



July 28, 2021

ESA Full Service Case Management Contract Monitoring Summary Quarter 2: April - June 2021

Below is a summary of monitored performance areas, successes, areas of concern for the second quarter of 2021, and action steps for the next quarter.

- A. Case Transfer/Assessment** – During this quarter, there were 185 case transfers between the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Initial Assessment team and Saint Francis. Saint Francis accepted all referrals from DHHS with recommendations for services, interventions, and strategies to address safety concerns. Saint Francis met the required 2-hour time frame to implement services for families. The DHHS Initial Assessment team verified case transfer staffing has been occurring consistently. During this quarter, the DHHS Service Area Administrator attended random case transfer staffing meetings to ensure continued adherence to the case transfer staffing process.
- B. Case Management/Supervision** – Two performance measures reflect Saint Francis' successes with case management:
- Saint Francis continues to exceed the goal for Absence of Recurrence of Maltreatment within 12 Months (goal is to be greater than 92.1%). DHHS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) data for the Eastern Service Area indicates Saint Francis achieved minimal instances of Recurrence of Maltreatment with the following performance noted: 96.4% for April, 96.2% for May, and 96.8% for June.
 - Saint Francis continues to meet the goal of reducing the percentage of Children who Re-enter Foster Care within 12 Months of Discharge (goal is <8.3%). DHHS CQI data for the Eastern Service Area indicates Saint Francis had 6.9% of children re-entering foster care for April, 7.4% for May, and 5.6% for June.

Items of concern:

- Saint Francis has not met the target goal for Monthly Face to Face Contact with Youth (target 95%) or Monthly Face to Face Contact with Non-court Involved Children (target 95%). Saint Francis was able to have

monthly face-to-face contact with 89% of youth in April, 84.5% of youth in May, and 93.6% in June.

- During the first and second quarters of 2021, the DHHS CQI team conducted a review of active CFS cases in the Eastern Service Area. The case review sample was pulled from the youth data extract file located in the Nebraska Family Online Client User System (NFOCUS) on March 1, 2021.
 - To meet the goals of the study, the project team conducted 1,922 case reviews of children utilizing a standardized review tool to assess the condition of the case as documented in NFOCUS.
 - Of all the children reviewed, 98.3% had no safety concerns identified while 33 (1.7%) children had a noted safety concern. All safety concerns identified in this review were responded to immediately by Saint Francis staff with face-to-face contact with the child, a review of the safety concern, and the development or adherence to the safety plan, as well as increased safety plan monitoring and documentation.
 - Out of 1,922 child records reviewed, 762 (39.6%) records noted case management concerns. Case management concerns included items such as mandatory monthly contact with parents and siblings did not occur or were not documented, family team meetings did not occur monthly or were not documented, case managers were either not visiting with the child in private during the monthly visit or not documenting that a portion of the visit occurred in private, the identification and engagement of the father, etc.
 - In addition, our review team conducted interviews with forty (40) Saint Francis Ministries staff at all levels. Saint Francis Ministries leadership holds one-on-one meetings with their staff weekly to develop reports. One-on-one staffing includes discussions about cases, concerns with staffing, and consultation points. Daily huddles include discussion on performance measures, timely task completion, and court.
 - The findings from the case review are significant for several reasons. First, a case review of 100% of the youth served under this contract ensures child safety. Secondly, the case review provides insights into areas identified as strengths as well as areas needing improvement.

Next Steps:

- 1) DHHS requested a Corrective Action Plan to address issues related to meeting the statewide target for contact with children. This Corrective Action Plan was submitted by Saint Francis and approved by DHHS on February 12, 2021. To ensure this issue continues to be a focus, face-to-face contacts with children are monitored and reported on daily by the Saint Francis Quality Assurance team.

This increased monitoring and prioritization by Case Management leadership was implemented in June, due to a noted decline early in the quarter. Saint Francis showed significant improvement in this measure increasing monthly contacts by 9% from May to June.

C. Service Array - Saint Francis provides services intended to support and assist children, youth, and families. In this past quarter, Saint Francis requested proposals from providers interested in providing services in the Eastern Service Area.

- Saint Francis uses the Consultation and Information Sharing Framework®, which creates a supportive and consistent infrastructure for critical thinking, decision making, supervision, family involvement, and practice improvement. Saint Francis has also implemented Safety Organized Practice which further supports Saint Francis's work and alignment with DHHS priorities.
- Saint Francis continues to work closely with DHHS to plan and implement the Federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) services in the Eastern Service Area. Saint Francis staff participate in external multi-disciplinary teams to discuss service concerns and innovative solutions that utilize FFPSA evidence-based practices in their delivery to best meet the needs of children and families. During this quarter, the Saint Francis Contracts Team worked to implement new services in the ESA based on re-assessing gaps and needs as well as including services and models rated as Supported and/or Well Supported by the Title IV-E Clearinghouse.
- Contracts for the following new services have been issued: Intensive Family Preservation, Intensive Family Reunification with the use of EBT's that target different populations, Assessment Foster Care, Integrated Family Care, and Resource Family Homes.
- Within the last quarter Saint Francis posted the Saint Francis Ministries Services Referral Guide to their website at:
<https://saintfrancisministries.org/nebraska/the-ffpsa-in-nebraska/>

D. Service Monitoring - Saint Francis subcontractors are monitored for contract compliance and are required to provide monthly supporting documentation of service provisions to the Saint Francis Data Management team. Saint Francis provided their Achievement Indicator Matrix showing the monthly results of subcontractor surveys to DHHS. DHHS noted a lack of responsiveness by the provider community to the surveys.

Saint Francis implemented a file audit system to monitor subcontractor compliance with contract requirements. During the second quarter, Saint Francis completed personnel file audits for 7 contracted providers: Beneficial Behavioral Health, Boys

Town, Capstone, Child Connect, Christian Heritage Children's Home, Caring People of Sudan, and Omaha Home for Boys.

Next Steps:

- 1) DHHS will monitor provider responses when Saint Francis contracts for services.
- 2) Saint Francis will now hold provider meetings monthly.
- 3) DHHS and Saint Francis will develop a collaborative response to send to subcontractors used jointly by DHHS and Saint Francis that have performance issues.

E. Educational Opportunities – During this quarter, the Saint Francis Education Specialist focused on Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) evaluations, ensuring youth evaluated timely and addressing any barriers. This included conversations with area Early Development Network coordinators, representatives from the Nebraska Department of Education, and Case Managers to ensure members of the team have the necessary case and contact information.

During Summer months Case Managers work with school districts to complete educational best interest staffing for school district transfers, as well as facilitate tours of new schools for youth transitioning from elementary to middle schools or middle to high schools.

Next Steps:

- 1) Saint Francis will contract by the end of the calendar year with a peer advocate organization work with local schools to improve graduation rates for children leaving our care.

F. Community Engagement - Saint Francis demonstrated community engagement efforts through holding quarterly provider and stakeholder meetings, attending quarterly Judges' meetings, and attending community meetings that included, but were not limited to:

- Douglas County Through the Eyes of the Child (2nd Wednesday of every month).
- Douglas County Treatment Team Meetings.
- Sarpy County Through the Eyes of the Child (3rd Friday of every month).
- Sarpy County Treatment Team Meeting.
- Youth Impact (Every Thursday).
- Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition meetings (3rd Friday of every month).
- South Omaha Juvenile Justice Forum (2nd Friday of every month).
- RED Meeting Urban League of Nebraska (2nd Friday of every month).
- Juvenile Justice Reform Initiative-Families Work Group (3rd Tuesday of every month).
- Judges meeting with SFM CEO William Clark.
- Saint Francis Provider Meeting held on April 1, 2021.

- Domestic Violence Subcommittee (2nd Thursday of every month).
- Juvenile Alternatives to Detention (once a month).
- Nebraska Family Support Network (NFSN)/DHHS/SFM meeting monthly.
- SFM and FCRO meeting held on May 6, 2021.
- Douglas County Attorney/SFM/DHHS discussion monthly.
- Sarpy County Attorney/SFM/DHHS discussion monthly.
- Saint Francis' Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Specialist maintains monthly contact with local tribes along with case managers and the DHHS ICWA Specialist to conduct a case review for each child who is eligible or registered as a member of these tribes. The Saint Francis ICWA Specialist participates in monthly Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition phone calls.

Next Steps:

- 1) Saint Francis's Regional Vice President will have a primary focus on community engagement and increasing the number of community contacts for upcoming quarters.

G. Resource Family/Foster Parent Homes – During the second quarter, Saint Francis succeeded in meeting several performance measures related to the foster care system in the Eastern Service Area:

- Continually meeting the percent of Children in Foster Care Placed in Relative/Kinship Homes target with 61% placed in April, 60.8% in May, and 60.5% in June. (*goal is greater than 58.7%*)
- Continues to perform better than the targeted goal for incidents of Maltreatment in Foster Care with 2.63 incidents for April, 2.63 incidents for May, and 2.82 incidents for June. (*The federal target is less than 7.00 incidents per 100,000 days of out-of-home care.*)
- Continually meeting the goal for Placement Stability this quarter (*average of less than 4.12 placement changes per 1,000 days of all youth in foster care for 12 months*). DHHS CQI data shows that children in the care of Saint Francis had an average of 3.42 moves for April, 3.54 moves for May, and 3.66 moves for June.
- Continually meeting the Placement Stability goal for the Percentage of Children in Foster Care for Less than 12 Months with Fewer than Two Placement Changes by achieving 87.9% for April and 86.5% for May. Saint Francis showed a slight decrease in June with 85.5%; the goal is to be greater than 86%.
- Continually meeting the Placement Stability of Children in Foster Care 12-24 Months with Fewer than Two Placement Changes achieving 68% for April, 68.5% for May, and 68.8% for June; the goal is to be greater than 65.4%.
- Continually meeting the goal for Placement Stability of Children in Foster Care 24 months or more, with Fewer than 2 Placements Changes achieving 46.2% for April, 46.3% for May, and 47.7% for June; the goal is to be greater than 41.8%.

Items of concern:

- Saint Francis needs to increase the number of licensed relative and kinship homes in the Eastern Service Area to maintain family connections for children and increase the drawdown of available Title IV-E funding.
 - The Saint Francis Ministries Recruitment and Retention report for January-March indicates Saint Francis had 315 approved relative/kinship foster homes and 73 licensed relative/kinship foster homes at the end of the first quarter.
 - Data for recruitment and retention of foster homes for quarter 2 is not available at the writing of this report but will be assessed in the quarter 3 report.

Next Steps:

- 1) Saint Francis is working to increase the number of licensed foster homes in the Eastern Service Area with contracted vendors. On June 30, 2021, DHHS received the Saint Francis Ministries Annual Kinship Licensing Report
- 2) Saint Francis and DHHS are exploring options to promote placement stability and increase the amount of licensed relative and kinship foster homes to maximize Title IV-Funding.
 - Saint Francis Ministries partnered with DHHS to pilot a provisional licensure program for foster parents in the State of Nebraska which started on March 8, 2021. In addition, DHHS has approved two foster care training curriculums, one from Saint Francis Ministries and one from Boys Town to pilot in the Eastern Service Area. These curriculums are designed to meet the specific needs of relative and kinship foster parents.

H. Workforce – Saint Francis continues to focus on ensuring a stable workforce is in place by hiring individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for case management, foster care homes, kinship, and support positions. During this quarter, Saint Francis experienced turnover in key leadership positions and has undergone an organizational redesign to support the retention of direct line staff. Saint Francis created several new positions such as the Case Manager Training Supervisor and another Human Resources Specialist to provide additional support for employees and to meet administrative needs.

Item of concern:

- The average monthly percentage of Saint Francis staff in compliance with caseload size was 44.1% for April, 35% for May, and 31.8% for June.

- Saint Francis hired 37 new employees for this quarter however they also had 52 employees depart. Out of the 37 new employees hired, 26 are Case Managers and out of the 52 departures, 30 were Case Managers.

Next Steps:

- 1) DHHS requested a Corrective Action Plan during the first quarter and the plan submitted by Saint Francis was approved on April 1, 2021. Saint Francis developed several strategies to meet the state standard for caseload ratio, including targeted recruitment and retention strategies, and a weekly review of caseload ratios at every supervisory level to determine barriers to success.
 - Based on the Corrective Action Plan, Saint Francis defines the indicator of success as a 10% increase in compliance every month. Saint Francis identified how many individuals they needed to recruit, apply, interview and hire to meet the caseload metric, accounting for projected resignations and terminations based on recent historical data.
 - Saint Francis Corporate Office provided support and oversight in the areas of human resources focusing on recruitment and retention activities.
 - DHHS Human Resources and Communications staff also provided technical assistance in areas of recruitment, job postings, interviews and retention strategies.
 - Saint Francis implemented several new retention strategies for this quarter including: raises for all staff, increased pay for bi-lingual staff, increased annual carry-over for earned time off, and employee referral and retention bonuses.
- I. **Maximizing Public and Private Funds** – Saint Francis maintains a listing of non-paid resources, along with private partners that provide services using private funding. To support the requirement and the implementation of the Families First Prevention Services Act, Saint Francis entered into a Memoranda of Understanding with Daybreak for Trauma-Focus Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and with Boys Town for Multi-Systemic Therapy to provide evidence-based clinical services and services to improve parental functioning services to children and families using public funds outside of child welfare dollars and private grant funds. Additionally, Saint Francis is speaking with Visiting Nurses Association and the Nebraska Children’s Home Society to enter into a Memoranda of Understanding for Healthy Families America.

Saint Francis has formed partnerships with several subcontractors and non-contracted agencies that allow access to grant-funded services for children, parents, and families such as human trafficking programs with the Indigo Program and Salvation Army, permanency services through Wendy’s Wonderful Kids, and housing programs through Heartland Family Services.

Saint Francis noted that staff experienced difficulty tracking Economic Assistance programs for families through NFOCUS, as there is no current functionality within the system to extract data for families who were offered or referred for these kinds of services except by hand count. Saint Francis has created a process to capture this information temporarily. While the information is preliminary, Saint Francis states that the overwhelming majority of families served through case management services have been referred to or are receiving economic assistance. A review posted on July 9, 2021, by the DHHS Continuous Quality Improvement team indicates DHHS assisted with economic assistance services to address the needs of the family 94.4% in the Eastern Service Area.

J. Utilization Management – Saint Francis developed the Care Center service coordination to provide oversight in the referral process for services and placements. During this quarter, Saint Francis Care Center processed service referrals from the DHHS initial assessment team and ongoing case management. As noted in the Case Transfer/Assessment section above, 185 cases were transferred to ongoing case management services with Saint Francis without issue.

- During the second quarter, Saint Francis used non-relative licensed homes on an average of 52% of the placements.
- Saint Francis requested permission to place 7 youth out of state due to court orders or lack of facilities in Nebraska that would be able to serve these youth. Saint Francis made referrals for all in-state facilities before seeking placement out-of-state.

Next Steps:

- 1) Saint Francis and DHHS will review Single Case Agreements and out-of-state placements to determine resource needs and identify gaps.
- 2) Saint Francis will identify services for pre-teens age 10-14 years.

K. Administrative Review

Grievances - Saint Francis has a Customer Care Department that responds to concerns and helps find a positive resolution to most issues while remaining neutral and objective.

- During the second quarter, Saint Francis received 30 Customer Care Contacts: 14 were categorized as customer concern, 12 were general inquiry, and 4 were other/unknown.
- DHHS received 20 grievances and 12 complaints from external stakeholders regarding Saint Francis which were addressed and resolved to the extent possible.

Background Checks - Saint Francis submitted a Corrective Action Plan to address compliance with background checks of new employees, this plan was

approved by DHHS on February 8, 2021. Saint Francis indicated on March 5 and April 9, 2021, internal reviews determined there was 100% compliance with having all necessary background checks received and cleared before the start date of each employee.

- DHHS completed file audits for Saint Francis employees in April and June. Results of these audits showed Saint Francis to be 100% in compliance with background check requirements for new staff hired since the implementation of the Corrective Action Plan.
- Based on the performance observed and verified over the past two quarters DHHS notified Saint Francis on July 9, 2021, the CAP would be closed as completed.

Court Room Issues – During this quarter, several court issues have been identified by the Douglas County Separate Juvenile Court including a finding of no reasonable efforts to provide services in one case and a finding of no active efforts in another case. Saint Francis has improved in timely submission of case plan/court reports since the last quarter.

In the second quarter, DHHS documented that out of 1,231 hearings, Saint Francis had been out of compliance with court orders in 15 cases (1.2% of cases)); case plan/court reports had not been submitted timely in 30 cases (2.4% of cases); Saint Francis staff failed to attend 19 hearings (1.5% of hearings) and were determined to be unprepared in 2 hearings (0.1% of hearings) during this quarter.

Next Steps:

- 1) DHHS is working closely with Saint Francis to resolve and reduce the issues identified by the Douglas County Juvenile Court. Weekly meetings are held with SFM leadership and DHHS Attorneys to resolve and overcome any barriers.
- 2) Saint Francis Attorneys are working with Case Management teams to better prepare Case Managers for court hearings.
- 3) DHHS leadership provides a weekly tracking report to Saint Francis noting the court issues by each Judge for the previous week.
- 4) Saint Francis has hired a paralegal to assist with court tracking and administrative oversight as well as to assist in increasing the frequency of Vice-President and General Counsel observing court hearings.

L. Financial Review – Saint Francis has consistently submitted financial information on time, including: Statement of Functional Expenses; Statement of Financial Position; Aging Reports; and Cash Flow Statements along with the Transaction Journal.

- DHHS and Saint Francis have established a system to track Saint Francis's direct services to accurately reflect the percentage to meet Nebraska Revised

Statute 43-4204. The CFS Deputy Director of Finance, CFS Federal Aid Administrator, and CFS Internal Auditor had multiple meetings with Saint Francis during the quarter to discuss the financial reporting needed to comply with state statutes. Saint Francis is working to comply with the reporting requirements regarding their direct services.

Next Steps:

- 1) The DHHS CFS Internal Auditor will continue to monitor and provide technical assistance and guidance as needed.
- 2) Saint Francis Finance and Data Management staff will enter direct service authorizations into NFOCUS timely

M. Information Systems - DHHS continues to use the information portal system, which is accessible for Saint Francis to view reports on performance specific to the Eastern Service Area. This system continues to be used to provide updates on performance metrics and authorization of services.

- DHHS continues to use a Business SharePoint webpage to serve as a repository for guidance and policy documents, training information, and documents related to case management.
- Saint Francis utilizes NFOCUS as the case management Child Welfare Information System and authorization system for services.

Corrective Action Plans

Please see attached Corrective Action Plan Compliance report.

Conclusion

During this quarter, the top priority for Saint Francis has been to increase the recruitment and retention of staff while continuing to meet several contractual performance metrics. While ongoing areas of opportunity are noted, including compliance with caseload ratio standards and licensing of relative and kinship homes, Saint Francis successfully completed Corrective Action Plans in the areas of background check and e-verify requirements.

During this quarter, Saint Francis opened their procurement process to encourage additional providers to contract for services in the Eastern Service Area. Saint Francis has engaged the provider community in developing services under the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) as demonstrated in their referral guide posted on their Nebraska site. Saint Francis continues to reach out to community providers and

stakeholders to build a strong system of support for children and families in the Eastern Service Area.

DHHS remains committed to working alongside Saint Francis to address workforce challenges being felt across the state and nation, recognize areas of improvement, and create action steps to ensure strong outcomes for children and families served in the Eastern Service Area.

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