

## BROADCAST 7189

DATE: November 3, 2011

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

TO: Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) Directors, Foster Care, Child Protective Services and Adoption Supervisors and Staff; Licensed Child Placing Agencies, Comprehensive Services Act Coordinators

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SUBJECT: Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (PL112-34)

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The purpose of this broadcast is to inform child welfare service providers of new service provisions as a result of passage of the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Public Law 112-34) signed by President Obama on September 30, 2011.

Although the provisions of this law are currently in effect, no substantive guidance is available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families regarding implementation of these provisions. Additional information regarding implementation will be provided when additional federal instructions are available. Provisions of the Act relevant to Virginia's child welfare program are summarized below.

### **Title I: Extension of Child and Family Services Programs:**

1. Requires the state plan for oversight and coordination of health care services for any child in a foster care placement to include an outline of:
  - a) the monitoring and treatment of emotional trauma associated with a child's maltreatment and removal from home, and
  - b) protocols for the appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medications.
2. Requires the state plan for child welfare services to describe:
  - a) state activities to reduce the length of time children under age 5 are without a permanent family;
  - b) state activities to address the developmental needs of such children who receive child welfare program benefits or services; and
  - c) the sources used to compile information on child maltreatment deaths which the state agency is required by federal law to report and why certain sources of information from the State vital statistics department, child death review teams, law enforcement agencies or offices of medical examiners or coroners are excluded and how the agency will include the information.
3. Revises requirements for monthly child visitations by caseworkers to require that each state ensure that the total number of monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care is at least

90% (raised to 95% for FY2015 and thereafter). Changes as to how these percentages are calculated are included.

4. Extends specific reservations of funds through FY2016 for monthly caseworker visits and requires monthly caseworker visit grants to be used to improve the quality of monthly caseworker visits, with an emphasis on improving caseworker decision making on the safety, permanency, and well-being of foster children.
5. Extends the Safe and Stable Families Program through FY2016 and requires states' Safe and Stable Families Program plan to describe how the state identifies which populations are at the greatest risk of maltreatment and how services are targeted to them.
6. Revises requirements for time-limited family reunification services provided to a child removed from the child's home and placed in a foster family home or a child care institution, and to the child's parents or primary caregiver, in order to facilitate the child's safe, appropriate, and timely reunification with the parents or caregiver. Requires such services to include:
  - a) peer-to-peer mentoring and support groups for parents and primary caregivers, and
  - b) services and activities designed to facilitate access to and visitation of children by parents and siblings.
7. Revises requirements for grants to state court improvement program that serve the purpose of increasing and improving engagement of the entire family in court processes relating to child welfare, family preservation, family reunification, and adoption.
8. Requires state case review systems to assure that:
  - a) each child in foster care under state responsibility who has attained age 16 receives a free copy of any consumer report pertaining to the child each year until the child is discharged from care along with help in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the report; and
  - b) the educational stability case plan requirements established in the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 are met at the time of each placement change, not just at initial placement into foster care.

**Title II: Child Welfare Demonstration Projects** - Renews authorization for states to conduct child welfare program demonstration projects likely to promote the objectives of Titles B and E of the SSA title IV part E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance). It allows HHS to approve up to 10 new child welfare waiver demonstration projects in each of FYs 2012-2014, and provides new application and eligibility criteria

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families Information Memorandum [ACYF-CB-IM-11-06](#) provides limited additional information about this law.