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**Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 800-800-5556**

October 1, 2009

To: Regional Managers  
Directors, Local Offices, Department of Child Services  
Supervisor, Department of Child Services

From: James W. Payne, Director  
Angela Green, Deputy Director of Practice Support  
Dave Judkins, Deputy Director of Field Operations  
Department of Child Services

Subject: Quality Assurance Reviews: Mental Health Screening and Assessment Question  
Scoring  
DCS-09-19

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is committed to partnering with families and communities to provide safe, nurturing, and stable homes for children under DCS care and supervision. In fulfilling our mission, it is essential that we properly screen and assess the needs of the children and families we serve.

The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) is an assessment instrument utilized to document the intensity of behavioral health services needed by the child and family and will be the basis for planning individualized services for children. The CANS assessment will also play a critical role in decision making regarding the type and level of placement a child needs once the decision to place has been made.

This administrative letter outlines recent revisions to the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) based on the implementation of the CANS Assessments. Below is a summary of the changes to the QAR effective October 1, 2009.



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In an effort to support field staff during the transition to the use of the CANS, those DCS regions participating in the pilot of the CANS survey will no longer be required to score the Mental Health Screening questions. All QAR questions regarding the use of the Mental Health Screening tool and the related Mental Health Assessment will be scored as not applicable (N/A). The Mental Health Screening and Assessment questions are found in the Assessment and Services Section of the Wardship/CHINS Tool. The Mental Health Screening and Assessment questions are as follows:

11. The Early Mental Health Screening Tool was completed timely for each child for whom a petition was filed and who was placed in out-of-home care.
12. A referral for Mental Health Assessment has been completed timely and appropriately.
13. Services were initiated within 10 business days for each child according to the recommendations in the summary of assessment findings completed by the Mental Health provider.

If you have any questions regarding this change please address them to Lisa Whitaker, Performance and Quality Improvement State Director at 317-233-9354.

Sincerely,

James W. Payne, Director  
Department of Child Services



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