

County PIP Reduction Strategies and Action Steps document

County : Luzerne

County Point of contact: Georgine Meyers

Email address: gmeyers@cysluzerne.org

Add more or delete strategies as necessary

Strategy i: Identify parental drug and alcohol issues at intake, improve access to treatment, and identify supports.

Action Steps and timeline:

- Engage the Integrated Family Resource Team (IFRT) at intake. The IFRT consists of on site provider services, which allows casework staff to immediately access team members to resolve any issues regarding their clients in relation to the particular provider service; which includes D&A.
- Utilize HealthChoices on site drug and alcohol counselor to decrease the wait time for clients entering service.
- HealthChoices Drug and Alcohol services through, Serento, WVADS, Court Advocate and Choices to provide services to families.
- Partnership with Choices Recovery Clinic to address issues with heroin addicted mothers and their babies.
- Request of HealthChoices the expansion of the Home Based Family Treatment and Functional Family Therapy, as well as implementation of Multi Systemic Therapy, which is only available in Lackawanna County. Home Based allows for transportation assistance to parents to get to D&A appointments.
- Mandatory referral to FFT, Home Based and FGDM to prevent placement or return children home.
- Utilize Family Group Decision Making as a front and back door mechanisms. Identify family resources to assist in developing a plan that the family is comfortable with, which allows for a greater chance of success.
- Apply as Phase II County for the Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI).
- Implement through PPI Family Finding and Family Credentialing
- Expand LSI paralegal services (add another position) to assist in Family Findings, preparation of petitions/terminations/reviews.

Strategy ii: Utilize community based resources to assist families in meeting needs for basic necessities.

Action steps and timeline:

- Review provider services to determine if positive outcomes are achieved. This will be accomplished by on site provider reviews, which will be performed by the Quality Assurance Unit and Children and Youth Advisory Board members.
- Enhance relationship with community providers to meet basic needs through ICSP partnership with The United Way.
- The agency partners with CEO, United Way, St. Stephen's Clothing Closet, food pantries and Nurse Family Partnership.
- Provide families knowledge on how to access community resources.
- School based services assists school age children and their families in seeking out community resources.
- Mandatory referral to FFT, Home Based and FGDM to prevent placement or return children home.

Strategy iii: Internal placement review and reunification efforts.

Action Steps and timeline:

- Case reviews at 10 days from the day of placement as well as Permanency Concurrent Planning (PCP) meetings at 3 and 9 months from placement.
- Continue improvement efforts with Orphan's Court as well as Delinquency Court. Collaboration regarding NGA project and Phase II Permanency Practice Initiative.
- Apply as Phase II County for the Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI).
- Implement through PPI Family Finding and Family Credentialing
- Expand LSI paralegal services (add another position) to assist in Family Findings, preparation of petitions/terminations/reviews.
- Continued support of Time Limited Family Reunification for more intensive work with the family.
- Aggressively pursue reunification of families within 6 months of placement, as well as kinship placements becoming Subsidized Legal Custodianship after 6 months.
- Improve the quantity and quality of visitation by utilizing the agency Parenting Center.
- Request of HealthChoices the expansion of the Home Based Family Treatment and Functional Family Therapy, as well as implementation of Multi Systemic Therapy, which is only available in Lackawanna County. Home Based allows for transportation assistance to parents to get to D&A appointments.
- Foster sibling connections by using SWAN and Family Finding.

Strategy iv: Evaluate placement goals to determine if goal is still reasonable.

Action Steps and timeline:

- In all case reviews via PCPs, Permanency Hearings, Review Hearings, determine if the case goal is viable or if changes need to be implemented.
- Increase utilization of Time Limited Family Reunification, Family Functional Therapy, Home Based services, and Family Group Decision Making.
- Utilize safety assessment to examine cases and the appropriateness of returning home while ensuring safety. (effective July 1, 2009 and ongoing)
- Continue improvement discussions with courts, with assistance from AOPC.

Strategy v: Review provider outcomes on a regular basis & identify gaps in service

Action Steps and timeline:

- Review provider services to determine if positive outcomes are achieved. This will be accomplished by on site provider reviews, which will be performed by the Quality Assurance Unit and Children and Youth Advisory Board members.
- Review all JPO contracts for services, including FFT contract with MH/MR.
- Review prevention service contracts to determine possible gaps in service.
- Request HealthChoices expansion of Home Based Family Treatment and Family Functional Therapy.
- Request HealthChoices implementation of MST in Luzerne County.

Strategy vi: Court improvement collaboration.

- NGA project; AOPC, Northeast Regional Office, and the Deputy Secretary of OCYS meet monthly to review cases, identify and resolve systemic issues, obstacles, or barriers that impede permanency for children.
- Identify Orphan's Court Judge.
- Aggressively pursue reunification of families within 6 months of placement, as well as kinship placements becoming Subsidized Legal Custodianship after 6 months.
- Resolve the need for addition court time for termination proceedings.
- Increase court knowledge and use of FGDM, FFT, and Home Based services.

Strategy vii: Workforce development plan to ensure the recruitment and retention of a skilled labor force.

Action Steps and timeline:

- Safety Training for all staff, completed by May 22, 2009. This training will improve caseworker skills to engage families, interview, and develop appropriate safety plans.
- In addition to trainings available to staff, encourage participation in the CWEL program through the University of Pittsburgh to enhance casework abilities and skills.
- Aggressively fill vacancies to allow for more intensive work with families to prevent placement and expedite reunification. Caseworker II specific recruitment from statewide civil service list.
- Reduce caseloads by (1) formalizing caseloads for school based units to include a target population of school aged children and their families, (1a) through ICSP contract with CCBHO to act as liaison between LCCYS school based program and CCBHO/NBHCC school based behavioral health (SBBH) program, which is a pilot program in Luzerne County with potential to expand into Lackawanna, Sullivan, Wyoming Counties. The SBBH program is a BHRS initiative to reduce RFT placements, (2) Family Preservation and Parenting Center will carry caseloads with a target population of families referred to parenting on a regular basis, (3) Case Weight Measurement to ensure appropriate distribution of cases across the agency.
- All staff successfully completed Strength Based Solution Focused Training; follow up as necessary.
- Ensure appropriate training and implementation of concurrent planning with both in-home and placement cases.
- Agency Events Committee with staff retention focus.

Strategy viii: Permanency

Action Steps and timeline:

- Apply as Phase II County for the Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI). This enables the county to further enhance our abilities to assist families with helping themselves plan appropriately to seek out the help they need in order to keep their family intact.
- Implement through PPI Family Finding and Family Credentialing
- Expand LSI paralegal services (add another position) to assist in Family Findings, preparation of petitions/terminations/reviews.
- Targeting existing FGDM and Time Limited Reunification contract for placed children to return home.
- Agency Permanency/Legal Committee to identify and address barriers to permanency. AOPC collaboration.
- Recruit and hire/contract for 2 additional of Guardian Ad Litem to ensure representation for all children.
- Recruit and hire/contract attorneys to represent indigent parents in parental right termination proceedings.
- Utilize SWAN for assistance in family and child profiles, finalization, child prep and child specific recruitment.
- The agency will register 100% of children with a goal of adoption with PAE.
- The agency will ensure children placed in pre-adoptive homes have intent to adopt filed on their behalf.

Strategy ix: Improve visitation

Action Steps and timeline:

- Whenever possible visits will be moved from the agency visit rooms to the agency Parenting Center, which includes living area, kitchen, laundry, and bathrooms with shower.
- The Parenting Center staff will ensure quality visits.
- (Foster Care) Whenever possible visits will occur in the parent's home. Encourage foster parents to participate as a resource to the natural family.
- Require new agency foster parents to allow for visitation to occur in the foster home.
- Increase quantity of contacts between parent and child in order to support parent's steps towards reunification as well as limit the trauma of separation to the child.
- Weather permitting, parents and children will be encouraged to seek outdoor activities for visitation.