

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



February 23, 1995

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-09-95

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ADOPTION
AGENCIES
CDSS ADOPTION DISTRICT OFFICES

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: COLLECTION OF MEDICAL-SOCIAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR PURPOSES OF ADOPTION

The Department has recently been made aware of concerns on the part of licensed private adoption agencies regarding the adequacy of child medical-social background information made available to prospective adoptive parents. This issue arises when a licensed private adoption agency is cooperatively making an adoptive placement of a county-supervised court dependent child with an adoptive family recruited and studied by the licensed private adoption agency.

There are several requirements in the Adoptions Program Regulations in Title 22, Division 2, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations (all cites to regulations are to these regulations) that require all licensed adoption agencies to provide background information to the prospective adoptive parents prior to or at the time of adoptive placement. See Section 35207(b)(1)(C), which requires the adoptive placement agreement contain a statement regarding the agency's responsibility to provide the prospective adoptive parents with a report on the child's medical background; Section 35207(b)(1)(E), which requires the adoptive placement agreement contain a statement regarding the existence of or, due to family history, the potential for any physical, mental, emotional, or medical handicap or condition of the child which may manifest itself after completion of the adoption; Section 35209, which requires the agency to provide the prospective adoptive parents with a medical background report on the child and the child's birth parents in accordance with Family Code section 8706; and Section 35211, which requires a written medical report, as defined, on the assessment of the child be provided to the prospective adoptive parents prior to or at the time of the adoptive placement.

Included in the definition of "Medical Report" at Section 35000(m)(2) is the completed AD 512 on which information about the child's medical and family background is contained, as well as all known medical background about the child's

birth parents, and all known information about the child's family life. To be attached to the AD 512 are copies of the nonconfidential section (Part II) of the AD 67 and the AD 67A when completed by the birth parent and photocopies of all original source reports on the child's and his or her birth parents' medical and family backgrounds obtained during the agency's investigation of the child.

We recognize the difficulty posed to caseworkers during the initial child welfare services process in obtaining the amount of detailed information needed to meet the above-referenced regulations. However, obtaining medical-social background information as early as is practicable in the service intervention process is both good social work practice and in the best interests of children. We strongly urge counties to impress upon their child welfare service caseworkers how important it is to gather this kind of information when the birth parent is potentially more approachable rather than waiting until the final stages of permanency planning for the child, when cooperation of the birth parent is much less likely or the birth parent has left the area with no forwarding address. Counties that have stressed gathering this important medical-social background information early in the service intervention process have experienced a great deal of success in obtaining the required information.

If you have any questions on this issue, please contact the Adoptions Branch at (916) 322-4228.



MARJORIE KELLY
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

c: CWDA