



CDSS

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February 10, 2009

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NO. I-13-09

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES
PROGRAM MANAGERS
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

SUBJECT: DOCUMENTATION OF REFERRALS IN CHILD WELFARE
SERVICES/CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CWS/CMS)

REFERENCES: ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 03-61 CWS/CMS DATA ENTRY;
ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE (ACIN) I-37-04 PROCEDURES
FOR REFERRALS ON PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED CHILDREN; ACL 05-09
REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD
ABUSE ALLEGATIONS REGARDING CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME
PLACEMENTS; ACL 06-07 ASSEMBLY BILL 2795: CHANGE IN TIME
PERIOD FOR COMPLETION OF A CASE PLAN; ACL 06-15
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF CHILD ABUSE
ALLEGATIONS REGARDING PROBATION WARDS IN OUT-OF-HOME
PLACEMENT

This All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to remind counties of existing policies and procedures, established through the Manual of Policies and Procedures, regarding ACLs and ACINs related to the investigation and documentation of child abuse and neglect reports in the CWS/CMS application. These reminders are provided to ensure that counties maintain proper documentation of all child welfare services activities.

Complete and Timely CWS/CMS Referral Documentation

It is expected that CWS/CMS will provide support to county staff in the investigation of referrals and contain official documentation of both the facts and the outcome decisions made as a result of these investigations. All reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect should become referrals that are documented in CWS/CMS. It is expected that reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect on the same child(ren) with different allegations or circumstances coming in at different times will result in the creation of

separate and distinct referrals which document each individual investigation. Among those reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect that could result in the creation of a new referral could be differences in injuries, type of abuse, perpetrator involved, or the passage of the time between reports. Counties should refer to ACL 03-61, issued December 2, 2003, for clarification on what should be considered a duplicate report and the proper disposition of this type of report.

Counties that receive a new report of suspected child abuse and/or neglect on a child(ren) when there is already an existing open referral under investigation need to evaluate the new information to determine if it should be considered part of the on-going investigation or whether it constitutes a new referral with a subsequent investigation and outcome. In making this determination, counties should keep in mind the timeframe of 30 calendar days from the in-person response in which to make a determination as to whether services are necessary and/or whether to open a case or close the referral. New reports received after the 30 day time frame need special scrutiny to determine if they should result in a new referral with a subsequent follow-up investigation or are duplicates of the original referral.

In addition to the importance of recording all reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect in CWS/CMS through the opening of a referral, counties need to be aware that the system serves as the primary source of documentation as to the steps taken to investigate such reports and to justify the disposition of the referral. As such, it is critical that the entry of data regarding the investigation of the referral be completed timely, and must accurately represent the facts as known at the time actions are taken or decisions are made regarding the safety and protection of the child(ren). Counties should be aware that existing documentation and data related to investigation activities and referral disposition/ conclusions should not be overwritten or deleted ANYWHERE in the CWS/CMS application. This includes but is not limited to discrete data fields, contact and service delivery entries and text, case notes and document text. New information should be added with a brief explanation, but should not replace previous information.

Reopening Closed Referrals and Updating Information

There may be circumstances where it is necessary to reopen a closed referral. Although infrequent, it may be necessary to reopen a referral closed in error. With proper user authority, designated workers have the ability to reopen a closed referral so corrections can be made and documented. Repetitive reopening or deletion of data within the same referral, specifically those done in a short period of time, can result in the inability to accurately provide a documentation trail for each transaction. Once a staff person has made a disposition of a referral with the approval of a supervisor, this disposition should not be altered since it serves as documentation of the basis for decisions and action taken at the time. Receipt of any subsequent information that could alter this decision should be additionally recorded and prompt a county to consider whether a new referral, resulting in a new investigation, and possibly a new outcome should be created. In the event a new referral is not warranted but an update must be made to the original documentation of the disposition, such updates should be made to permit individuals reviewing CWS/CMS to see

both the original disposition and the change in disposition, as well as the reasons for such changes. Lack of timely data entry into CWS/CMS should not change this fundamental process of documenting daily ongoing activity to protect children and preserve families.

Maintaining Confidentiality of Referrals/Cases

Counties are reminded of the importance of maintaining privacy and confidentiality for our children and families. Because of the frequent need for CWS staff to access referrals and cases in CWS/CMS, most cases need to be available to the CWS staff who review or update them. However, highly publicized cases can attract attention and curiosity which might result in their being opened by staff that do not have a professional need to directly access them and may inadvertently cause a breach in the confidentiality of personal client information.

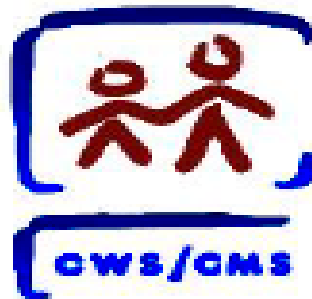
Therefore, the California Department of Social Services recommends that highly sensitive cases be immediately given restricted access to only those workers who have involvement in the referral/case or authority to view sensitive cases. Examples of highly sensitive cases could be those in which a child has died as a result of abuse or neglect, a well-known public figure is involved, or an employee or family member may be at risk if confidential information is released. In CWS/CMS, cases can be marked as sensitive, restricting access to only those employees involved with the case or with a security level to view sensitive cases. The data entry instructions for making a case/referral sensitive and the accompanying screenshots from CWS/CMS can be found in the Attachment A. Counties are reminded to regularly review who has been given authority to access sensitive cases to ensure that this functionality remains effective.

If you have questions about this notice or need assistance, please contact me at (916) 651-7884.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By:
Glenn Jue for***

TOM BURKE
Branch Chief
Case Management System Support Branch



All County Information Notice (ACIN) X-XX-09

CWS/CMS Data Entry Instructions

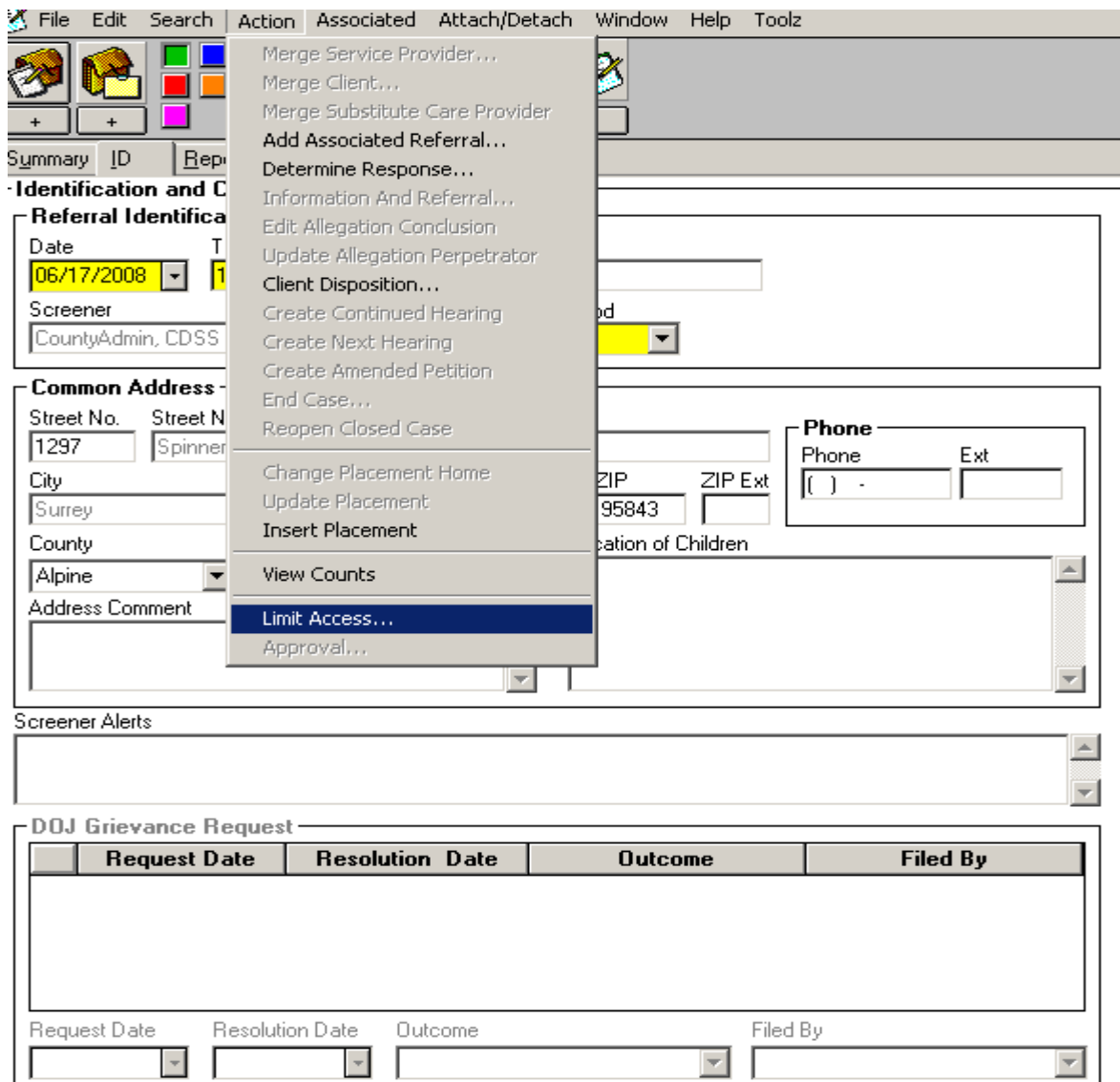
Make a Referral/Case Sensitive

CWS/CMS DATA ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

Make a Case/Referral Sensitive

Sensitive Cases are those that are determined to need special protection against visibility such as high profile personalities. When you mark a case or referral as Sensitive on the Action drop down menu, all the clients involved in that case or referral are marked as sensitive. Sensitive clients will display in search results, but a user without sensitive privilege will be unable to open the Client Abstract. Sensitive cases can only be viewed by those assigned the Sensitive case privilege, by those with a direct assignment to the case, and their supervisor.

1. With the active referral/case open on the desktop, select the “Action” menu item, then select “Limit Access...” from drop down list .



Screener Alerts

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DOJ Grievance Request

Request Date	Resolution Date	Outcome	Filed By

Request Date Resolution Date Outcome Filed By

[Dropdown] [Dropdown] [Dropdown] [Dropdown]

2. On the Limit Access pop up screen, select “Sensitive Case/Referral” and then OK.

The screenshot shows a software application window with a menu bar (File, Edit, Search, Action, Associated, Attach/Detach, Window, Help, Toolz) and a toolbar. Below the toolbar are tabs for Summary, ID, Reporter, Assignment, and Spec Proj. The main area is titled "Identification and Common Address" and contains two sections:

- Referral Identification**: Fields for Date (06/17/2008), Time (10:58am), Referral Name (Severus Snape), Screener (CountyAdmin, CDSS), and Report Method (Telephone).
- Common Address**: Fields for Street No. (1297), Street Name (Spinners End), City (Surrey), and County (Alpine).

A "Limit Access" dialog box is open over the Common Address section. It contains the following options:

- Non-Limited Access to Case/Referral
- Sensitive Case/Referral
- Sealed Records Case/Referral

Buttons for OK, Cancel, and Help are visible on the right side of the dialog box.

Below the address section is a "Screener Alerts" section with a scrollable area. At the bottom is a "DOJ Grievance Request" section with a table:

Request Date	Resolution Date	Outcome	Filed By

3. Limited Access to the referral/case can be removed by repeating the process and selecting the first radio button – Non-Limited Access to Case/Referral.