

Northern Service Area

Initial Safety Assessment 3rd Round - Safety Model QA Review



**Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Quality Assurance**

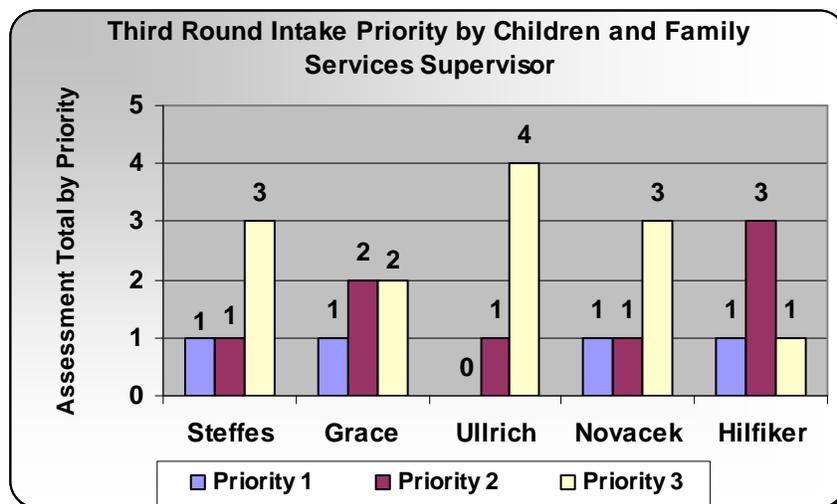
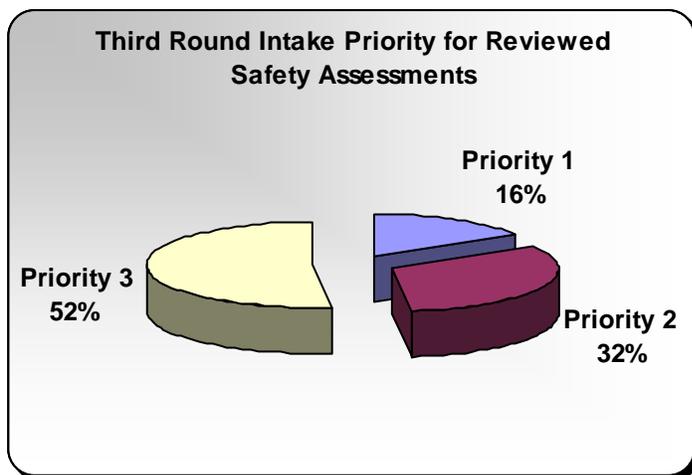
October 2009

Quality Assurance Team completed third round of Initial Safety Assessment Reviews in August and September 2009. A total of 25 finalized Safety Assessments were randomly selected by QA staff from five Children and Family Services Supervisors (CFSS). Review consisted of five assessments from each NSA Supervisor; Benita Steffes, Erin Grace, John Ullrich, Lara Novacek and Tami Hilfiker.

Second round of Initial Safety Assessment reviews was completed in November 2008. A total of 20 finalized Safety Assessments were randomly selected by QA staff from four Children and Family Services Supervisors (CFSS). Review consisted of five assessments from each NSA Supervisor: Benita Steffes, Erin Grace, John Ulrich, and Tami Hilfiker.

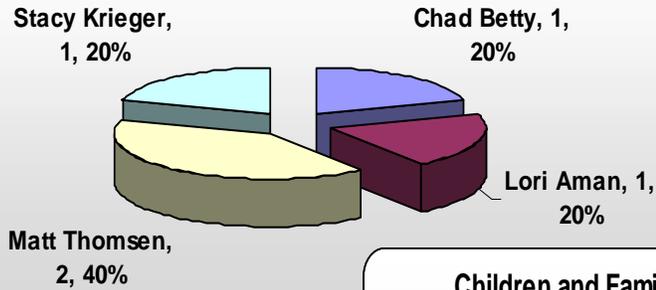
First round of Initial Safety Assessment reviews was completed in April 2008. A total of 75 finalized assessments were submitted to QA staff from five Children and Family Services Supervisors (CFSS). The reviews consisted of fifteen cases each from Benita Steffes, Erin Grace, LaDonna Mead, Tami Hilfiker, and Tony Mitzel.

Third Round: 25 assessments reviewed; 4 were Priority 1, 8 were Priority 2 and 13 were Priority 3.

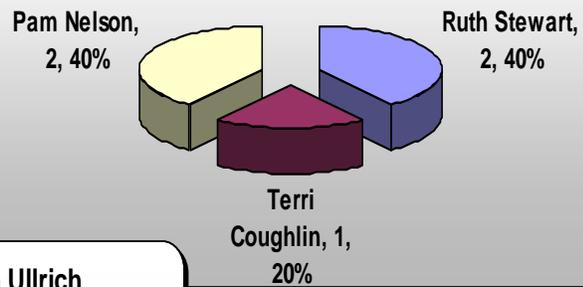


The following charts contain a breakdown of reviewed assessments per worker for each Children and Family Services Supervisor:

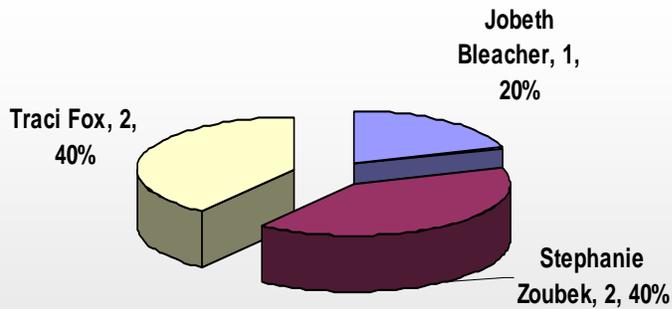
Children and Family Services Supervisor Benita Steffes



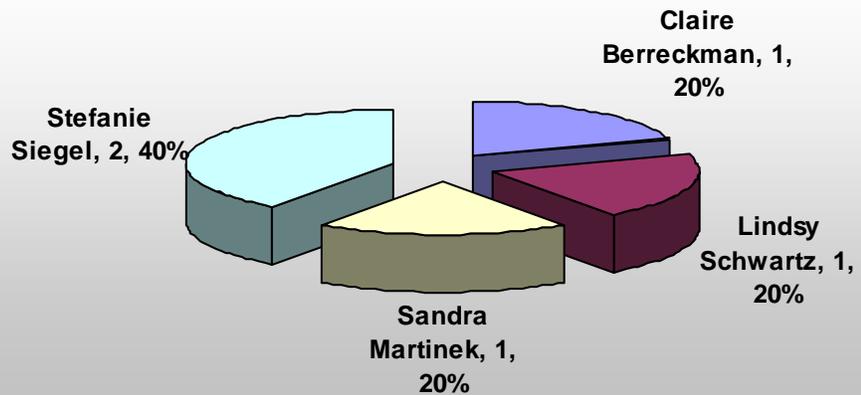
Children and Family Services Supervisor Erin Grace

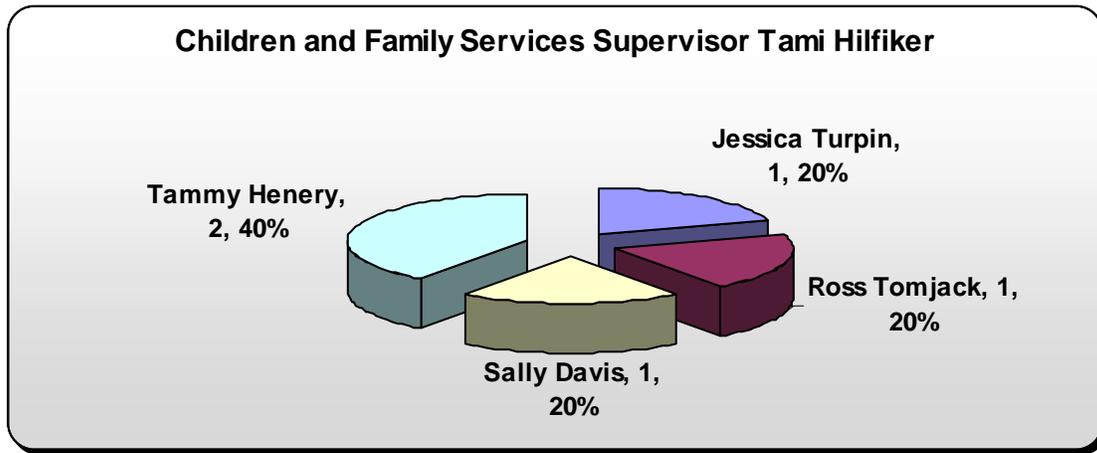


Children and Family Services Supervisor John Ullrich



Children and Family Services Supervisor Lara Novacek





The following is a summary of Second Round Data from ALL 25 Initial Safety Assessment reviews. Charts for these overall data can be found in the attached excel file: *NSA Safety QA Report.CHARTS.Overall 3rd Round*. Charts in these attachments, compare all rounds of Initial Safety Assessment Reviews.

Initial Response/Contact Information (Chart 1):

- Initial contact with child victim was made within required time frame in 76% of the Safety Assessments (19 out of 25 instances).
- Other children in the household were present in 5 of the 25 (20%) of the reviewed assessments. Other children in the home were interviewed in 5 out of 5 instances (100%).
- 11 out of 20 reviewed assessments had a non-maltreating caregiver listed in the intake. The non-maltreating caregiver was interviewed in 10 out of 11 or 90.9% of the instances.
- Other adults were present in 5 of the reviewed assessments, 40% or 2 out of 5 of these adults were interviewed by workers.
- Interviews with the maltreating caregiver occurred in 96% or 24 out of 25 assessments where a maltreating caregiver was identified.
- Interview protocol was followed in 44% or 11 out of 25 assessments. For those assessments that did not follow protocol reviewers were unable to find documentation to indicate the reason for the deviation from protocol in 5 out of 14 assessments (35.7%).

Present Danger (Chart 2 & 3):

- Present danger at the initial contact with the child victim and/or family was identified in 1 out of 25 reviewed assessments (4%).
- Reviewers agreed with the worker’s assessment of Present Danger in 25 out 25 or 100% assessments.
- One Safety Assessment had an Immediate Protective Action (IPA) taken;
 - Reason for the protective action was explained to the parent/caregiver in 0 out of 1 instance (0.0%).

- Protective Action included a provision for oversight in 1 out of 1 instance (100%). Oversight requirement was sufficient to assure that the Protective Action was implemented in accordance with expectation and assured child safety in 0 out of 1 instance (0.0%).
- Protective Action contained parent's willingness to cooperate in 1 out of 1 instance (100%).
- Protective Action contained a description of the persons responsible for the Protective Action in 1 out of 1 instance (100%).
- Protective Action contained confirmation of person responsible for Protective Action (trustworthiness, reliability, commitment, availability, alliance to plan) in 1 out of 1 instance (100%).
- Description of how Protective Action will work was reflected in 0 out of 1 instance (0.0%).
- Timeframes of the Protective Action was documented in 0 out of 1 instance (0.0%).
- Overall, 0.0% Protective Action Plans were judged to be sufficient by Reviewers.

Domains (Chart 5):

- **Maltreatment** – Sufficient information was collected in 76% (19 out of 25) of the assessments.
 - *Reviewer Comments: Interview or include information for everyone listed as perpetrators. Include findings/conclusions and evidence to support findings, include removal of child, address all areas of concern in the intake. Caution run on narratives, information needs to be separated into other domain areas.*
- **Nature** – Sufficient information was collected in 56% (14 out of 25) of the assessments.
 - *Reviewer Comments: Information contained in domain is evidence and goes to supporting the finding, therefore should be contained in maltreatment. Include analysis of events/factors surrounding the abuse and neglect. Include pattern of why the abuse and neglect is occurring in the home.*
- **Child Functioning** – Sufficient information was collected in 76% (19 out of 25) of the assessments.
 - *Reviewer Comments: What conclusions can be drawn from the worker's contact with all parties regarding the child's behavior and development? Discuss nature of peer interactions. Worker observation of child (ren), description of overarching statements surrounding child's development or behavioral difficulties; need to assess all children living in home.*
- **Disciplinary Practices** – Sufficient information was collected in 60% (15 out of 25) of the assessments.
 - *Reviewer Comments: Include situations and detailed information in which the parent implements discipline for the child(ren), future discipline plans in assessments involving infants, children's statements of discipline in home, patterns of discipline with older children.*

- **General Parenting** – Sufficient information was collected in 56% (14 out of 25) of the assessments.
 - *Reviewer Comments: Routines within the home, include past parenting of children that may have been relinquished or terminated, family activities, parental roles, include parenting for all individuals living in the home if they take a role in caring for the children.*
- **Adult Functioning** – Sufficient information was collected in 60% (15 out of 25) of the assessments.
 - *Reviewer Comments: Need to include all adults living in the home, community or family supports, Mental Health, Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse information. Talk about the nature of adult relationships within the home (marriage and other relationships).*

Collateral Source (Chart 5):

- 22 out of the 25 (88%) assessments indicated that information should have been collected from a collateral source. Collateral information was collected in 31.8% or 7 out the 22 assessments.
 - *Reviewer Comments: Incorporate the information gained from collaterals into the assessment. Many times a contact is recorded on the contact sheet but the information gained is not incorporated into the assessment. Suggest workers utilize the narrative portion in the contact sheet to document the family’s relationship to the contact.*

Maternal/Paternal Relatives (Chart 5):

- Maternal relatives were identified in 76% of the assessments (19 out of 25).
- Paternal relatives were identified in 80% of the assessments (20 out of 25).
 - *Reviewer Comment: Documentation needs to contain at a minimum first name, last name, and location (city & state). Include in documentation parents’ refusal to provide extended family information during assessment.*

ICWA (Chart 5):

- Information regarding ICWA was obtained in 84% of the assessments (21 out of 25).
 - *Reviewer Comments: Workers need to utilize the kinship narrative and include a statement as to how ICWA information was obtained by CFS Specialist. For example, ICWA does not apply to family or N/A. Need to include statement of how the worker learned that it did not apply.*
 - *Examples:*
 - *Per mother/name and father/name child does not meet criteria for ICWA because of the following reason.*
 - *Father was asked about enrollment or qualification he may meet in Native American Tribe in which he denied eligibility for him or his son.*
 - *According to (parents/name), no Native American Tribal heritage exists within the family.*

Impending Danger (Charts 4, 5 & 6):

Impending Danger at the initial contact with the youth and/or family (Chart 3): The worker identified impending danger at the initial contact with the child or family in 32% or 8 out of the 25 reviewed assessments. **The reviewer agreed with the worker's decision in 76% or 19 out of the 25 reviewed assessments.**

- Reviewer disagreed with the worker in 6 of the assessments, where the worker indicated that there was NO impending danger at the initial contact with the youth and family. The reviewers determined that there was not enough information in the assessment to determine if impending danger was present initial contact with the child and/or family.

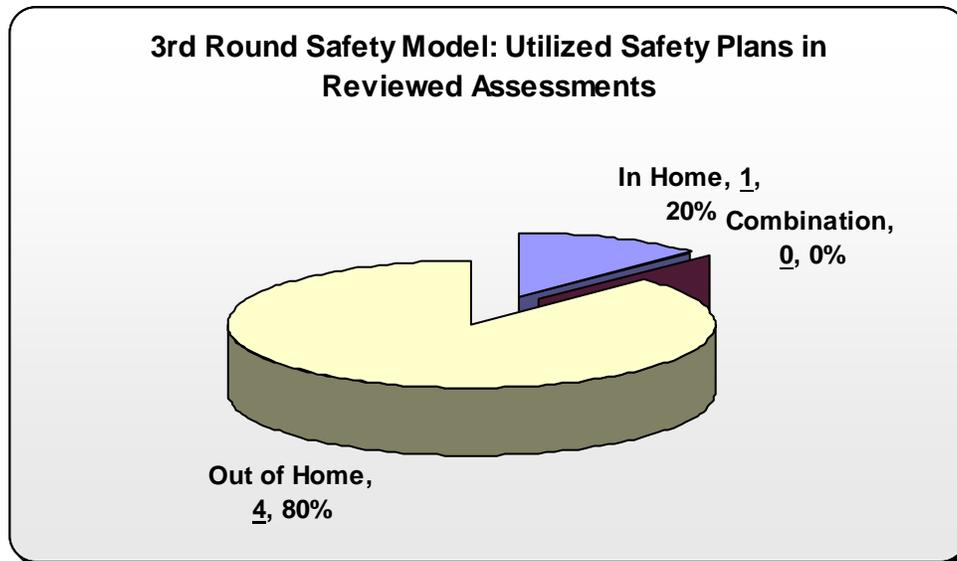
Impending Danger at the end of the Initial Assessment (Chart 4): The worker identified impending danger at the end of the initial assessment in 8 out of the 25 cases reviewed.

- 14 out of 25 (56%) of the reviewed assessments contained sufficient information to provide a reasonable understanding of family members and their functioning.
- 14 out of 25 (56%) of the reviewed assessments contained sufficient information to support and justify decision making.
- 14 out of 25 (56%) of the reviewed assessments contained sufficient information in the six domains to accurately assess the 14 factors.
- Safety threats were identified in 8 of the reviewed assessments.
 - In 87.5% or 7 out of 8 of the instances the reviewer agreed with the worker on all of the safety factors identified “yes”.
 - Within the safety factors identified “yes”, 6 out of 8 (75%) contained threshold documentation for identification/justification of impending danger.
- In 48% or 12 out of 25 assessments, the reviewer agreed with the worker on all of the safety factors identified “no”.
- Safety Assessment Conclusion:
 - The worker determined that the child was UNSAFE at the conclusion of the safety assessment in 8 out of 25 (32%) of the reviewed assessments. The reviewer agreed with the worker’s decision that the child was UNSAFE in 8 out of the 8 (100%) assessments.
 - The worker determined that the child was SAFE in 17 out of 25 (68%) of the reviewed assessments. The reviewer agreed with the worker’s decision that the child was SAFE in 8 out of the 17 assessments (47.1%).

Although the reviewers determined the majority of assessments did not contain sufficient information to determine impending danger did not rise to the level for Children and Family Services Administrator notification due to safety concerns.

Safety Plan (Charts 7, 8 & 9): The worker determined that the child was unsafe in 8 out of the 25 (32%) reviewed assessments. Safety plans were established at the conclusion of the safety assessment in 8 out of 8 (100%) of the applicable reviewed assessments.

- 12.5% or 1 out of 8 of the safety plans were in home safety plans.
- No combination safety plans were utilized.
- 87.5% or 7 out of 8 of the safety plans were out of home safety plans.



- 8 out of 8 (100%) safety plans contained a contingency plan; reviewer judged the contingency plan to be appropriate in 2 out of 8 (25%) of the reviewed assessments.

Examples of sufficient contingency plan:

Note: The intent of having a sufficient contingency plan is to have staff think ahead, anticipate situations that might come up and make a plan to deal with them. A good contingency plan is an actual backup plan with names and information of individual(s) that will take over or complete safety actions if the original safety plan participant is unable to do so. A good contingency plan is one that can prevent the need for immediate caseworker notification or action.

For Out of Home Safety Plans:

1.) *If (NAME) approved relative provider is unable to care for the (child/youth), the relative care provider will contact the child's caseworker and the child will be placed with (NAME) another identified and approved relative provider.*

2.) *If (NAMES) foster parents are unable to care for the (child/youth), the foster parents will contact the child's caseworker and the child will be placed with (NAME) identified respite care provider or (NAME) identified traditional or agency foster care provider.*

For IN Home Safety Plans:

1.) *If (NAME) relative safety plan provider is unable to be at (NAME) family home as expected from 4-6pm. Then (NAME) will contact (NAME) another relative safety plan participant who will substitute for them during that time. If both are unavailable due to a family emergency then (NAME) the pastor's wife will substitute for them during that time.*

2.) *If (NAME) a contractor providing safety services for the family is unable to do what they agreed to do, they will notify the caseworker and (NAME) another safety service contractor will be utilized.*

Examples of insufficient contingency plan:

- 1) *The placement unit will need to find another placement.*
- 2) *Child will be made a state ward and placed into foster care.*
- 3) *This is an out of home safety plan and there is not a need for a backup plan.*

- 4) *The assigned caseworker should be contacted.*
- 5) *Their designee will take over*
- 6) *None*

- Suitability of the safety plan participants was completed in 6 out of 8 (75%) of the assessments.
 - Reviewer judged that there was sufficient information to support the decision made with regards to the suitability of the safety plan participants in 6 out of 8 (75%) of the safety plans.
 - *Reviewer Comments: Need to ensure suitability is completed for all participants including two-parent foster families, providers and informal supports. Include background checks on suitability.*
- 7 out of 8 (87.5%) safety plans addressed who was going to make sure the child was protected.
- 3 out of 8 (37.5%) safety plans addressed what action is needed.
- 5 out of 8 (62.5%) safety plans addressed where the plan and action are going to take place.
- 0 out of 8 (0.0%) safety plans addressed when the action will be finished.
- 4 out of 8 (50%) safety plans addressed how it is all going to work and how the actions are going to control for safety.
- 87.5% or 7 out of 8 of safety plans did not contain caregiver promissory commitments.
- 2 out of 8 (25%) safety plans involved in home services.
- 8 out of 8 (100%) safety plans contained a plan for oversight.
 - Reviewers determined that the oversight requirements were sufficient to assure that the safety plan was implemented in accordance with expectation and was assuring child safety in 3 out of 8 (37.5%) of the reviewed safety plans.
- 6 out of 8 (75%) safety plans adjusted as threats increased or decreased.
- Overall, 0.0% (0 out of 8) Safety Plans were judged to be appropriate by Reviewers.

Protective Capacity Assessment

- 3 out of 8 (37.5%) of the reviewed cases had a protective capacity assessment completed on the system at the time of the review.
 - Documentation within the protective capacity assessments indicated that consensus was reached between the specialist and family regarding what has changed or needs to change in 1 out of 3 or 33.3% of the completed assessments.
 - Specialists identified the parents' enhanced protective capacities in 66.6% 2 out of 3 of the completed protective capacity assessments.

Conditions for Return

- Conditions of return should have been established in 6 cases. 0.0% or 0 out of 6 were completed on the applicable reviewed cases.

Reviewer's Overall Analysis and Conclusion of the Work:

For the purpose of a case review, the reviewer assessed the following information based on their review of the case. This part of the review contains the same information as those included in the Supervisory Review of Nebraska Safety Assessment.

Category	NSA 3	Steffes 3	Grace 3	Ulrich 3	Novacek 3	Hilfiker 3
The Nebraska Safety Assessment Instrument was completed correctly and completely	32%	20%	40%	40%	40%	20%
Documentation is on N-FOCUS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Required Time Frames were met	76%	80%	100%	60%	80%	60%
A reasonable level of effort was expended given the identified safety concerns.	48%	40%	80%	60%	20%	40%
Safety of the child/youth was assured during the assessment process.	52%	40%	80%	60%	20%	60%
Sufficient information was gathered for informed decision making	56%	40%	100%	60%	40%	40%
Available written documentation was obtained from law enforcement and others as approp.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ICWA information was documented	84%	40%	100%	80%	100%	100%
Information was obtained about non-custodial parent, relatives, and other family support.	68%	40%	60%	60%	80%	100%
An Immediate Protective Action was appropriately implemented to assure child safety.	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
A Safety Plan was appropriately completed and implemented to assure child safety.	11.1%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
A Safety Assessment was documented in accordance with required practice.	33.3%	25%	40%	40%	40%	20%
A Protective Action was documented in accordance with required practice.	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
A Safety Plan was documented in accordance with required practice.	12.5%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
The family network and others were appropriately involved in the gathering of information.	37.5%	40%	50%	20%	40%	40%
The family networks and others were appropriately involved in developing Safety Plans.	50%	100%	0%	50%	100%	0%
Policy and procedures related to safety intervention were followed.	64%	60%	80%	40%	80%	60%
Safety plan is sufficient to protect child from threats of severe harm.	25%	0%	50%	0%	0%	100%
Efforts to coordinate with law enforcement were documented.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Interview protocols were followed or reason for deviation were documented.	64%	60%	80%	40%	80%	60%
The appropriate definition was used in making the case status determination.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
The finding was correctly documented in N-FOCUS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Factual information supports the selected finding.	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%
Proof of certified notice to the alleged perpetrator is located in the file.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The following table provides a listing of the reviewed Safety Assessments by HHS Quality Assurance for Northern Service Area third round of initial assessment safety reviews by Children and Families Services Supervisor and Specialist:

Children and Families Supervisor	Intake #	Children and Family Services Specialist
Benita Steffes	321293	Chad Betty
	312449	Stacy Krieger
	315837	Matt Thomsen
	320310	Matt Thomsen
	307683	Lori Aman
Erin Grace	308830	Ruth Stewart
	324909	Terri Coughlin
	309753	Pam Nelson
	316170	Ruth Stewart
	312170	Pam Nelson
John Ullrich	309494	Traci Fox
	271290	Jobeth Blecher
	323931	Stephanie Zoubek
	323489	Stephanie Zoubek
	307099	Traci Fox
Lara Novacek	308888	Stefanie Siegel
	316248	Stefanie Siegel
	313987	Claire Berreckman
	310365	Lindsay Schwartz
	304359	Sandra Martinek
Tami Hilfiker	324806	Jessica Turpiin
	304140	Tammy Henery
	308723	Tammy Henery
	315017	Ross Tomjack
	302971	Sally Davis