

## Arizona Department of Economic Security Division of Developmental Disabilities (Report Highlights)

November 2000

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (Division) provides services to 18,000 persons with developmental disabilities and their families. Sixty percent of the clients (11,000) are eligible for services through the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) operated by Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), the State's Medicaid agency.

### Our Conclusions:

Division and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers need to better coordinate their efforts regarding foster care children who become involved with both divisions. In addition, the Division needs to work with the Government Information Technology Agency to evaluate replacing its information system, manage its client waiting list better, and continue to improve the system for reporting client abuse and neglect. Finally, the Division has improved and should continue to improve its contracts management.

**Developmental Disability**—A severe chronic disability that is:

- Attributable to mental or physical impairment such as mental retardation or cerebral palsy;
- Manifested before age 18;
- Likely to continue indefinitely;
- Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more major life areas; and
- Reflects the need for extended or lifelong special services.

needs of CPS-involved children with developmental disabilities. At the end of June 2000, the Division and CPS shared case management of 524 (280 in Maricopa County) of these foster care children.

**Coordination important**—These cases require two kinds of expertise: one dealing with the legal system for abused and neglected children, and the other assessing needs and providing services. Coordination is especially important in these cases to ensure the children's special needs are met.

### Better Coordination Between Division and CPS Needed

The Division of Developmental Disabilities and Child Protective Services (CPS), both within the Department of Economic Security (DES), share responsibility for meeting the

CPS placed a child with developmental disabilities in foster care, but the Division was not involved in decisions about her services. While in foster care, she received an operation that can be problematic for children with her condition and it resulted in speech difficulties.



Currently, the waiting list is:

- Incomplete—Division management estimates it is only 75 percent complete; and
- Inaccurate—information is inaccurate on how long clients have been waiting.

Waiting list problems exist because:

- Staff do not always enter clients on the waiting list;
- Clients may give up waiting and ask to be removed from the list; and
- Policies and procedures governing the list are inadequate.

**The Division should:**

- ✓ Instruct its staff to promptly enter all authorized but unmet service needs on the list; and
- ✓ Update policies and procedures for maintaining the list.

**Further Improvement  
Managing Unusual Incident  
Reports Needed**

When client abuse or neglect is observed, suspected, or alleged, Division management must be notified through an Unusual Incident Report (UIR). In fiscal year 1999, 3,300 UIRs were filed.

**Management problems remain**—Although the Division has improved the UIR system since our last report in 1993, some problems remain:

- There are too many (91) codes for categorizing incidents, leading to inconsistent coding;

- All files still do not show when investigations are complete;
- There is a two to three year backlog of forms waiting to be entered on the UIR database; and
- Staffing is inadequate to handle current UIR and backlog.

**Pilot program shows promise**—The Division recently adopted a pilot UIR program to streamline the process. It decreases incident codes from 91 categories to 11 and gathers time sensitive data to measure performance. However, the Division still needs to manage the backlog and ensure that staff is properly trained in the new program.

**The Division should:**

- ✓ Continue to monitor the implementation of the pilot program.

**Contract Management  
Practices Have Improved**

Seventy-eight percent of the Division’s fiscal year 1999 budget was expended on contracts. These contracts include:

- 961 contracts with service providers such as group homes and therapists; and
- 1,566 individual service agreements (ISA’s) with individuals providing services such as attendant care and transportation.



