

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION
Medical Consultation



2015-17 BIENNIAL BUDGET

Request	FY16	FY17	15-17
FTE	0	0	0
GF-State	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$380,000
Total	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$380,000

DECISION PACKAGE SUMMARY

The Children's Administration (CA) requests additional resources in order to maintain access to physicians who make medical findings in cases of alleged child abuse and neglect. By funding this request, CA is expected to continue to provide adequate and effective medical consultations on serious physical abuse and sexual abuse cases.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the mid-1990's, CA began contracting with the University of Washington's Children's Hospital for consultation on suspected cases of serious physical abuse and sexual abuse. At that time there were between four and ten consultations a year and an annual contract amount of \$55,000. Consultations now have increased to approximately 250 per year. This contract provides quick access for CA staff to consult physicians with expertise in the diagnosis of complex cases of child abuse. In 2008, CA revised its policy regarding responses to serious physical abuse and sexual abuse to require the social worker to obtain a medical examination or consultation of the child when he/she is seriously injured or when there is a pattern of injury to the child. This policy also lines up with RCW 26.44, which allows the CA to develop protocols and to coordinate with other agencies and organizations when investigating serious child abuse cases. The physician must be part of the statewide Medical Consultation Network (MedCon) or a Child Advocacy Center (CAC). This change in policy increased the number of cases going through the MedCon network but the contract rate was never increased. UW Children's Hospital has been reporting increasing and ongoing difficulties in recruiting qualified medical consultants at CA's current reimbursement rates. It is imperative that cases needing medical consultation on causation of suspicious injuries be done with pediatricians who are deemed child abuse experts.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

CA proposes to increase the current contract by \$190,000 each fiscal year from the current amount of \$61,000 to meet the increased consultations. This increase also would allow the MedCon network to reimburse physicians at \$250 an hour. This is the rate that MedCon currently charges local law enforcement and prosecutors when they suspect an abuse and consult with physicians.



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EXPECTED RESULTS

The budget request supports DSHS Goal 2: Safety - Each individual and each community will be safe. The decision package is essential to implementing the CA's Strategic Objective- 3.1: Percentage of alleged child victims seen by a social worker within 24 hours of the intake in emergent cases will increase; and 3.3: Percentage of children with a founded allegation who have a new founded allegation within six months will decrease.

This decision package supports the Results Washington goals to help keep people safe in their homes, on their jobs, and in their communities and:

- Decrease the rate of children with founded allegations of child abuse and/or neglect.
- Increase the percent of child victims in Child Protective Service intakes seen by a social worker within 24 hours of the intake.

With these additional funds, CA will maintain access to the MedCon contract, which reviews over 250 cases a year of suspected serious physical or sexual abuses. These reviews allow to CA to make informed decisions regarding the child's safety, which may lead to possible removal of the child or ability to stay with their family.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

The contract is tightly connected to child safety; therefore, advocates will support this request.



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