

Office of Child and Family Services Quarterly Child Welfare Update

Health and Human Services Committee
September 20, 2023

Director Todd A. Landry, Ed.D.



Content of September Updates

- Cross-Office Collaboration
- Prevention
- Substance Use Disorder
- Safety Science
- Policy Review and Updates
- Staffing
- Legislation Implementation

Department of Health and Human Services

Cross-Office Collaboration

MaineCare

- Collaborating on implementation of the 1115 Waiver for parents dealing with SUD who are involved with or at-risk of involvement with Child Protective Services
- Development of the MaineMOM program to improve care for pregnant and postpartum people with opioid use disorder and their infants

Maine CDC

- Collaborating on CradleME, a referral system for all birthing families in Maine
- Public Health Nurses, Maine Families Home Visiting, and Women Infants and Children (WIC) (programs of Maine CDC) are key partners with all divisions of OCFS (Child Welfare, Early Care and Education, and Children's Behavioral Health)
- Ongoing collaboration on public information campaigns including those about safe sleep, abusive head trauma, and the Period of Purple Crying

Office for Family Independence

- OCFS staff regularly facilitate connections between families and OFI for services such as SNAP, TANF/ASPIRE, and MaineCare
- DSER helps to ensure economic support for children and families through enforcement of child support obligations

Office of Behavioral Health

- Collaborating on specific efforts targeted at parents with SUD, for example, Substance Use Specialists located in OCFS' District Offices, Peer Recovery Coaches in Family Recovery Courts, and distribution of lockboxes and lock bags through OCFS' field staff
- Statewide naloxone distribution
- Continued collaborative work on updating the Rights of Recipients for both adults and children

Office of Aging and Disability Services

- Ongoing collaboration on transitioning youth from children's behavioral health services to adult services
- Collaboration on implementation of Lifespan initiative
- Collaborating on OCFS' work with stakeholders to develop a process for a No Eject/No Reject practice
- OCFS' Intake unit serves as the intake for reports to OADS alleging abuse or neglect to adults

Role of Prevention

The Department is dedicated to promoting health, safety, resilience, and opportunity for Maine people

- These connections both within OCFS and between OCFS and other offices are centered around child and family safety and well-being, for example:
 - Access to adequate financial resources to meet the basic health and safety needs of the family
 - Access to affordable child care, enabling parents to work and meet the financial needs of the family
 - Access to supportive services for new parents
 - Access to services to address behavioral and mental health concerns within the family
 - Access to comprehensive services to address parental substance use disorder which may otherwise create risk for children

The well-being of families is key to preventing child abuse and neglect

Prevention Efforts within the Department

Department-Wide and Beyond

- With the support of the Legislature, hiring of a Special Projects Manager for Child and Family Well Being position at the Commissioner's Office
- Development of the Maine Child Safety and Family Well Being Plan, the plan includes strategies and outlines initiatives spearheaded by the Department and providers
- Collaboration across state agencies via the Maine Children's Cabinet on initiatives and policies that will improve and promote the healthy development of children and youth in Maine
- Focus on collaboration and partnership with providers who deliver services targeted at meeting the needs of children and families
- State Agency Partnerships for Prevention – Led by OCFS, state agencies partnering to support healthy and safe families and children through increased access to and knowledge of prevention services for families in Maine

Within OCFS

- Implementation of the Federal Family First Prevention Services Act to provide evidence-based services to families at risk of child removal
- Targeted initiatives to provide evidence-based services to families in the reunification process
- Direct work with families to safely prevent removal of children, for example, contingency funds



Maine Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan

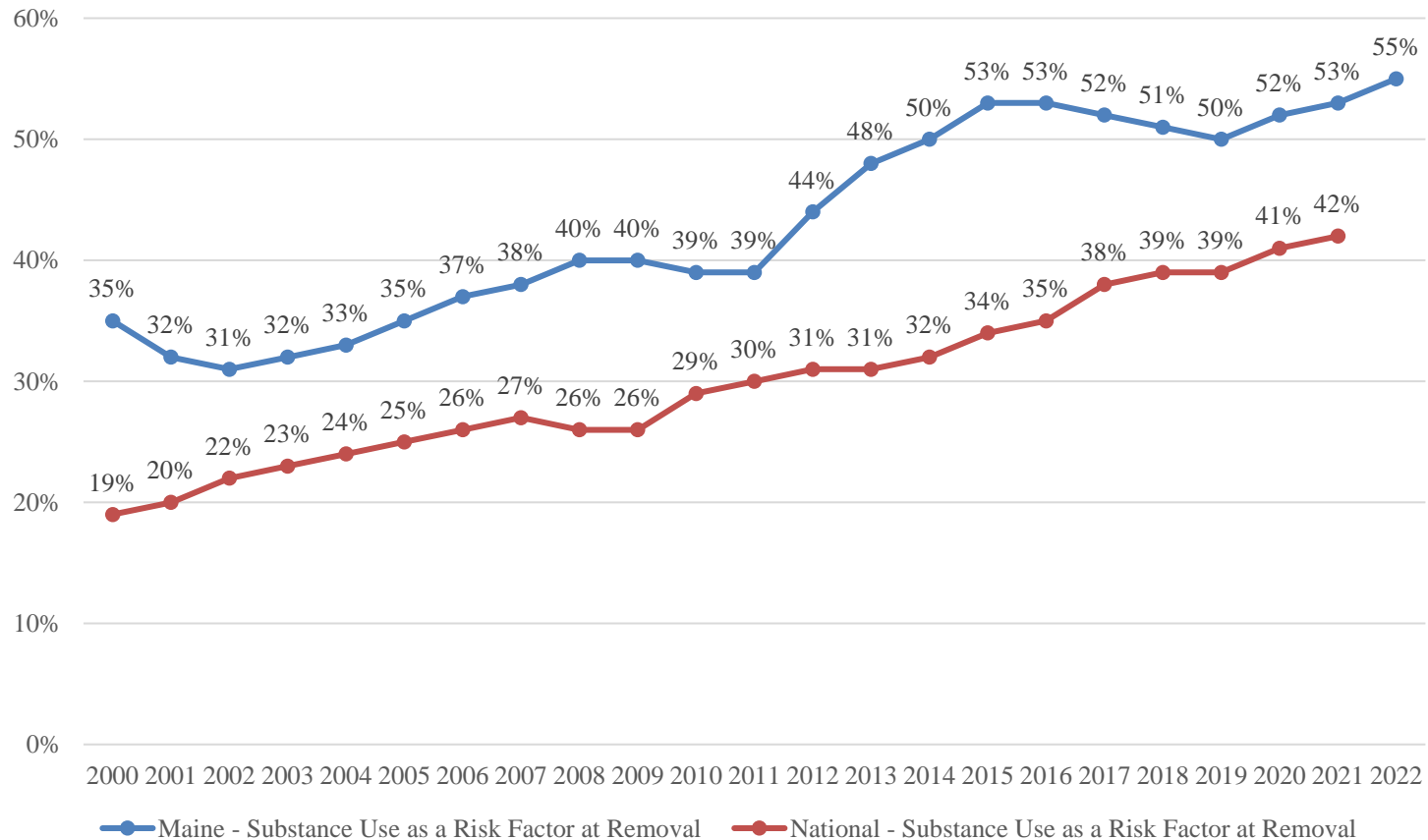
Version 1.0 - May 9, 2023

Prepared by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services
in Partnership with the Maine Child Welfare Action Network



Substance Use and Family Well Being

Rate of Substance Use as a Risk Factor at Removal, 2000-2022



*National data not available yet for 2020 & 2021

Update on SUD Collaborative Projects

1115 Waiver

- Collaboration between MaineCare and OCFS
- State flexibility to pilot four services focused on MaineCare-enrolled parents with SUD who are involved with or at risk of involvement with Child Protective Services, this includes family visit coaching
- An RFP for this work will be released soon

Peer Recovery Coaches

- Collaboration between OBH and OCFS (using OTPF funding)
- Adding Peer Recovery Coaches to current Maine Re-entry Network contract to support Family Recovery Courts
- Contracting in progress for this additional funding

SUD Clinical Consultant

- Collaboration between OBH and OCFS (using OTPF funding)
- RFP for co-located SUD Clinical Consultant positions for each District is currently in progress

Distributing Narcan to Child Welfare Staff

- Collaborating with OBH and Gordon Smith to distribute Narcan to child welfare staff on a voluntary basis
- HR and OAG have been consulted
- Implementation will include training for those who elect to carry Narcan
- This pilot is building off the efforts in the Portland District Office to have Narcan available to DHHS staff who are trained to administer it.

Safety Science

Strengths Identified in the Safety Science Model 2022 Report



- Shared decision making about cases in supervision and Team Decision Making meetings
- Ongoing efforts to improve the usability of the Katahdin system based on stakeholder feedback through system enhancements and additional training
- Development of the Children's Emergency Services (CES) afterhours unit
- Implementation of new worker support groups through partnerships of District offices and the OCFS Training Team
- Additional training and policy resources on Structured Decision Making (SDM)
- OCFS' extensive recruitment strategies
- Staff workgroup and resulting policy changes regarding investigation time frames

Key Findings of the Safety Science Model 2022 Report



- Staff Knowledge and Skill Building
- Time Frames
- Safety Planning
- Vacancies/Workload
- Structured Decision Making
- Katahdin

Action Steps from the Safety Science Model 2022 Report



- Supervision Framework
- Ongoing Policy and Practice Updates
- Safety Planning Workgroup
- Implementing Recommendations of the Investigation Workgroup
- After Hours CES Program
- Training and Support
- Ongoing Katahdin Enhancements and Training

Child Welfare's Role when Removal Occurs

- The Department's statutory obligation when children are removed is to provide rehabilitation and reunification services unless relieved of that obligation by the Court
 - In Federal Fiscal Year 2022, 44% of exits from care were to reunification while 49% of exits were to adoption or permanency guardianship
 - In the previous three Federal fiscal years the rate of reunification exits outpaced adoption or permanency guardianship exits
- The Department pursues placement of the child with relatives whenever safely possible

Placement Type	Maine – Percent <i>(Data as of August 2023)</i>
Traditional Foster Care	43%
Relative/Kinship Care	41%
Therapeutic Foster Care	4%
Trial Home Placement	5%
Adoption	4%
Residential	< 2%
Other	< 2%
Unlicensed Non- Relative	<1%

Reviewing & Updating Policies

In Review/Revision

Approval of Relative Family Foster Homes for Children
Caseworker Contacts
Children's Emergency Services (CES)
Decision Making and Service Authorization
Determining Access to Department Records
Placement
Psychotropic Medication
Safety Planning (new stand-alone policy versus current embedded policy)

In Final Review

Adoption
Child Protective Intake
LGBTQIA+
Supervision

Completed

Background Checks
Child Protective Investigation
Collaboration
Domestic Abuse and Violence
Entry into Care
Family Team Meetings
Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
Immunization of Children in Custody
Indian Child Welfare (ICW)
Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
Missing and Runaway Youth
Permanency
Placement with DHHS Employees
Safe Haven
Staff Safety and Critical Safety Cases
Resource Home Licensing
Substance Exposed Infants
Youth Transition Services

New since last report

Completed since last report

Staffing Update

Point in Time	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2021	Dec 2022	August 2023	Net Change 2018-Now
Total Positions	351	365	398	414	445	445	+94/ +27%
# Filled	325	347	385	383	388	375	+55/ +17%
# Vacancies	26	18	13	31	57	70	
% Vacancies	7.4%	4.9%	3.2%	7.5%	12.8%	15.7%	

Staff Support

Targeting Districts with the Greatest Number of Vacancies

- Surrounding districts are assisting Rockland and Lewiston offices during this time of higher vacancies
- Moved two unfilled positions from Rockland to Bangor and Lewiston to Portland to support this work

Ensuring Adequate Staffing Among Support Staff

- Budget included reclassification of 48 Customer Representative Associate II positions to CPS Case Aides
- Support staff are key to ensuring that field staff have what they need to be successful

Seeking Additional Solutions

- Meeting with the Board of Social Work Licensure to review licensing requirements for CPS caseworkers
- Continuing regular District meetings to solicit feedback from staff

Katahdin



To date Katahdin has released over 40 system enhancements in 2023

- Changes as identified from the Caseworker Advisory Team
- Screen changes to increase the ability to understand and evaluate a clients' CPS history
- Updating the discovery print feature based on user feedback

OCFS has met the new federal AFCARS 2.0 reporting requirements

- OCFS delivered the first required report on time and met all federal report requirements for accuracy and completeness.

Completed a user survey and District meetings to gather feedback.

- Helped identify key challenges of users which were followed-up by system changes and additional training opportunities
- Plans to continue soliciting user feedback going forward

Legislative Implementation Updates

Highlights from the 131st Legislature

- LD 474 (P.L. 2023, ch. 146) – *An Act to Improve Collaboration Between Mandated Reporters and Law Enforcement in the Investigation of Alleged Child Abuse and Neglect* – Continuing to meet with the stakeholder group that developed this proposal to plan for implementation.
- LD 594 (P.L. 2023, ch. 62) – *Resolve, to Review the Resource Parent Bill of Rights* – The stakeholder group has been convened and is meeting to gather and provide feedback for possible updates and changes to the current Bill of Rights.
- LD 1229 (P.L. 2023, ch. 447) – *An Act to Support Peer Mentors for Parents Involved in the Child Protective Services System* – OCFS is working to plan for implementation of this one-time funding for CPS 101 in SFY 2025. OCFS is collaborating with the Maine Judicial Branch to continue the CPS 101 program until this funding becomes available in SFY25.
- LD 1970 (P.L. 2023, ch. 359) – *An Act to Enact the Maine Indian Child Welfare Act* – This bill went into effect in July and OCFS issued an updated policy in August 2023.

Budget Implementation Updates

Highlights from the 131st Legislature

- Implemented 5% increase in the resource home reimbursement rate for non-therapeutic resource homes; the 5% increase for therapeutic resource homes will be implemented after the effective date of 10/25/23.
- 48 Customer Representative Associate II - Human Services positions will transition to CPS Case Aides during the appropriate processing week after 10/25/2023.
- Ongoing work between State Forensic Service (OBH) and OCFS to plan for implementation of transition for court ordered diagnostic evaluations (CODEs).
- Planning for implementation of the one-time funding in the IV-E Foster Care/Adoption Assistance program (\$5.5M) and the State-Funded Foster Care/Adoption Assistance program (\$2M).
- Ensuring contingency fund process accounts for the change to a carrying account

Questions

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Office of Child and Family Services

