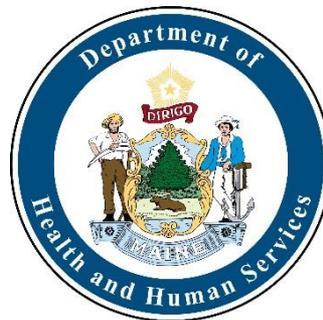


Office of Child and Family Services Child Welfare Update

Health and Human Services Committee
September 19, 2022

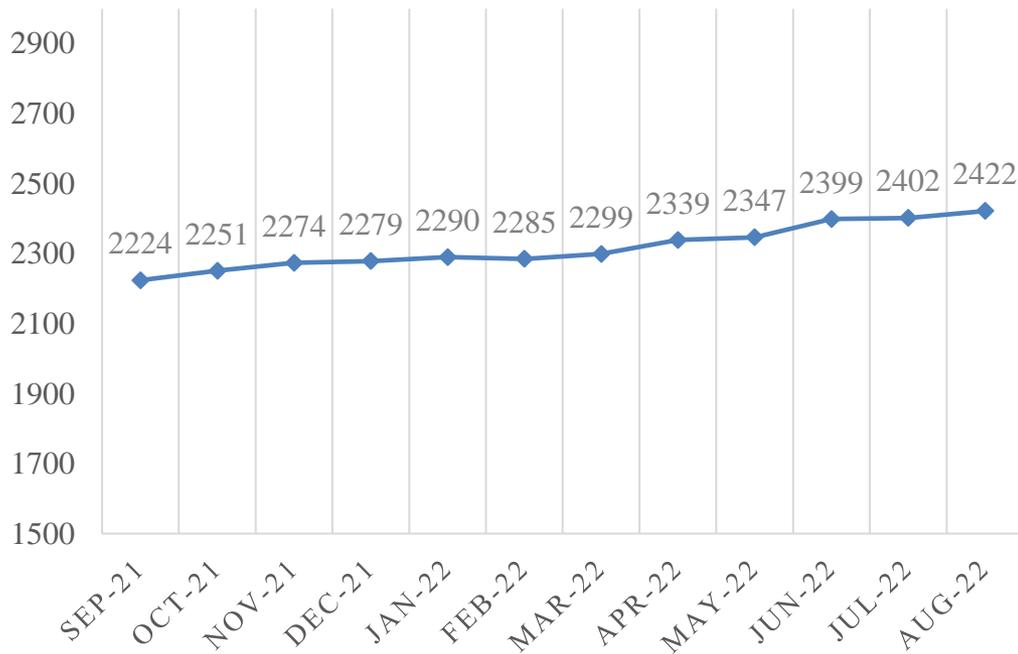
Dr. Todd A. Landry, Director



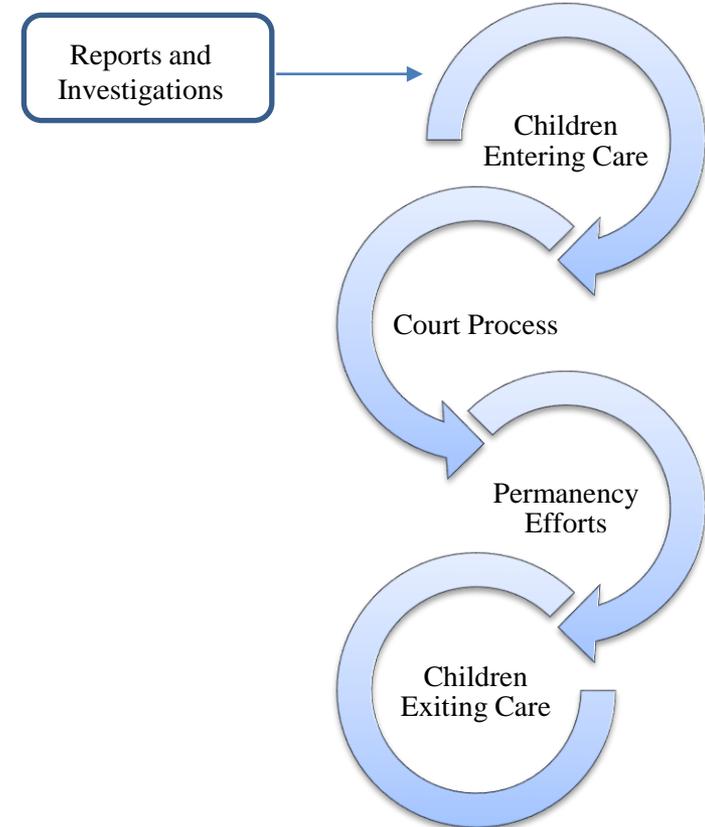
Agenda

- General comments and updates
- Update on Maine's success with Federal Program Improvement Plan
- Update on Collaborative Safety recommendations and implementation
- Staff development and support
- Budget and bill implementation updates
- Addressing service quality and availability
- Q&A

Children in State Custody 2021 - 2022



What Drives the Number of Children In State Custody?



Current Factors Impacting Numbers of Children in State Custody

- **Enactment of LD 1091, expanding the upper age limit for voluntary extended care agreements (“V9”) from 21 to 23**
 - Continue to engage in efforts to communicate about this change to youth who have previously aged out of care and are now eligible to engage in an extended care agreement
- **Service availability**
 - Collaborating with providers and within the Department to expand accessibility of services for parents (mental health treatment, substance use treatment, etc.)
- **Court-related challenges**
 - Ongoing efforts with the Maine Judicial Branch to address both systemic and case-by-case delays
 - Ongoing efforts to collaborate with the Maine Judicial Branch and MCILS to address the shortage of attorneys qualified and available to represent parents in court proceedings

Maine's Success in Implementing the Federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Earlier this month OCFS was notified by the Administration for Children and Families that Maine had successfully completed goals identified in the PIP in several areas.

Outcomes were in the following areas, permanency, and well-being. Systemic factor goals were met as they related to case reviews, staff and provider training, and service array and resource development.

Maine now enters a period of PIP evaluation which includes ongoing monitoring related to the remaining PIP measures. This period ends in 2024.

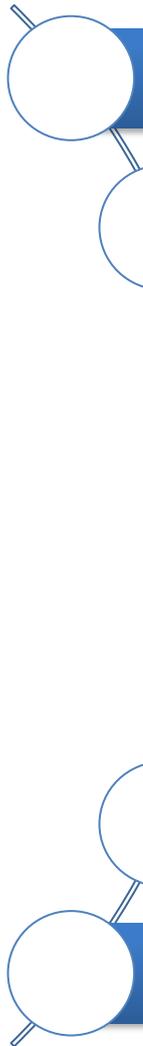
Maine is now in compliance with 2/3 of the process identified in the 2017 PIP and has successfully avoided a potential financial penalty of over \$1 million.

Collaborative Safety Recommendations & Safety Science Implementation



Collaborative Safety Review and Analysis

7 Recommendations to OCFS:

- 
1. Work with a coalition of providers to support effective coordination with child welfare staff (e.g., supporting families, court and Family Team Meeting participation, sharing information, etc.) and address any identified barriers.
 2. Establish joint protocol agreements between Law Enforcement, Hospitals and Child Welfare staff when there is suspected abuse or neglect to support communication and coordination.
 3. Explore ways to support consistent practices, including role clarity and ongoing support for Family Team Meetings.
 4. Explore ways to support engagement between parents and the child welfare system, such as parent partner/parent mentor programs.
 5. Continue to examine national best practices regarding standby and after-hours practices.
 6. Examine national best practices for assessment timeframes and ensure that whatever timeframe is selected, it is compatible with the expected workload.
 7. Conduct an analysis of current work tasks required in an assessment and remove any unnecessary and/or redundant tasks.

Collaborative Safety Recommendations

Supporting effective provider & community partner engagement

Collaborate with providers to support effective coordination on child welfare matters

- Ongoing work with providers through the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel (MCWAP) and Maine Child Welfare Action Network (MCWAN)
- Working within the Department to support expanded capacity in services for parents with children in state custody and children in state custody

Establish protocol agreements between law enforcement, hospitals, and child welfare

- Ongoing meetings of the stakeholder group that includes hospital representatives, law enforcement, OCFS staff, and legal experts to review statutory and other barriers to information sharing and effective partnerships
- Department will submit a bill informed by stakeholders in 2023 to address identified statutory challenges

Collaborative Safety Recommendations

Improve consistency in family team meeting practice

Family Team Meeting
policy reviewed and
updated in Fall 2021

Staff training on policy and
practice, as well as other related
topics, such as conflict resolution

Making available a public
webinar for parents, providers,
and stakeholders

Webinar presented to members of
the Citizen Review Panels on
August 15, 2022

Collaborative Safety Recommendations

Support engagement with parents and the child welfare system

Expansion of Cooperative Agreement

- Two parents with lived experience have been hired under the Cooperative Agreement to serve as parent mentors and provide their perspectives in the development of policy and training under the Agreement
- OCFS and USM have also engaged with a cohort of other parents with lived experience who will receive stipends for time spent participating in trainings, policy workgroups, and other activities

Listening Sessions

- OCFS continued to partner with the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel's Family Engagement subcommittee to conduct listening sessions with fathers who have been involved in the child welfare system, the Associate Director of Child Welfare Services attended each of these sessions
- Ongoing partnership with MCWAP on parent engagement, with a particular focus on fathers

Collaborative Safety Recommendations

Improving caseworker support & practice

Examine best practices for standby and after-hours coverage

- Governor's budget proposal included 16 caseworker positions and three supervisor positions to create a unit of staff dedicated specifically to providing after hours and standby coverage.
- To date, 10 of the 16 caseworker and all 3 supervisor positions are hired. Training is in progress with staff transitioning into these roles in September and October, and full implementation by November 2022.

Examine assessment practices (timeframes and work tasks)

- OCFS has convened a workgroup of staff, and consulted with university, and national partners to research best practices related to investigation timeframes and analyze the activities required during an investigation
- Recommendations from the workgroup are under consideration; next steps are being developed.

Collaborative Safety Recommendations

Review and update policy to improve practice

Process for Policy Review and Revision



Collaborative Safety Recommendations

Review and update policy to improve practice

Revision IMPLEMENTED

- Safe Haven
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
- Staff Safety and Critical Safety Cases
- Safety Planning
- Immunization
- Family Team Meetings
- Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
- Collaboration
- Placement with DHHS Employees
- Substance Exposed Infants
- Permanency

Pending Finalization

- Youth Transition
- Adoption
- Child Protection Intake

Pending Review

- Resource Home Licensing
- Background Checks
- Entry into Care
- Psychotropic Medication
- Access to Child Welfare Records
- LGBTQ+

Workgroups and Staff/Stakeholder Comment

- Domestic Abuse and Violence
- Supervision
- Indian Child Welfare (ICW)
- Child Protective Investigation

Safety Science Implementation

Integrating Safety Science into our work

OCFS has hired two full-time and one part-time Safety Science Analysts



Monthly reviews of child fatalities and serious injuries have commenced

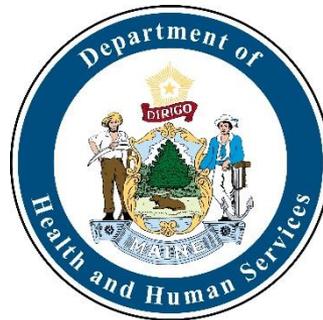


The Maine Safety Science Team has completed eight in-depth case reviews



Safety Science team will capture results of the reviews and provide recommendations for policy and practice going forward

Staff Development and Support



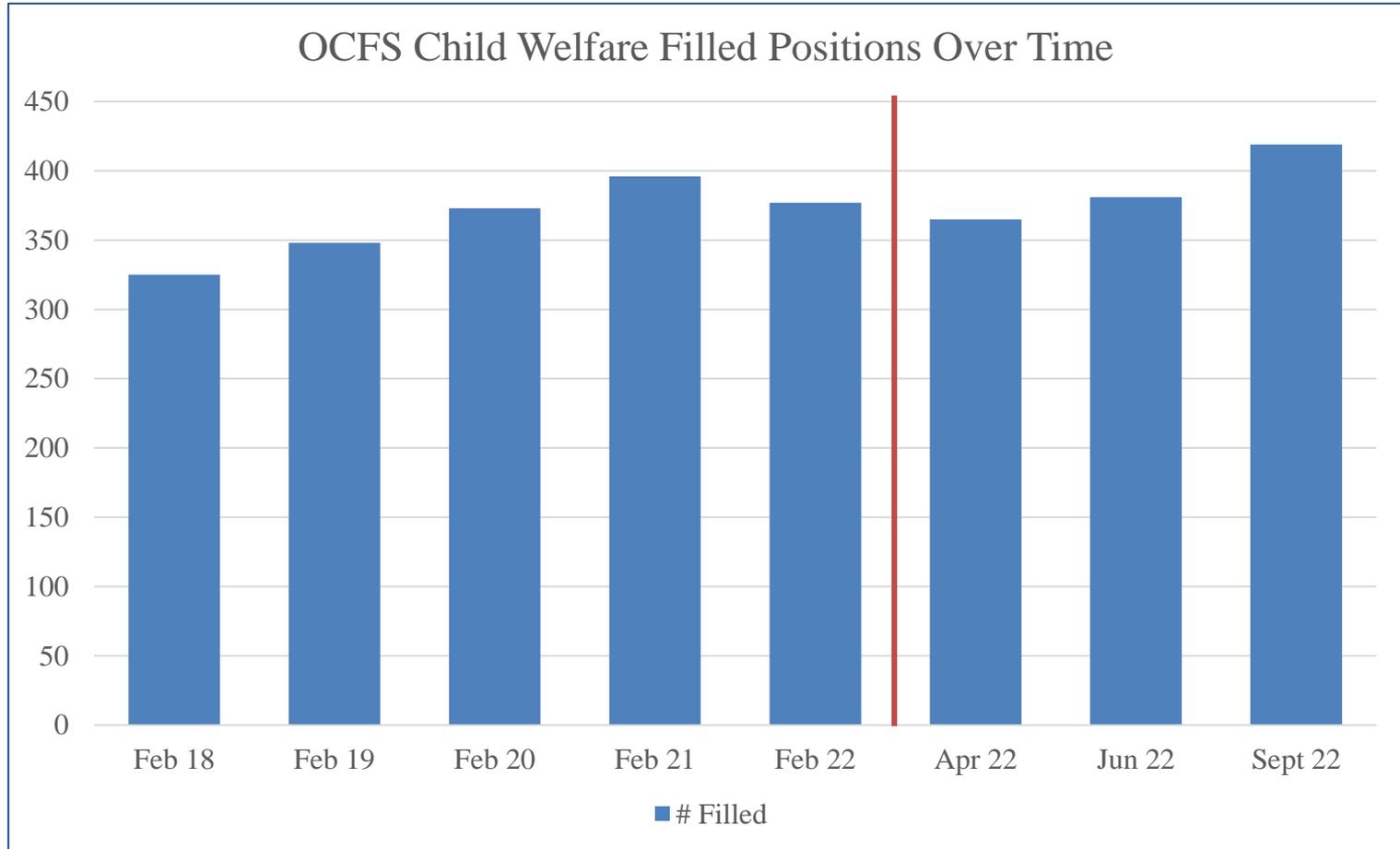
Staff Development and Support *Staffing*

Point in Time	Feb 2018	Feb 2019	Feb 2020	Feb 2021	Feb 2022	April 2022	June 2022	Sept* 2022	Change 2018-2022
Total Positions	351	361	391	407	425	425	425	446	+95/ +27%
# Filled	325	348	373	396	377	365	381	419	+94/ +29%
# Vacancies	26	13	18	11	48	60	44	62	
% Vacancies	7.4%	3.6%	4.6%	2.7%	11.3%	14.1%	10.4%	13.9%	

* Data includes positions approved July 1, 2022

Staff Development and Support

Staffing



Staff Development and Support

Hiring Landscape

Child Welfare

- Currently staffing is an issue in most jurisdictions nationally
- The other New England states report difficulties in hiring similar to Maine
- Tennessee and Illinois both recently reported a vacancy rate around 22%
- Louisiana recently reported they have approximately 400 open positions in child welfare across the state
- Some jurisdictions are reporting vacancy rates as high as 35-40%

Overall

- Low unemployment (2.8% in Maine) and a competitive hiring environment has led to higher wages in all fields, including those that some find less demanding (retail, manufacturing, etc.)

Staff Development and Support

Retention and Recruitment Incentive

Retention and Recruitment Incentive announced Sept. 15

- **Retention:** all child welfare supervisors, caseworkers, and case aides hired as of September 1 and remaining on staff as of November 19 are eligible for a \$1000 incentive payment
- **Recruitment:** all new child welfare supervisors, caseworker, and case aides hired from September 1 through November 19 (and remaining on staff as of November 19) are eligible for a \$1000 incentive payment
- Incentive payments will be paid in the November 30, 2022 payroll

Staff Development and Support

Additional Retention and Hiring Efforts

Strategies

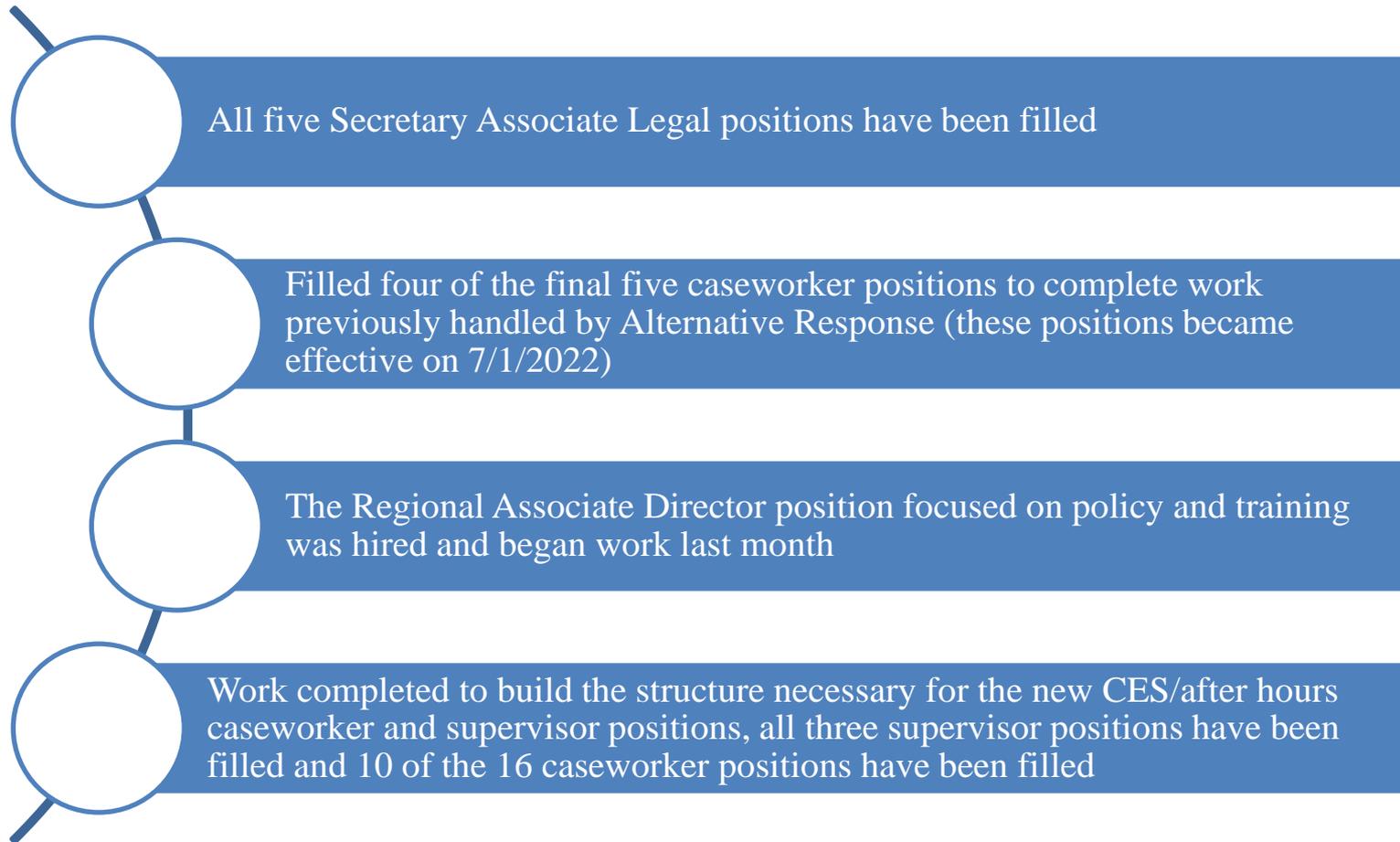
- Pulse media recruitment contract (radio and social media ads)
- College Employment Fairs
- Promoting Public Service Loan Forgiveness opportunities for staff
- Workforce Wellness – clinical supports, Living Resources
- Supporting flexible work options for staff, (e.g., Voluntary Employee Incentive Program (VEIP))

Regionally-Targeted Efforts

- Print and Digital advertisements
- Paid Indeed advertisements
- Maine Chapter of National Assoc. of Social Workers advertisements
- Social media through BHR Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn

Staff Development and Support

Hiring



Staff Development and Support *Training*

Foundations Training for Caseworkers

- Since June two more foundations cohorts have completed or started training:
 - Cohort 3, consisting of 33 participants, completed training on 7/22/22
 - Cohort 4, consisting of 36 participants, will complete training on 9/30/22
- Cohort 5 will begin training in October

Field Instruction Program

- 3 interns (60% of the pilot cohort) from 2021-22 were hired as caseworkers
- 14 interns have enrolled in the program for 2022-23
- Interns receive segments of the Foundations training in weekly sessions throughout the academic year
- OCFS is collaborating with the University of Maine System (UMS) to deliver a statewide child welfare course with OCFS staff co-teaching with UMS faculty

Budget and Bill Implementation



Budget and Bill Implementation *Services*

Finalizing Contracts and Implementing with Providers

\$420k contract renewal with Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine includes additional funding for Kinship Navigator Services

Additional funding for Parents as Teachers and Homebuilders under the Family First Prevention Services Act

Expansion of the Family Visit Coaching Pilot is in process

Implementation of Homebuilders for Reunification amendment is in process

Homeless Youth Services (3) are encumbered

Budget and Bill Implementation

Statutory Changes

LD 1091 – Expanding the Upper Age Limit for Voluntary Extended Care

- Implemented for young adults and continuing to work with stakeholders to optimize the services and supports available to these young adults

LD 1721 – Report on Children in State Custody who Parents are Known to the Department to be Incarcerated

- Updated reporting began in August to include the number of children and those for whom the goal is reunification

LD 1960 – Ombudsman Program Services

- Additional funding allocated through the Governor's Office contract
- Reporting fatality information to the Ombudsman through a process designed in collaboration with the Ombudsman
- Ombudsman has been welcomed to the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel (CDSIRP)
- Ombudsman provided the opportunity to review draft policies and notified when policies are finalized

LD 195 (129th Legislature) – MaineCare Coverage for Parents During Reunification

- Received federal approval to pilot continued MaineCare coverage for members who might otherwise lose eligibility due to changes in household size while involved with child welfare. Maine is the first state in the nation to receive this type of approval.

Addressing Service Quality and Availability



Family First Prevention Services

Resource Accessibility

Goal: Raise awareness of existing resources that help families stay safe, stable, happy and healthy.

- OCFS Staff training (held in June 2022, another in Nov/Dec 2022).
 - Providers in each region of the state present information to OCFS staff on services, availability, and referral processes.
- State Agency Partnership for Prevention.
 - Bi-monthly convening of all State Agencies funding or implementing primary, secondary, tertiary prevention services.
 - Inventory of existing services and supports funded or implemented by state agencies.
- Development and ongoing monitoring of Access Maine: an online Resource Guide of state level programs to compliment 211 Maine's resource of community level programs.

Family First Prevention Services

Child Abuse Prevention

Bi-Monthly Child Abuse Prevention webinars:

- ✓ June 7th webinar on Protective Factors. Recording can be found [here](#).
- ✓ August 2nd webinar on the intersection of Mental Health Promotion, Substance Use Prevention, and Child Abuse Prevention. A recording of the webinar can be found [here](#) using the following passcode: n!AM=8kN.
- ✓ Additional webinars will be held on the 1st Tues. of every other month at 10 a.m..

Prevention Mindset Institute participation with Maine Children's Trust, Prevention Council and Parent Partner:

- ✓ Working on shifting the mindset in Maine to a shared responsibility for child and family well-being.

Family First Prevention Services

Gap Analysis with Chapin Hall



Addressing Service Availability

Behavioral Health Investments

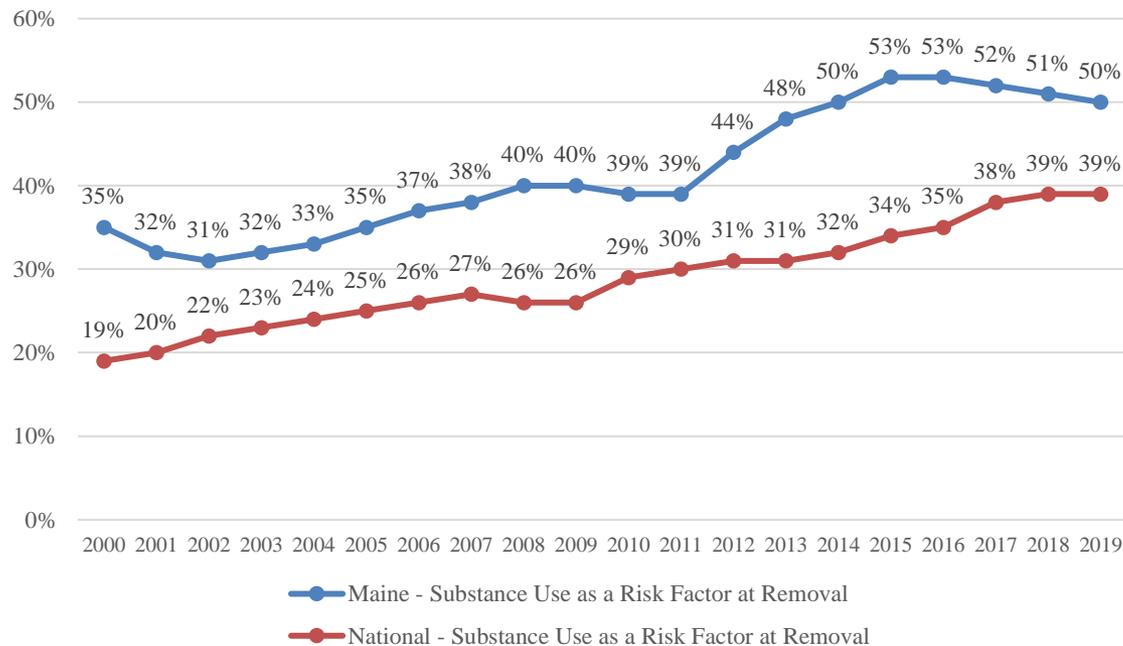
- \$230 million investment in behavioral health in SFYs 2022 and 2023
- 2022 Rate reviews, including:
 - Section 13 – Targeted Case Management
 - Section 17 – Community Support Services
 - Section 28 – Rehabilitative and Community Support Services for Children with Cognitive Impairments and Functional Limitations
 - Section 65 – Behavioral Health Services
 - Medication Management
 - Children’s Behavioral Health Day Treatment
 - HCT
 - Multisystemic Therapy (MST)
 - Medication-Assisted Treatment with Methadone
 - Family Focused Therapy
 - Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
 - Therapy for Disruptive Behavior Disorders (including Triple P and Incredible Years)
 - Section 92 – Behavioral Health Home Services (includes Children’s Hi-Fidelity Wraparound)

Substance Use and Child Welfare

Removals Including SUD as Risk

In 2020, 52% of all removals in Maine had parental substance use as a risk factor, in 2021 the rate was 53%

Rate of Substance Use as a Risk Factor at Removal



Expanding Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Applies to substance use treatment for youth and adults



\$1.9 million to expand treatment in rural areas



Increasing MaineCare rate for residential treatment by an average of 37.5% since November of 2021



Medicaid SUD 1115 Waiver, expanding services for MaineCare enrolled parents with SUD who are at-risk of or already involved with Child Protective Services



MaineMOM program improving care for pregnant and postpartum Mainers with SUD and their infants



Todd A. Landry, Ed.D.
Director
Office of Child and Family Services

