[MS-0398.043.007.007]

County of San Diego

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: October 21, 1991

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUBJECT: CHOICE POINT FLOW CHART OF THE CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE SYSTEM AND A CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

SUMMARY:

Issue
Should the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Administrative Office to develop a Choice Point Flow Chart of the San Diego County's system for child abuse cases and to schedule a conference on children and families?

Recommendation
SUPERVISOR BAILEY:

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Develop a Choice Point Flow Chart of the total County child abuse response system; and

2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

   A. Present the Choice Point Flow Chart and documentation to the Board of Supervisors in a conference concerning children and families within 160 days;

   B. Give the Board a comprehensive presentation concerning the findings, recommendations and interrelationships of all investigations or reports which have been completed or are pending about the entire system; and

   C. Provide comprehensive recommendations and action plans for any recommended changes and improvements to the child abuse response system. Our aim must be to have a system which will focus on helping children and families in San Diego County in the fairest and most efficient manner.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

SUBJECT: CHOICE POINT FLOW CHART OF THE CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE SYSTEM AND A CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

BACKGROUND

Few issues are more complex, troublesome and difficult to understand than the County's system for child abuse cases. Over a prolonged period of time from initial contact or report to final resolution or placement of the child, a multiplicity of agencies, officials, professionals and other people are involved with each case. Police, social workers, school officials, District Attorney, Public Defender, County Counsel, private attorneys, special advocates, mental health professionals, family members, foster parents, Superior Court Judges, Officials and many other professionals or agencies, all participate in these cases in different degrees, have different roles, purposes, goals and responsibilities, and see the same facts in different ways.

To make matters worse, as each case moves through the system from one point to another, the people who are involved with the case and their corresponding responsibilities and goals for the case change. While to those who are involved with particular cases, these changes may make sense or have purpose, but to those of us on the outside, it creates tremendous confusion. It tends to focus on the process, rather than on what should be happening to protect and help each child and family. These changes also create a great deal of mistrust of the people who are handling each case and frequently cause the situation to become even more adversarial in nature.

For the entire time I have served as a Member of the Board of Supervisors, the County's complex and confusing child abuse system has been under close scrutiny and has received special reviews by the Board of Supervisors appointed committees, Chief Administrative Officer, Grand Jury and other professional and advocacy organizations. I am aware of several reviews which are currently underway, one at my request. My concern with these reviews, however, is that they may fall short of what is really needed. We need more than separate reports which have recommendations for different parts of the system and which, if combined with each other, appear to be disjointed, incompatible or contradictory.

It is time that we put an end to this confusion. More importantly, it is time that we put a stop to a system which seems to perpetuate itself without accountability or without regard to what it is doing to children and families. Reoccurring similar cases which have come to my attention, illustrate well the need for action, action which must come soon. A child's life span of formidable years is too short for us to lose any more precious time.

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BACKGROUND (CONT.)

I, therefore, recommend that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a Choice Point Flow Chart of the County's entire child abuse response system, with particular attention to the following issues or questions:

A. When and where are the points where choices can or should be made concerning each contact with the County concerning possible child abuse problems?

B. Who are the individuals who are involved at each choice point, what are their respective roles, objectives and other considerations?

C. What criteria do the above individuals use to evaluate the situation at each point and to make recommendations for further action or choices for the "case."

D. What reports or documentation is prepared at each point, by whom and how is it used?

I further recommend that the Board direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

A. Present the Choice Point Flow Chart and documentation to the Board of Supervisors in a conference concerning children and families within 160 days;

B. Give the Board a comprehensive presentation concerning the findings, recommendations and interrelationships of all investigations or reports which have been completed or are pending about the entire system; and

C. Provide comprehensive recommendations and action plans for any recommended changes and improvements to the child abuse response system. Our aim must be to have a system which will focus on helping children and families in San Diego County in the fairest and most efficient manner.

By developing the Choice Point Flow Chart and holding this conference, we should finally be able to realize universal visions, while developing mutual understandings and common goals and ensure that we are working together to protect children from child abuse and to help to preserve and strengthen families.

Respectfully Submitted,

George

GEORGE F. BAILEY
Supervisor, Second District

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM
INFORMATION SHEET

SUBJECT: CHOICE POINT FLOW CHART OF THE CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE SYSTEM

SUPV. DISTRICT: ALL

COUNTY COUNSEL APPROVAL: Form and Legality ( )Yes (X)N/A
( )Standard Form ( )Ordinance ( )Resolution

AUDITOR APPROVAL: (X)N/A ( )Yes 4 VOTES: ( )Yes ( )No

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW: ( )Yes (X)No

CONTRACT REVIEW PANEL: ( )Approved _____
(X)N/A

CONTRACT NUMBER(S):

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTION:

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

CITIZEN COMMITTEE STATEMENT:

POLICY B-51 STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:

CONCURRENCES:

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Second Supervisorial District

CONTACT PERSON: JAN THOMAS S30/531-5522 A500

_____ NOVEMBER 5, 1991
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER MEETING DATE