



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kentucky one of 10 states chosen to attend school safety convening

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 9, 2019) - The Commonwealth of Kentucky has been chosen to participate in the National Governors Association's multi-state convening, entitled Child Health, Wellbeing, and Safety in School and Communities, on July 9-10 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Governor Matt Bevin selected a cross-agency core team to attend the convening, including members of Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

"CHFS is excited about being selected to participate in this cross agency, multi-state convening - the timing couldn't be better," said CHFS Secretary Adam Meier. "Governor Bevin has challenged us to find new ways to focus on improving the physical and mental health of our young Kentuckians, as well as the safety of their environments. The convening offers us a great way to learn from national experts, other states as well as share some of the great things we have going on in Kentucky."

Team members have identified three goals related to the safety of Kentucky children:

- Decrease the number of students who report feeling unsafe or very unsafe at school by 2020, as measured by the Kentucky Incentives for Prevention Survey
- Decrease the number of students reporting high-risk behaviors like substance abuse by 2020, as measured by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Increase the number of schools reporting in the affirmative about key school health policies and programs by 2020, as measured by the School Health Profiles Report

The state has multiple school safety, school climate, and school mental health programming efforts underway. Earlier this year, Senate Bill 1, the School Safety and Resiliency Act, was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Bevin.

"The passage of Senate Bill 1 represents Kentucky's most comprehensive school safety legislation to date," said Gov. Bevin. "A balance of both physical security and psychological safety measures, this legislation offers great promise to our students, teachers, schools, and communities."

Members of Kentucky's cross-agency core team include:

- Kristi Putnam, Deputy Secretary of Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services
- Wendy Morris, Commissioner of Kentucky's Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities
- Amanda Ellis, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Academic Officer of Kentucky's Department of Education
- Ben Wilcox, Kentucky School Security Marshal at the state's Department of Criminal Justice Training, Justice, and Public Safety Cabinet.
- Vestena Robbins, Executive Advisor at Kentucky's Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities
- Jon Akers, Executive Director of Kentucky Center for School Safety.

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.