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An Act Regarding Children in the Child Welfare System

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §4004-C is enacted to read:

§ 4004-C. Clinical review of placement decisions

When the department has determined that a child receiving child welfare services requires therapeutic care in a residential or foster care setting or requires other specialized mental health care treatment, the department shall, prior to determining the placement needs of the child, complete a clinical review by a health care practitioner licensed to provide mental health evaluation and treatment. For the purposes of this section, "health care practitioner" has the same meaning as in section 1711-C, subsection 1, paragraph F.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §4004-D is enacted to read:

§ 4004-D. Assessment

Beginning July 1, 2008, the department shall complete an assessment of each child leaving the custody of the department and implement a system for providing periodic contact with and evaluation of a child who has left custody. The assessment must include evaluations of the child at the time of entering and leaving custody. The department shall collect the data from the assessments and, while protecting the confidentiality of information as provided in section 4008 and the privacy rights of all persons involved, make it available to the public on an annual basis.

SUMMARY

This bill requires that when the Department of Health and Human Services has determined that a child receiving child welfare services requires therapeutic care in a residential or foster care setting or requires other specialized mental health care treatment, the department must complete a clinical review. The bill also requires the department to assess a child leaving state custody, to have periodic contact with and evaluation of a child who has left custody and to collect and make available to the public data on the assessments.