Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury
Child Protective Services
Case #11-15C

SUMMARY

The 2010/2011 Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury (SCCGJ) received a complaint requesting the investigation into whether or not the "policies" of Stanislaus County Child Protective Services (CPS) are being followed.

The complainant requested that the SCCGJ examine the policies of Stanislaus County CPS and determine if the policies were being followed and if not, did the lack of compliance prevent it from protecting the lives and well being of children.

After a review of documents and interviewing key personnel, it was determined:

1. CPS, now recognized as Community Services Agency (CSA), does have policies and procedures in place to ensure that children receive Social Worker visits in a timely manner.

2. Social Workers do visit children in a timely manner.

3. Stanislaus County CSA out-performs California state averages.

GLOSSARY

SCCGJ – Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury.

CPS – Child Protective Services.

CSA – Community Services Agency.

CWS – Child Welfare Services.

CPS Social Workers – CPS clients are provided services by Social Worker IV's who must possess a Master's degree in Social Work or a two-year Master's degree in Counseling. Social Workers at this "IV" level are expected to work independently without extensive supervision, and must perform professional casework of an advanced nature in the most difficult social service areas. (Summary of Stanislaus County Social Worker IV position).

AB 636 Measure 2C – The Assembly Bill defining Social Worker Contacts.

SafeMeasures.org - An organization that reports on behalf of the state compliances, by County, of family reunification cases.

CWS Outcomes System Summary for Stanislaus County – This is a report generated by U.C. Berkeley on behalf of the State of California publishing CWS outcomes.

CWS Outcomes System Summary for the State of California – This is a report generated by U. C. Berkeley on behalf of the State of California publishing CWS outcomes.

BACKGROUND

On August 18, 2010 a complaint was filed with the SCCGJ. The complainant accused Stanislaus County CPS of "failure to act" consistently in regards to "at risk" children. The complainant requested the SCCGJ take action to determine if 1) there were policies in place to ensure "at risk" children are contacted by Social Workers and 2) if the policies were being followed. The SCCGJ assigned the Social Services Committee to investigate the complaint.

METHODOLOGY OF INVESTIGATION

The investigation of this complaint took place between August 2010 and February 2011. During the investigation the following actions were taken by the investigating committee:

1. Reviewed the "All County Letter 09-31" from the State of California Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Social Service which outlined the Policies and Procedures for Safety and Risk Assessments to be completed by Child Welfare Services (CWS).

2. Reviewed the Stanislaus County CSA procedures as they pertain to CPS.

3. Interviewed under oath the complainant and selected Stanislaus County CPS staff.

4. Analyzed California State and Stanislaus County data on the timeliness of visits by Social Workers during month 1, month 2, and month 3 of children being assigned a Social Worker by CSA.

5. Received a demonstration of the software mandated by the State of California which captures data on potential CPS clients.

6. Made an on-site visit to Stanislaus County CPS offices.

FINDINGS

F1. The SCCGJ finds that Stanislaus County CSA and CPS does have policies and procedures in place that directs Social Workers to complete personal contacts with clients on a monthly basis.

F2. The SCCGJ finds that Stanislaus County CSA is in compliance with their policies.

- The SCCGJ also finds that Stanislaus County CSA's compliance rate is higher than the State of California average.
- A report from SafeMeasures.org which tracks AB 636 Measure 2C for the month of November 2010, reported Stanislaus County CSA was in compliance with monthly visits 94% of the time.
- The CWS Outcomes System Summary for Stanislaus County for the fourth quarter of 2009 reported during October 2009 that Stanislaus County CSA was in compliance with monthly visits 92.8% of the time, during November 2009 94.4% of the time and during December 2009 94.7% of the time.
- The CWS Outcomes System Summary for California for the fourth quarter of 2009 reported that during October 2009, California was in compliance with monthly visits 93.1% of the time, during November 2009 92.6% of the time and during December 2009 92.9% of the time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the staff and management of the Community Services Agency receive accolades from the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors for not only adhering to policies and procedures but for exceeding California State averages. (A copy of this report will be sent to Board of Supervisors).

REQUESTS FOR RESPONSES:

No response is required.

This report of case #11-15C is issued by the 2010-2011 Stanislaus Civil Grand Jury with the following exception: three members of the grand jury volunteered to recuse themselves due to a perceived conflict of interest. These persons were excluded from all phases of the investigation, including interviews, deliberations, voting and in the writing and approval of this report. None of the information in this report was obtained from the excluded grand jurors as a means of mitigating a potential bias to the integrity of this report.

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929

prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Civil Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigations.