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# Milwaukee County Child Welfare

Legislative Audit Bureau  
September 2006

1

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## Overview

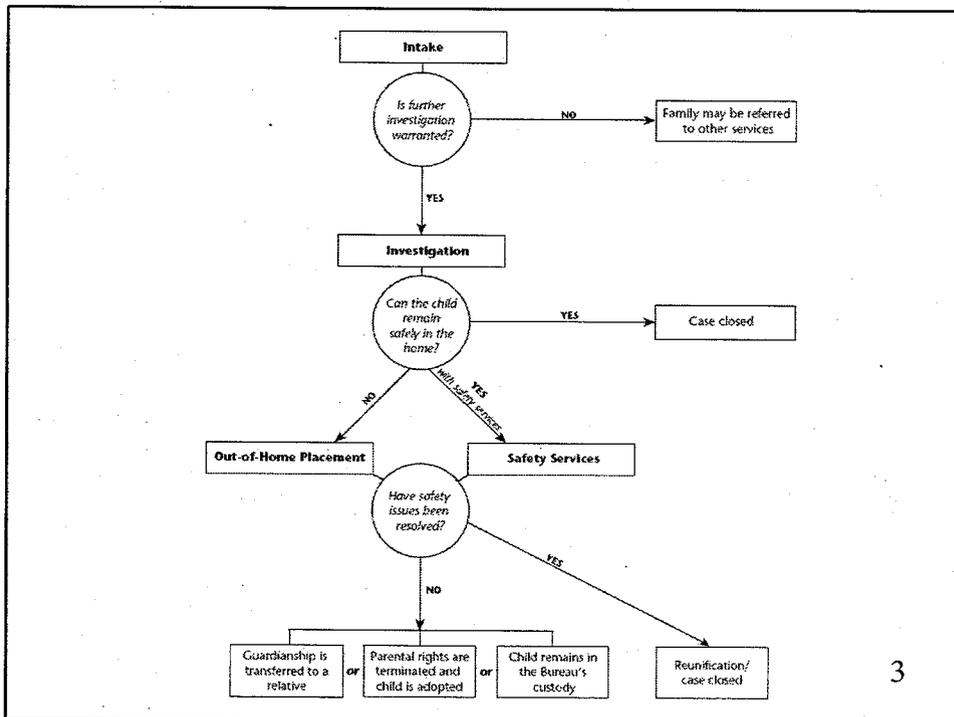
- ◆ DHFS began administering the program in 1998, following a class-action lawsuit
- ◆ The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare investigates allegations of abuse/neglect
- ◆ Contractors provide most services
- ◆ In June 2005, the Bureau employed 153 FTE staff; six key contractors employed 500 staff

2

# Milwaukee Child Welfare Expenditures

Expenditure Category	2001	2002	2003	2004	January through June 2005
Bureau Costs	\$ 16.4	\$ 16.1	\$ 17.4	\$ 20.4	\$ 9.0
Placement	50.2	52.3	42.8	38.4	20.3
Contract Services	47.6	44.5	50.0	44.2	24.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$114.2</b>	<b>\$112.9</b>	<b>\$110.2</b>	<b>\$103.0</b>	<b>\$53.4</b>

3



3

## Investigations

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- ◆ From January 2004 through June 2005, 14,224 investigations of maltreatment allegations were completed
- ◆ 4,397, or 30.9 percent, took longer than the 60-day statutory limit

5

## Out-of-Home Care

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- ◆ Milwaukee County caseloads declined 47.7 percent from January 2001 through June 2005
- ◆ In contrast, caseloads in some other large counties increased from December 2001 through June 2005:
  - 93.9 percent in Brown County
  - 33.9 percent in Rock County
  - 4.7 percent in Racine County
- ◆ In June 2005, 3,188 children in Milwaukee County were in out-of-home placements
- ◆ The median stay in out-of-home care declined from 39 months in June 2003 to 21 months in June 2005

6

## Out-of-Home Care Concerns

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- ◆ Only 27.4 percent of court-ordered services were provided in a timely manner
- ◆ 25 of 48 cases we reviewed had problems, such as insufficient coordination of services
- ◆ 20.1 percent of children reunified with their parents reentered out-of-home care within 24 months

7

## Safety Services

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- ◆ Milwaukee County is the only county in Wisconsin to provide safety services
- ◆ Caseloads declined 63.4 percent from January 2001 through June 2005
- ◆ The average period for which services were provided declined from 110 days in January 2003 to 81 days in January 2005
- ◆ We reviewed 50 cases and found contractors had not complied with all contract provisions

8

## Staff Turnover

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Turnover of child welfare staff in 2004 was:

- ◆ 38.6 percent among contracted case managers;
- ◆ 25.5 percent among contracted safety services managers; and
- ◆ 10.9 percent among Bureau social workers

11

## Future Challenges

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- ◆ Additional efforts will be needed to address identified problems
- ◆ Case management contractors are paid a flat monthly rate under the 2006 contracts
- ◆ Coordination of service delivery among support programs is limited

12