

Cabinet Receives High Marks for Outcomes in Child Welfare, Public Assistance

By Anya Armes Weber

The Cabinet's human services programs were ranked among the best in a recently released series of national reports.

The Lexington-based Council of State Governments (CSG), in partnership with the Urban Institute, has released the first reports from its State Comparative Performance Measurement Project. These studies focus on performance measures for child welfare including foster care and adoptions, food stamps and public assistance, known as the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (K-TAP).

Secretary Janie Miller said the report gives staff of the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) the credit they deserve.

"I see and hear of the work of our front-line and administrative staff every day, and I know the work they are doing to guide the families we serve to recover from crises and find safe permanency for kids," she said. "This report reflects their dedication to achieving good outcomes for Kentucky families."

The comparative performance measurement on child welfare compared 12 months of data from 15 states that had available statistics ending in March 2007.

The public assistance review included data reported by all states to the federal government for fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

DCBS Commissioner Patricia R. Wilson said that even though the statistics in the reports are from two years ago, Kentucky's data has been consistent or improved since then.

"Performance outcomes are relevant to staff because of what they represent – the families, adults and children whose lives have improved because of our services," she said.

CSG is a nonpartisan, national organization of leadership from all three branches of state government.

Read the CSG reports online at
<http://www.csg.org/programs/policyprograms/CPM.aspx>.

Begley Named CHFS Inspector General

Mary R. Begley, CHFS ombudsman, has been named as the Cabinet's Inspector General.

In January 2009, Begley joined CHFS from Ephraim McDowell Health, where she served as vice president of customer and physician relations since 2006.

A registered nurse, Begley joined Ephraim McDowell as a staff nurse in 1976, and held various positions with the organization, including director of marketing and community relations, education coordinator, and director of critical care. Begley received a bachelor of science degree in nursing from Eastern Kentucky University.

“Mary Begley’s broad experience as a health care professional and her knowledge of facility operations will serve the Cabinet well in her new role,” said CHFS Secretary Janie Miller.

“The responsibility this office has of providing quality regulatory services for the licensing of health care facilities, day care, long-term care and child caring agencies in the Commonwealth is of vital importance,” Begley said.

The Office of Inspector General regulates more than 2,200 day care facilities, almost 500 long-term care facilities and 2,550 other health facilities.

Go Red on Friday for Heart Disease Awareness

The CHFS Wellness Committee invites you to join your coworkers to stand up and speak up against heart disease by wearing red on Friday, Feb. 5.

All employees are encouraged to participate by wearing red to work to help the American Heart Association raise awareness of cardiovascular disease, as well as empower women to take an active role in reducing their risk.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women – as well as men -- and affects women from all age groups, ethnicities, family histories and walks of life.

To learn more about this national campaign visit GoRedForWomen.org.

Living Well: 7 Simple Steps to Heart Health

Did you know that red hearts symbolize something more than the Valentine’s Day holiday? The month of February is also Heart Health Month and features the American Heart Association’s Go Red campaign. The campaign is focused on women and empowering them to take charge of their heart health. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, as well as men. The disease affects women from all age groups, ethnicities, family histories and walks of life.

The American Heart Association lists seven goals for adults toward achieving ideal cardiovascular health. The seven goals are:

- Never smoked, or quit more than a year ago.
- Body mass index, a measure based on weight and height, less than 25.

- Physical exercise -,at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity each week.
- At least four key components of a healthy diet, such as fewer calories, more fruits and vegetables, omega (such as salmon), four times a week.
- Total cholesterol lower than 200.
- Blood pressure below 120/80.
- Fasting blood sugar below 100.

These seven goals have been set to provide a simple checklist designed to improve cardiovascular health in the U.S. Overall, the U.S. death rate from heart attack, stroke and cardiovascular conditions has been reduced by 35 percent, which has been directly related to improved preventive measures. The association hopes that by packaging these components together there will be another 20 percent reduction in deaths from these conditions. Researchers have discovered that many Americans do not connect lifestyle behaviors like inactivity and poor diet with cardiovascular disease. Furthermore, the association hopes that simplifying things to seven steps will allow people to feel these goals are attainable and directly related to being heart healthy and gaining a higher quality of life. If you would like more information regarding the seven steps, visit the American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org

On Friday, Feb. 5, the American Heart Association is promoting its national Go Red campaign by asking Americans to wear red to work to increase heart health awareness and focus particularly on women's heart health. Through increased awareness we will have the knowledge and information needed to start implementing preventive measures to keep us healthy. Join together with your coworkers and help raise awareness for cardiovascular disease by wearing red. Show us that you participated by submitting a photo of you and your co-workers wearing red on Feb. 5 to Kris Hayslett at Kris.Hayslett@ky.gov

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

The next time you need to plan a message to persuade someone to agree with your plan or point of view, try modeling the five-step structure of Alan H. Monroe, a noted communications professor. Monroe created the "Motivated Sequence" – a pattern to follow for any persuasive speech. Here are the steps to this process:

Get your audience's attention. Open with a statement that may surprise and one that you can use to sway your listeners.

State the problem. Make sure your audience knows why the current situation isn't working.

Demonstrate the solution. How can your ideas meet needs or solve the problem?

Support your position with evidence.

Use visualization techniques. In detail, describe how your conditions will improve with your solution or degrade without it.

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Ask for action. Turn the consensus you get from making your proposal into a commitment as soon as you can.