



CDSS

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May 17, 2017

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 17-40

TO: ALL COUNTY CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES

SUBJECT: **ONLINE MANDATED REPORTING PILOT PROGRAM**

REFERENCES: [SENATE BILL \(SB\) 478, CHAPTER 490, STATUTES OF 2015](#);
[PENAL CODE \(PC\) SECTIONS 11166 AND 11166.02](#); [WELFARE &
INSTITUTIONS CODE \(W&IC\) SECTION 10612.5](#); [ALL COUNTY
INFORMATION NOTICE \(ACIN\) NO. I-55-16](#)

The purpose of this ACL is to provide counties with written guidance and directives in the implementation of the Online Mandated Reporting Pilot Program (hereafter referred to as "Online Pilot Program") which was created by SB [478](#), effective January 1, 2016.

BACKGROUND

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) introduced the Online Pilot Program in ACIN No. [I-55-16](#). The Online Pilot Program currently allows the Child Welfare Services (CWS) agency in participating counties to test the concept of an online reporting system for the following specified mandated reporters: law enforcement, social workers and educators (teachers, counselors, school administrators). These select mandated reporters may use the internet-based reporting in lieu of the initial telephone report and will not need to submit the required written follow-up report (Suspected Child Abuse Report Form [SS 8572](#)). As provided in PC section [11166.02 \(a\)\(2\)](#) and W&IC section [10612.5 \(b\)](#), CDSS will oversee and administer the pilot program. The Online Pilot Program remains in effect until January 1, 2021, unless another statute extends or deletes that date. The CDSS may conclude the Online Pilot Program of an individual county prior to January 1, 2021, if the evaluation and monitoring indicate the pilot program is compromising the safety of children.

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- ☒ State Law Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order
- ☐ Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- ☐ Initiated by CDSS

EVALUATOR AND OUTCOME MEASURES

Prior to implementation of the Online Pilot Program, the CWS agency must hire an independent evaluator to monitor the implementation of the program. The evaluator should come from a third party organization to alleviate any possible bias or conflict of interest in the monitoring of the program. The evaluator is responsible for determining the effectiveness, validity in assessing safety and the overall quality of service of the pilot program for the duration of the program. The CWS agency, in collaboration with CDSS and the County Welfare Directors Association of California must determine the outcome measures to be monitored by the evaluator. The outcome measures should assist with determining the overall improvement and efficiency in call volume to the Child Abuse Hotline for non-emergent referrals. The measures shall include, but not be limited to the following determinants:

1. The number of reports provided by telephone and any increase or decrease in the usage of telephone reports.
2. The number of reports provided through the internet-based reporting system and any increase or decrease in usage of the system.
3. Any increase or decrease in the number of emergency or non-emergency telephone reports.
4. Any increase or decrease in the overall number of emergency or non-emergency reports (both telephone and online).
5. Timely response between the receipt of the online report and the initial in-person contact of the Emergency Response social worker.
6. Number of reports made online that were partially and fully completed
7. Number of subsequent referrals received for the same child(ren).
8. Number of online reports that required a ten day response versus those that were evaluated out.
9. Number of online reports that could not be completed due to an immediate response being required.

The CWS agency shall provide these outcome measures to CDSS on a quarterly basis, to be scheduled at the time each county who has opted into the pilot program is ready to start operating the online system. The CDSS will monitor the outcomes and the resulting evaluations to ensure that safety requirements of children are met. The CDSS may end the program at any time if its oversight reveals the program poses a risk to the safety of children.

GUIDANCE AND DIRECTIVES

Any allegation of child abuse or neglect requires immediate attention and prompt resolution. Users of the online mandated reporting platform must submit their online referral immediately or as soon as is practicably possible, after an incident of suspected child abuse or neglect is discovered (PC section [11166](#)). The online report should not be used in circumstances that indicate the child is subject to an immediate risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation or that the child is in imminent danger of severe harm or death. The online mandated reporting platform must begin with standardized safety assessment qualifying questions that would redirect the mandated reporter to perform a telephone report in cases where online reporting is not permitted by law.

Mandated reporters should be making reports when there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, regardless of how much detail of the alleged abuse or neglect is known. The online mandated reporting platform will be designed so that the mandated reporter will have to complete all required fields in order to submit the report for review. In situations where the mandated reporter does not have all of the required information, they must immediately call the Child Abuse Hotline and make a verbal report and let the Hotline social worker know that an online report was started and provide the online report number. In addition, current statutory or regulatory requirements regarding timely review, assessment and response to possible abuse and neglect remain in effect and are unchanged by utilization of the Online Pilot Program report (PC section [11166.02](#))

The county's CWS agency must also provide an internet-based reporting system that has appropriate security protocols to preserve the confidentiality of the reports and any documents or photographs submitted through the system.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Participating counties shall, on or before January 1, 2020, provide information to the Assembly Committee on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Human Services pertaining to the effectiveness of the program based on the outcome measures developed in collaboration with CDSS.

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For further questions regarding the information in this letter for online reporting of child abuse and neglect, please contact the Child Welfare Policy and Program Development Bureau at (916) 651-6160.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

GREGORY E. ROSE
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division