

*Intranet***NJ-
DCF
Home**

All Sites



Advanced Search

NJ-DCF Home > Announcements > Commissioner Message - Office Security and Caseworker Safety

Announcements: Commissioner Message - Office Security and Caseworker Safety

Alert Me | Version History

Title Commissioner Message - Office Security and Caseworker Safety**Body**

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing today to share how we are moving forward on several fronts regarding local office security and caseworker safety. As many are aware, my senior staff and I met with staff from the local offices of Camden to hear their thoughts and concerns first hand so that their needs are met in our statewide response to safety.

We implemented some immediate enhanced security measures at the Camden Local Offices last week. While we continue to engage in a broad building security review, we will be implementing enhanced security measures at additional local offices throughout the state based upon the immediate feedback that I have received from local leadership and our facilities management team.

Last week CP&P leadership, including the CP&P Area Directors, and I met with the Department of Human Services Assistant Commissioner and Director who oversee the Human Services Police. In that meeting, we were assured that the new centralized deployment model will maintain the customary level of service from DHS police to accompany our staff in the field or in the office when meeting with individuals who may pose a risk. We were further assured that this new model will, for the first time, make Human Services Police available to staff in the field beyond standard business hours to include weekend, holiday, and after hour support. Updated policy with instruction on how to make referrals to the Human Services Police will be published today.

This week, I have also created an internal workgroup on caseworker and personal safety which will be co-chaired by DCF Chief of Staff Barbara Rusen and Essex Area Director David Sims. DCF representatives included in this workgroup are Policy and Regulatory Development Director Brian Ross, Child Protection and Permanency Assistant Director Nancy Carre-Lee, Office of Training and Professional Development Director Robert Ring, Hudson South Local Office Manager Kristen Pinho, Camden County Family Service Specialist Chanda Edwards, and Erika Lively, a supervisor in the Mercer South Local Office who also works for the Special Response Unit.

The group will assess caseworker safety training and review field safety protocols and practices. Their work will be informed by resources from national experts and methods employed by other public child welfare agencies. The workgroup will review several areas, including the buddy

system, procedures when a field visit may not be safe and law enforcement is not available, and department policies regarding caseworker use of aerosol self-defense sprays. I have asked the group to present their recommendations to me within the next 60 days.

The work that you do produces great rewards for our families and I applaud you for that. In the weeks and months ahead we will be making changes to strengthen the great work that you do on behalf of New Jersey's children and their families.

Regards,
Allison

Allison Blake, PhD, LSW
Commissioner
NJ Department of Children and Families

Expires	12/24/2014
----------------	------------

Version: 1.0

Created at 11/24/2014 3:57 PM by DCF

Last modified at 11/24/2014 3:57 PM by DCF