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Council on Accreditation

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February 15, 2008

Cheryl S. Stephani
Assistant Secretary
Children's Administration
Washington State Department
of Social & Health Services
Office Building 2, 14th & Jefferson
Olympia, WA 98502

Dear Cheryl:

I am writing to notify you that the accreditation process of the Children's Administration, Washington State Department of Social & Health Services' (Department) has been placed on hold.

COA's policies and procedures provide that it (COA) reserves the discretion at any time to place an agency's accreditation process on hold when conditions exist that raise a serious concern about stakeholder health or safety or the credibility of COA's accreditation process. (See *Accreditation Policies & Procedures Manual, Public Agencies, Article IX. B.3., "COA Discretion to Place the Accreditation Process on Hold"*).

The Department's application for accreditation dates back to September 2001. In the years since, progress has been made by many of the regional offices. There remain, however, a significant number of foundational standards relating to stakeholder health and safety that have not been implemented, including but not limited to timely visits to foster homes; caseload size; staff credentials; adequate kinship home studies; stakeholder participation in the CQI processes; and risk management reviews. Moreover, the Department has failed to adopt policies relative to the implementation of these standards.

Of additional concern to COA is the Department's ongoing involvement in litigation that is centered on issues directly related to the non-compliance with COA's standards of best practice.

Cheryl S. Stephani
Assistant Secretary
Children's Administration
Washington State Department
of Social & Health Services

February 15, 2008
Page 2

When we met on December 7, 2007, I requested that the Department confirm in writing that it is committed to implementing all of the required standards and submit a proposed specific timeframe for that implementation. This request was reiterated in a December 24, 2007 email to you and in our telephone conversation of January 9, 2008.

To date, we have not received any communication addressing our request.

Should the Department seek to have the accreditation process reinstated, it should send COA a written request accompanied by a schedule detailing proposed dates for the implementation of the above referenced standards. If the request and schedule are not received by February 29, 2008, the Department will be deemed to have withdrawn from the accreditation process. In that event, should it again elect to pursue accreditation it will be required to submit a new application and begin the process *de novo*.

While we regret having to take this action, we know that it is appropriate and in the best interests of the vulnerable children, individuals and families in the state of Washington.

Sincerely,



Richard Klarberg
President & CEO

cc: Honorable Christine Gregoire, Governor of the State of Washington
Robin Arnold-Williams, Secretary, Washington State Department
of Social & Health Services
Timothy Hunter, Accreditation Program Manager, Children's Administration,
Washington State Department of Social & Health Services