement Goal 12: Provide support and relief, where possible, to social work staff

Strategy 12.1: Maximize available workforce to meet needs of caseload management

SIP Update 2008: Multiple actions have been taken to achieve this strategy including the development of several specialty countywide units, maximizing support resources/partnerships with our community based organizations through MOUs/contracts, implementing the Mental Health Screeners, and simplifying the Mental Health Access process.

Strategy Rationale: Workload distribution has become increasingly higher in the North County region due to the volume of referrals – subsequent cases opened without a corresponding shift in staff resources.

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| Milestones | 12.1.1 | Review current assignment of staff, duties for each role, and unit structures (unit, job class, region, process, program) | Timeframes | September 2007 | July 2007 | Assigned to | CWS Team |
| | 12.1.2 | Evaluate use of case aides and make necessary adjustments to unit structures to support expanded services | | September 2007 | July 2007 | | CWS Team |
| | 12.1.3 | Develop intern/volunteer program | | September 2008 | | | CWS team |
| | 12.1.4 | Implement intern/volunteer program | | December 2009 | | | Staff Development CWS Training Supervisor |