



CDSS

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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
GOVERNOR

May 1, 2018

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO.18-44

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS  
ALL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM MANAGERS  
ALL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM COORDINATORS  
ALL FOSTER CARE MANAGERS  
ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES  
ALL TRANSITIONAL HOUSING COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: NEW AND REVISED RESOURCE MATERIALS REGARDING  
HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PREGNANCY  
PREVENTION FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

REFERENCE: SENATE BILL (SB) [528](#) (CHAPTER 338, STATUTES OF 2013) AND  
SB [89](#) (CHAPTER 24, STATUTES OF 2017); WELFARE AND  
INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTIONS [369](#), [16001.9](#), AND [16521.5](#); AND  
ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NUMBERS [16-88](#) AND [16-82](#)

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to instruct county child welfare agencies, probation departments, and other parties working with foster youth that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and Healthy Sexual Development (HSD) workgroup have created new resource materials and tools to support the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and non-minor dependents (NMDs) in foster care.

### **REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL**

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

## **BACKGROUND**

The CDSS convened the HSD workgroup in February 2016, to address concerns related to the sexual and reproductive health of foster youth. These concerns included unintended pregnancy, the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, and ensuring that foster youth had access to information about sexual and reproductive health and services. In October of 2016, CDSS released “California’s Plan for the Prevention of Unintended Pregnancy for Youth and Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs)” which was released as ACL No. 16-88. Since the release of the plan, CDSS, with collaboration of the HSD workgroup, has developed several new tools and resource materials to further promote the delivery of sexual and reproductive health services and information to foster youth and NMDs. These include a “Guide for Case Managers”, a youth-friendly brochure about reproductive health rights, and a webpage pertaining to the healthy sexual development of California foster youth and available resources. Unless otherwise noted, references to Case Managers in this ACL include county social workers and probation officers providing direct case management services to youth and NMDs in foster care.

### **New Resource Materials and Tools**

The resource materials and tools described below were developed using knowledge and experience collected from the child welfare field including the views expressed from current and former foster youth.

#### **I. Guide for Case Managers: Assisting Foster Youth with Healthy Sexual Development and Pregnancy Prevention**

The [Guide for Case Managers](#) is an extension of “California’s Plan for the Prevention of Unintended Pregnancy for Youth and Non-Minor Dependents” and expands on Section III, Role of the Case Management Worker (Social Worker or Probation Officer).

The Guide is organized into five sections and each section provides supplemental guidance and instruction to assist case managers on the following topics:

##### **1. Required Case Manager Duties and Responsibilities**

- A. Provide Youth with a Copy of Their Foster Youth Rights
- B. Provide Youth with Access to Age-Appropriate, Medically Accurate Information

- C. Inform Foster Youth of Their Rights to Consent to Sexual and Reproductive Health Care
- D. Inform Foster Youth of Their Rights to Confidentiality and Written Consent Prior to Any Disclosure(s)]
- E. Ensure Youth Are Up-To-Date On Their Annual Medical Appointments
- F. Ensure Barriers to Services Are Addressed in a Timely and Effective Manner
- G. Personal Biases and/or Religious Beliefs Will Not Be Imposed Upon Foster Youth

## **2. Recommended Case Manager Duties and Responsibilities**

- H. Have Open and Honest Conversations with Foster Youth
  - I. Include Reproductive and Sexual Health Education as a Case Management Service Objective
  - J. Document in a Manner to Ensure the Foster Youth's Privacy
  - K. Provide Foster Youth with Information to Make Medical Appointments
- 3.** Tips for Talking with Youth provides case managers with helpful tips to build rapport and maintain a level of trust with youth and young adults. This section provides case managers with suggestions to help ease awkwardness or difficulty when having serious discussions with youth in foster care.
- 4. Case Scenarios** includes an illustration of eight different situations case managers may encounter when working with foster youth and their reproductive and sexual health. Each case scenario includes the legal responsibilities of the case manager, "*What is the Case Manager required to do?*" and also "*What are some best practices for the case manager in this scenario?*"
- 5. Online Resources** specific for foster youth, NMDs, caregivers, social workers, and probation officers are provided including resourceful links to available training and research.

## **II. “Know Your Sexual and Reproductive Health Care Rights” Youth Brochure**

The youth-friendly brochure, “Know Your Sexual and Reproductive Health Care Rights,” was finalized in August 2017. This brochure was specifically designed for foster youth and NMDs to empower them about their sexual and reproductive health care rights. The brochure also provides youth and NMDs with some suggested questions to ask when talking with their various trusted adults or even their romantic partner about different sexual and reproductive health topics. Questions about abstinence, sex, respecting your partner’s decision, various contraception methods, relationship values, gender identity, and other sexual health topics are provided. Social workers, community advocates, public health nurses, attorneys, and current and former foster youth provided valuable input to the creation of this document. The CDSS has printed copies of this brochure which are now available for distribution to county child welfare and community agencies.

Printed copies may be requested via email to the Healthy Sexual Development mailbox at [SexualDevWorkgroup@dss.ca.gov](mailto:SexualDevWorkgroup@dss.ca.gov). The brochure may also be downloaded and printed from the [CDSS HSD Project webpage](#).

Please note, since printing copies of the brochure, CDSS has updated the brochure and added some pertinent information. The CDSS is modifying the digital version of the brochure to include these updates. The most current version will be stored on the CDSS webpage and be available for download and printing soon.

## **III. The Healthy Sexual Development Project Webpage**

The [Healthy Sexual Development Project webpage](#) provides foster youth, NMDs, foster caregivers, case managers, and other adults who serve foster youth, with resources and videos about pregnancy prevention and other related reproductive and sexual health care topics. The webpage includes on-line resources that cover a wide range of topics such as the different methods of contraception and protection, sex, abstinence, relationships, dating violence, sexual orientation and gender identity, teen parenting in foster care, and the reproductive and sexual health care rights of foster youth.

All of these resources, along with other materials, may be downloaded and printed for use by county case managers, foster youth, and all other supportive adults from the [CDSS HSD Project webpage](#).

The HSD Project webpage is maintained by the Placement Services and Support Unit (PSSU) and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure the website remains up to date.

### **Next Steps**

Following the completion of the original goals of the HSD workgroup, the CDSS is continuing its work pertaining to unplanned pregnancy and the healthy sexual development of foster youth and NMDs. With the passage of [Senate Bill 89](#) on June 27, 2017, there are new case plan and training requirements for county child welfare agencies and professionals working with foster youth, related to reproductive and sexual health. The CDSS will continue to work with the HSD Workgroup as these new requirements of SB 89 are implemented throughout the state.

The CDSS is in the process of issuing an ACL that will provide further information about these new requirements.

If you have questions regarding this ACL, you may contact the PSSU at (916) 657-1858 or via email at [SexualDevWorkgroup@dss.ca.gov](mailto:SexualDevWorkgroup@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

### ***Original Document Signed By***

GREGORY E. ROSE  
Deputy Director  
Children and Family Services Division