



February 19, 2021

**ESA Full Service Case Management
Contract Monitoring Summary
Quarter 4, October-December 2020**

December 31, 2020, marked the first full year of Saint Francis Ministries providing contracted Case Management services in the Eastern Service Area of Nebraska.

Below is a summary of monitored performance areas, successes, areas of concern for the 4th quarter of 2020, and action steps for the next quarter.

- A. Case Transfer/Assessment** – Case Transfer between the DHHS investigative team and Saint Francis was successful during this quarter. Saint Francis accepts all referrals from DHHS with recommendations for services, interventions, and strategies to address safety concerns. Saint Francis continues to implement services for families within the 2-hour time frame. DHHS and Saint Francis leadership representatives met on October 6, 2020, and November 3, 2020, during the quarter to improve processes in the transfer process.
- B. Case Management/Supervision** – Two performance measures reflect Saint Francis' success 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 that Saint Francis achieved minimal instances of recurrence of maltreatment 96.1% for October, 96.1% for November, and 96.5% for December.
 - 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 that Saint Francis had 6.0% of children re-entering foster care for October, 6.4% for November, and 3.8% for December.

Item of concern:

- Saint Francis has not met the target goal for Monthly Face to Face Contact with State Wards (target 100%) or Monthly Face to Face Contact with Non-court Involved Children (target 100%).
 - Monthly Face to Face Contact with State Wards was 93.8% in October, 93.3% in November, and 87.8% in December.
 - Saint Francis had Monthly Face to Face Contact with Non-court Involved Children 79.1% in October, 83.4% in November, and 86.9% in December.

Next Steps:

DHHS requested a Corrective Action Plan that will address issues related to meeting the statewide target for contact with children. This corrective action plan was submitted on February 4, 2021 and is under review by DHHS.

- C. Service Array** - Saint Francis continues to contract with approximately 40 providers to provide services to children and families in the Eastern Service Area. Saint Francis has established relationships, including contracts, with providers outside the Eastern Service Area to strengthen the service array for all families and children in the state of Nebraska. Saint Francis has shown progress in implementing services for the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) through establishing memoranda of understanding with local agencies to provide Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), a well-supported model. The local agencies that provide PCIT include: Heartland Family Service, Omni Inventive Care, and Daybreak. Daybreak also provides Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) through memoranda of understanding with Saint Francis. The PCIT and Trauma-Focused -CBT models are two of the programs included in Nebraska’s Five Year Plan for FFPSA. Additionally, Saint Francis has contracted with agencies to provide Motivational Interviewing which, as a well-supported model, may be considered as an added program for the Five Year Plan. Saint Francis established a Family- Centered Treatment team and hired two therapists. The Family-Centered Treatment program is pending review by the California Clearinghouse for Evidence-Based Practices, but has been deemed an “approvable” program for use and is included in Nebraska’s Five Year Plan.
- D. Service Monitoring** – Saint Francis developed network monitoring surveys that were distributed to Sub-contractors starting April 2020. The surveys are electronic and sub-contractors have a link to provide performance data on measures related to the services rendered. There are 18 areas of performance which include:

Adoption Home Study	Family Group Conferencing	Kinship Support
Adoption Services	Family Support Services	Mediation-Facilitation
Agency Supported Foster Care	Group Home	Parenting Time/Supervised Visitation
Cultural Ambassador	Heart Gallery	Pathways to Permanency
Day or Evening Reporting	Intensive In-Home Services	Relinquishment Counseling
DV Intervention Program	Interpreting/Translator	Short-term Specialized Foster Care

Examples of performance measures include but are not limited to:

- Timeliness of Adoption home studies;
- No maltreatment in agency supported foster care;
- Contact with the care taker while in Agency Support Foster Care;
- Successful completion of Domestic Violence Intervention Program; and
- Achievement of goals during Family Support services.

Survey results for the 4th quarter indicated successes and areas for improvement in several performance measures as rated by the sub-contractors.

- E. Educational Opportunities** - In the fourth quarter Saint Francis worked with families to identify and overcome barriers in supporting the education of youth as it continues to navigate through the

pandemic. Saint Francis worked diligently to ensure children had transportation to schools that were on new part-time schedules and also worked with families to create day plans for youth during e-learning days that supported their individual educational needs.

Saint Francis also contracts with Nebraska Family Support Network to provide Peer-to-Peer mentoring services for families with children who are experiencing urgent behavioral/emotional challenges in their schools. This service provides parents the support they need to support their children's education.

- F. Community Engagement** – Saint Francis reported continued community engagement through attending quarterly provider/stakeholder meetings, Judicial Meetings, and various community meetings. Community meetings during the quarter included, but were not limited to, 1184 multidisciplinary teams (several times per week); SFM Provider Meeting on October 8, 2020; South Omaha Juvenile Justice Forum on October 9 and December 21, 2020; Provider Performance Workgroup on October 1, 2020; ESA Service Array Practice Improvement Group on November 13 and December 11, 2020; Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative November 5 and 19, 2020; Douglas County Community Plan Discussion November 18, December 9 and 21, 2020.
- G. Resource Family/Foster Parent Homes** – Several performance measures reflect Saint Francis' accomplishments in building a strong foster care system in the Eastern Service Area.
- DHHS CQI data for the Eastern Service Area indicates that Saint Francis showed improvement this quarter regarding the performance measure of the percent of Children in Foster Care Placed in Relative/Kinship Homes with 59.5% for October, 59.3% for November, and 60.1% for December (goal is to be greater than 58.7%).
 - Saint Francis continues to do well in the performance measure of incidents of Maltreatment in Foster Care. The federal target is less than 7.00 incidents per 100,000 days of out-of-home care. DHHS CQI data for the Eastern Service Area indicates that Saint Francis lowered the number of incidents during this quarter with 2.44 incidents for October, 2.09 incidents for November, and 1.75 incidents for December.
 - Saint Francis consistently met 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 for the Eastern Service Area indicates that Children in the care of Saint Francis had an average of 3.51 moves for October, 3.33 moves for November, and 3.45 moves for December.
 - DHHS CQI data for the Eastern Service Area indicates that Saint Francis met 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 88.1% for October, 88.3% for November, and 87.9% for December (goal is to be greater than 86%).
 - DHHS CQI data for the Eastern Service Area indicates that Saint Francis showed a slight decrease this quarter but did continue to meet the goal for Placement Stability for Children in Foster Care 12-24 Months with Fewer than Two Placement Changes achieving 69.2% for October, 67.6% for November, and 67.1% for December (goal is to be greater than 65.4%).
 - Within this quarter, Saint Francis met the target goal for the performance measure of Placement Stability of Children in Care 24 months or more, with Fewer than 2 Placements (the goal is to be greater than 41.8%) DHHS CQI data for the Eastern Service Area indicates that Saint Francis was below the target for October at 41.1%, but for November data reports indicate Saint Francis was above the target, at 43.2%, and for December, 45%.

Item of concern:

The number of licensed relative and kinship homes in the Eastern Service Area is low. Saint Francis is required to ensure appropriately safe relative and kin foster parents complete all activities required for licensing. During the months of October through December, Saint Francis and its sub-contractors submitted five relative or kinship licensing packets to DHHS. Saint Francis needs to increase the number of licensed relative and kinship homes in the Eastern Service Area to provide added support to the foster family and increase drawdown of available Title IV-E funding. At the beginning of the quarter, Saint Francis reported a total of 337 relative and kinship homes, and through losses and gains, ended the quarter with 307 relative and kinship foster homes. During the same period, Saint Francis reported licensing 4 relative or kinship homes, ending the quarter with 102 licensed relative/kinship foster homes. It should be noted that losses of relative or kinship homes may be due to placement change of child or permanency (adoption) was achieved.

Next Steps:

- a. Saint Francis is working to increase the number of licensed foster homes in the Eastern Service Area with contracted vendors.
- b. Saint Francis and DHHS are exploring options to increase the amount of licensed relative and kinship foster homes to maximize Title IV-E funding. DHHS established a process for Saint Francis to provisionally license relative and kinship foster homes so that Saint Francis will comply with the contract.

- H. Workforce** – According to DHHS Continuous Quality Improvement data for this quarter: 54% of Saint Francis Case Managers met the state-required caseload ratio for October, 54% for November, and 54% for December. DHHS requested a hiring plan from Saint Francis due to concerns regarding Saint Francis staff turnover and ability to meet caseload ratios as defined by statute. The hiring plan was received by DHHS on September 15, 2020, which outlines strategies to meet caseload standards and maintain a stable workforce for the Eastern Service Area.

Next Steps:

This quarter's data is an improvement from the 3rd quarter, however, due to Saint Francis not meeting the statutory-required caseload ratios, DHHS requested Saint Francis submit a Corrective Action Plan that addresses employee turnover and the ability to meet caseload ratios as defined by statute. This plan was submitted on February 5, 2021 and is under negotiation.

- I. Maximizing Public and Private Funds** – As mentioned above in Service Array, Saint Francis engaged local agencies to implement FFPSA services for the Eastern Service Area. This will assist in Nebraska accessing Title IVE funding for children who qualify and offset state expenditures. DHHS requested information from Saint Francis regarding any submission of applications for grants, private funding or local resources; however, as of the finalization of this report, the information has not been received.

In a sample review completed by DHHS, 94% of the cases in the sample indicated that Saint Francis assisted families in accessing Economic Assistance to address the needs of the family. This is an improvement from the 3rd quarter where 77.5% of the case sample indicated that families were assisted in accessing Economic Assistance.

- J. Utilization Management** – Saint Francis reports that they can implement services to families within two hours of referral for placement by DHHS. As noted in the annual report, Saint Francis remains focused on providing a comprehensive array of accessible, individualized interventions to meet the unique needs of children and families. The Saint Francis Internal Provider Review team meets weekly to review service

and placement needs and address any identified gaps in services. Saint Francis Care Center staff provide oversight in the referral process for services and placement. Staff also gather data to trace the capacity of service providers and identify needs. Saint Francis Foster Care Program staff review all placement referrals to ensure the best match is made for the child and family

K. Administrative -

1. Grievances- Saint Francis produced documentation showing the rate of grievances for the quarter and has followed a standard complaint and grievance process and practice within its organization. In the October - December Quarterly Report, there were a total of 34 Customer Care Contacts with 15 of those being concerns and 19 general inquiry calls. Saint Francis reported a total of 56 concern calls over the past year, January-December 2020.
2. Background Checks - Saint Francis is not yet in compliance with ensuring all names or aliases are checked when completing background checks for employees who are expected to have contact with children and families. A Corrective Action Plan was requested from Saint Francis on October 3, 2020, to address the background check issues. Saint Francis submitted the Corrective Action Plan on November 5th, 2020.

Next Steps:

- a. DHHS will conduct a quarterly file review in March 2021 and increase the sample size to ensure Saint Francis increased measures to complete background checks on all employees who have client contact. This increased sample will include all newly hired employees since December 17, 2020.
 - b. DHHS has requested an updated Corrective Action Plan that will more thoroughly address issues related to completing required background checks for every employee as required by the contract. This updated Corrective Action Plan was submitted on February 3, 2021 and approved by DHHS on February 8, 2021.
3. Financial Review –During the fourth quarter Saint Francis spent beyond its budgeted amount per month, driving the agency to reach the contracted Do Not Exceed amount by February 2021. Saint Francis changed leadership to refocus efforts internally and to address any financial concerns. Saint Francis has been consistently sending financial information on time which includes: Statement of Functional Expenses, Statement of Financial Position, Aging Reports, and Cash Flow Statements along with the Transaction Journal. Saint Francis sent October expenditure details on November 25, 2020; November details on December 23, 2020, and December details on January 21, 2021. DHHS established an emergency contract with Saint Francis which adds \$24 million to the contract through February 2023.

- L. Information Systems** - DHHS established an information portal system in October 2019, 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.

Saint Francis reported functionality issues related to the Nebraska Family Online Client User System (NFOCUS). DHHS addresses each issue as it is presented to ensure that Saint Francis can use NFOCUS for case management duties and billing functions.

Saint Francis reported that while information regarding families who access public benefits can be seen by case management professionals in NFOCUS, there is no current functionality within that system to extract data for families who were offered or referred for these kinds of services except by hand count,

which does not tend to be efficient or reliable. In the meantime, Saint Francis Ministries created a process to capture this information temporarily.

Corrective Action Plans:

1. Case Plans Documented within 60 Days-

- The case plan needs to be completed no later than 60 days from the date the Intake is accepted.
- A case plan must be developed even if the court case has not been adjudicated, or disposition is not scheduled, within 60 days of the Intake being Accepted for Assessment.
- The parent(s) may elect not to participate in or follow the case plan before adjudication or disposition.
- Case plans will be updated before every court hearing, or as ordered by the Court, and whenever new information is shared that impacts the achievement of permanency for the child, case plans will be updated at least every six (6) months. (CFS Standard Work Instruction 5.6 Permanency and Case Planning, v.2)

DHHS Continuous Quality Improvement data for the Eastern Service Area shows Case Plans were completed within 60 days (includes Prevention Plans for Non-Court children) 86% in October, 84% in November, and 77% in December.

Saint Francis was initially showing continued improvement in this area each month, however there was a gradual decrease in case plans completed timely for this quarter. DHHS requested a new Corrective Action Plan that will thoroughly address issues related to completing case plans timely and meeting the statewide target. This updated Corrective Action Plan was submitted on February 4, 2021 and is under review by DHHS.

- #### **2. Documentation of Placement within 72 Hours-**
- All contact information shall be up to date on NFOCUS within 72 hours of any placement change for children in out-of-home care. DHHS CQI data for the Eastern Service Area indicates that placements were documented in NFOCUS within 72 hours of the child's placement 77.3% in October, 84.17% in November, and 67.67% in December. DHHS requested a new Corrective Action Plan that will thoroughly address issues related to completing documentation of placement in NFOCUS timely and meet the statewide target. This updated Corrective Action Plan was submitted on February 4, 2021 and is under review by DHHS.

- #### **3. E-Verify Form-**
- the Sub-recipient is required and hereby agrees to use a federal immigration verification system to determine the work eligibility status of employees physically performing services within the State of Nebraska. A federal immigration verification system allows for the electronic verification of the work authorization program authorized by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, 8 U.S.C. 1324a, known as the E-verify Program, or an equivalent federal program designated by the United States Department of Homeland Security or other federal agency authorized to verify the work eligibility status of an employee.

During the most recent Personnel File Review conducted on December 17th and 18th, 2020, a sample of 29 new employee files hired after the Corrective Action Plan were reviewed; out of the 29 files, 26 of the files indicated the federal E-verify form had been completed timely. DHHS has requested a new Corrective Action Plan that will thoroughly address issues related to completing E-verify for every newly hired employees as defined by the United States Department of Homeland Security. The updated

Corrective Action Plan was submitted on February 3, 2021, and was approved by DHHS on February 8, 2021.

- 4. Background Checks for Agents, Employees, Interns, Volunteers, Second Tier Sub-recipients or Sub-Contractors-** The Sub-recipient must complete and maintain the following initial background checks before any agents, employees, interns, volunteers, Second Tier Sub-recipients or Sub-contractors have direct unsupervised contact with any child or family, and every two years thereafter: Nebraska Sex Offender Registry, Nebraska Child and Adult Abuse and Neglect Central Registry, Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles Check, and Criminal Background check. The Sub-recipient must ensure, at a minimum, the following background checks have been completed on any agents, employees, interns, volunteers, Second Tier Sub-recipients and Sub-contractors who have been employed or resided in Nebraska for less than five (5) years: Criminal history check for each state, Sexual Offender Registry, Child and Adult Abuse and Neglect Central Registry, and State repository of driving records.

Saint Francis submitted a Corrective Action Plan to address background check issues on November 5th, 2020. During the most recent Personnel File Review conducted on December 17th and 18th, 2020 a sample of 50 employee files were reviewed. After review of the 50 files, 9 Saint Francis employees were directed to not have unsupervised client contact due to missing documentation of the required background checks. Saint Francis Human Resources representatives worked with the Contract Monitor to reconcile the background checks for these employees to avoid service disruption. As of January 26th, 2021, two Saint Francis employees remain on hold from unsupervised client contact pending completion of required background checks. As mentioned above, DHHS will complete a quarterly file review in March 2021 and increase the sample size to ensure Saint Francis has increased measures to complete background checks on all employees who have client contact. The increased sample will include all newly hired employee since December 17, 2020. DHHS requested an updated Corrective Action Plan that will thoroughly address issues related to completing required background checks for every employee as required by the contract. The updated Corrective Action Plan was submitted on February 3, 2021 and was approved by DHHS on February 8, 2021.

Conclusion

In the 4th quarter of full-service case management, Saint Francis continued to demonstrate its commitment to serving children and families in the Eastern Service Area.

DHHS will continue to partner with Saint Francis to recognize areas for improvement and create action steps to meet expected outcomes for children and families served in the Eastern Service Area.

****A copy of this report has been provided to all DHHS and Saint Francis leadership teams.***