



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
810 Richards Street, Suite 400  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

October 7, 2010

Ms. Debbi Amaral  
Maui Citizen Review Panel  
99 Mahalani Street  
Wailuku, HI 96793

Dear Ms. Amaral:

Thank you for the Maui Citizen Review Panel's (CRP) 2009 Annual Report and recommendations to improve Child Welfare Services (CWS). We appreciate the Panel's efforts and work on behalf of children and families.

The CRP's 2009 recommendations and the Department's responses (in italics) are as follows:

- 1) Six months from the receipt of the annual Report, DHS will have all Hawaii children eligible for adoption listed and profiled on the Adopt USKids website.

*DHS has an internal excel database to track PC children/youth without identified permanent caretakers (legal guardians or adoptive parents).*

*We have also implemented the CWSB "Keiki Placement Panel", a weekly teleconference with the Program Development Staff, CWS Section Administrators, and EPIC Ohana Conferencing to review all new placements of children into foster care and a monthly "Permanency Review Panel" of the status of all children and youth who are free for adoption to ensure that every effort is being made to find them permanent homes, including listing them on AdoptUSKids and other websites and venues that can lead to adoption of the approximately 150 children in the permanent custody of the Department who are waiting for permanent homes.*

*It is not appropriate to list ALL children eligible for adoption on the websites, especially since we are committed to maintaining family connections. The Department will work toward listing all children on the website for whom we do not have an identified permanent placement, known relatives, or where there are placement options available that would indicate that placement on the website would not be consistent with the permanency plan for the child.*

- 2) Six months from the receipt of the Annual Report, DHS will provide the Maui CRP results and evaluation of the '07-'08 fiscal year of DHS' participation in AdoptUSKids, HOPE Inc., Hawaii Family Forum, and Heart Gallery.

*The Department will be able to provide outcomes that have resulted from the listed resources to the CRP. It is not clear what analysis is being requested or what criteria will be applied to complete an analysis. We suggest that the CRP work with the Department to clarify this recommendation.*

- 3) DHS will send at least TWO CRP member to the Annual CRP National Conference.

*The Department does believe that the National Citizen Review Panel Conference is a valuable resource for the CRP and will continue to send at least one CRP member to the Annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference as long as funds permit us to do so.*

- 4) DHS will follow up on their 4 page questionnaire survey to foster parents. By February 1, 2010, the CRP shall receive documentation of what action has been taken from the information gathered, and if there were any plans made as a result of foster parent feedback.

*By February 1, 2011, the Department will send the Maui CRP a copy of the executive summary of the resource caregiver survey, along with the action the Department took as a result of this survey.*

***\*\*Numbers 5-10 will answer questions to numbers 7-12 on the Maui CRP annual report. The report is missing numbers 5 and 6. The Department listed the response in numerical order.***

- 5) Within 3 months from the receipt of the Annual Report, DHS will submit to the Maui CRP their reply to the Annual Report.

*The Department will submit the reply to the CRP within the recommended timeframe.*

- 6) DHS will continue to support and fund all costs for the Semi-annual Statewide CRP meetings.

*The Department is committed to fund one Annual Statewide CRP meeting, but is unable to commit to fund more than the one annual statewide CRP meeting.*

- 7) DHS will continue to fund all costs for Molokai and Lanai's participation in the CRP meetings.

*Although the Department has allocated money to support CRP's statewide, Molokai and Lanai representatives need to look at utilization of Video Conferencing Centers (VCC) and should not be coming to Maui every month when VCC is available. We understand the Molokai CRP member currently utilizes VCC to attend the monthly CRP meetings.*

- 8) DHS and the CRP will discuss the establishment and funding of CRP budget(s).

*The Department will discuss the establishment and funding of a CRP budget in accordance with Departmental funding priorities.*

- 9) Three months from the receipt of the Annual Report, DHS will provide the Maui CRP an analysis of the implementation of transition plans for foster youth aging out of the foster care system.

*Similar to the recommendation above, it is not clear what analysis is being requested by the CRP. We suggest instead that the CRP work with the Department to develop an analysis process that can be used for issues the CRP identifies that would clarify population, evaluation criteria, required information, outcomes and process to conduct an analysis before proceeding.*

- 10) The Maui CRP will collaborate with DHS and the Hawaii Foster Parent Association to introduce in the 2010 Legislative Session and/or promulgate changes in DHS policy to increase Foster Care Board rates and Difficulty of Care payments. The proposal includes rate/payment increases to 5% each year for the next 6 years, rate settings in three age categories (0-5, 6-12 and 13-18 years of age) and tying in future increase to an economic index such as the CPI (consumer price index).

*DHS appreciates this recommendation. However, given the State's fiscal situation and the impending change in administration, the Department is not in a position to guarantee that legislation will be submitted or supported in the next legislative session.*

Thank you again for your 2009 annual report and recommendations. We appreciate the commitment and the work accomplished by the Maui CRP and look forward to our continued partnership. Please contact John Walters, Program Development Administrator, at 586-5675 if the Panel has further questions.

Sincerely,



Lynne Kazama (Acting)  
Child Welfare Services Branch Administrator

c: Lillian B. Koller, Director