



**ATTACHMENT F**

July 8, 1999

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM # 1-99  
(formerly Administrative memo #1-98)\*

TO: Protection & Safety Workers and Supervisors  
Protection & Safety Leadership Team  
Resource Development Administrators  
Service Area Administrators  
Service Area Contract Liaison Team

FROM: Ron Ross, Director

RE: Communication Process for Juvenile and Family Service Providers and Health and Human Services Staff

The following communication process has been developed jointly between staff of HHS and Executive Committee Members of the Nebraska Association for Homes and Services for Children (NeAHSC). It is intended to be utilized by HHS staff and providers and to serve as a guideline for communication. This process will be reviewed and may be altered and improved as necessary.

**COMMUNICATION PROCESS:**

The main access point for communication for contract providers regarding CONTRACT ISSUES within the Health and Human Service System is the Service Area Contract Liaison (SACL). Within each service area there is a staff member identified with this role and they are to serve as the pivot point on contract matters within their service area.

The role of the Service Area Contract Liaison (SACL) includes:

- processing contracts
- assisting in problem solving and dispute resolution
- communication (with the providers, case manager, customer)
- oversight of the contracts and assurance of compliance
- oversight of the billing process
- involvement with program evaluation (to include the annual report)
- oversight of utilization communication with others in HHS regarding contract issues

The contractor and the SACL are encouraged to maintain regular communication through meetings, phone calls and other means to discuss how things are going and to problem solve regarding any issues of concern from either HHS or the provider's perspective. For contracts that cover more than one service area there will be a lead SACL identified as a point of contact for the provider.

## **CASE CONCERNS & CONTRACT CONCERNS:**

Paramount to the successful resolution of either a case or contract concern are two basic premises:

- 1) That concerns are raised and addressed in as timely of a manner as possible and
- 2) That concerns are addressed at the level closest to the provision of services as possible.

**CASE CONCERNS:** There will be times when the provider experiences concerns regarding an issues with a child and/or family that they are serving. In this instance the provider is encouraged to contact the Protection and Safety Worker to address their concerns. The Protection and Safety Worker is expected to acknowledge that they have in fact received the concern **within three days** (an emergency situation should be responded to as quickly as possible, if the Protection & Safety Worker is not available in an emergency then their supervisor should be contacted).

The Protection and Safety Worker and contractor will work together to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. If after consultation with the Protection and Safety Worker the provider is unable to resolve the issue then the Protection and Safety Supervisor should be contacted for further discussion.

It may be useful to involve the SACL to act as a consultant to this process of resolving specific case concerns. The SACL can assist by participating in the discussions as an intermediary, provide information regarding the chain of command in the service area and also provide ideas about resolution of case concerns.

If there is not a satisfactory resolution at the supervisory level further discussions may occur with the Protection and Safety Administrator and then the Service Area Administrator. If the provider is unable to resolve the issue at the service area level then Chief Deputy Director for Services would be the next level of contact followed by Director of Services.

**CONTRACT CONCERNS:** A contractor may have concerns that are related to their contract as opposed to a case specific concern. In that instance the provider should discuss these issues with the SACL. The SACL is expected to acknowledge the providers concern within **five working days** (again an emergency situation should be responded to as quickly as possible and if the SACL is not available their supervisor may be contacted).

The contractor and the SACL will work together to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. The contracts for child welfare and juvenile services are standardized with corresponding program standards, rates and utilization criteria. Because of the standardization there are many issues that are not able to be altered except through the overall contract revision process.

There is an exception process that has been developed regarding the program standards. If the provider is requesting an exception to a program standard they are expected to document the request in writing and send it to their SACL. The SACL will consult with the Resource Development & Support Unit in the Central Office of HHS and Service Area Administrator and a decision will be made to grant or deny the exception. If the exception is approved corresponding documentation will be attached to the providers contract.

The SACL serves as the person who interprets the contract and provides information regarding any changes in the contract to providers. The SACL will also be able to provide information regarding service area needs and processes for contracting ( e.g. open enrollment vs request for proposals).

If the contractor is unable to successfully resolve their contract concerns with the SACL they may address their concerns to the Resource Development Administrator (if the SACL does not serve this role) and then to the Service Area Administrator or their designee. If the contractor is unable to resolve their issues successfully with the Service Area Administrator or their designee then they may request that the appropriate Central Office staff would become involved and at a minimum this would include the Resource Development & Support Unit and may include others depending on the nature of the issue.

If the contractor is unable to resolve the issue with the Service Area and Central Office consultation then the contractor may address their concerns to the Chief Deputy Director for Services and then to the Director of Services.

The Department also expects that contractors will be responsive to requests for information on a case or contract basis within the time frames outlined by HHS.

In summary, both case and contract concerns should be directed to the HHS staff closest to the work involved, the Protection and Safety Worker and the SACL. While the focus of this process is to open up lines of communication and to do so in timely manner it is also important to note that at times the contractor will not agree with the HHS departmental stance on an issue. For a variety of reasons the departmental stance was determined and felt to be the most appropriate and may not change due to contractor disagreement. All case and contract concerns will be reviewed based on their own merits and will be evaluated accordingly.

cc: Dennis Loose, Chief Deputy Director  
Pat Taft, System Advocate  
HHS Contract Providers

**\*updated 6/15/99 to reflect new titles within HHS**