



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEV DUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

August 25, 2026

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, MANAGERS,
SUPERVISORS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

SUBJECT: Communication Process with Citizen Review Panels

REQUIRED ACTION: ☐ Immediate ☐ Time Sensitive ☒ Information Only

Dear County Director:

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/Division of Social Services (DHHS DSS) is seeking your partnership in strengthening communication between local child welfare and child fatality review efforts and the State's Citizen Review Panels (CRPs).

As you know, North Carolina's child fatality prevention and child welfare oversight structure recently underwent significant legislative changes. Historically, Community Child Protection Teams (CCPTs) served an important role in examining local trends, identifying system challenges, and informing child welfare improvements within their communities. Recent legislation restructured the state's child fatality prevention system, established new Local Teams, and created three regional Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) to fulfill federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) requirements.

While the structure has changed, the importance of local expertise has not.

The CRPs depend on information from counties across North Carolina to understand how child welfare policies and practices are experienced at the local level. Regional panel members cannot replicate the knowledge held by county directors, local teams, and community partners regarding emerging trends, service gaps, systemic barriers, promising practices, and opportunities for improvement. Your experience and perspective remain essential to ensuring that CRP recommendations are informed by real-world conditions affecting children and families throughout the state.

The purpose of this letter is to encourage and facilitate the ongoing sharing of information between counties and the CRPs. We want to ensure that local concerns, observations, successes, and recommendations have a clear pathway to inform statewide discussions and future recommendations.

As part of the state's redesign effort, three regional CRPs were established in 2025. These federally mandated volunteer panels review child welfare policies, practices, and outcomes and make recommendations for systemic improvement that are shared publicly through annual reports and state responses.

To support this information-sharing process, DHHS DSS has established a mechanism for county directors and local teams to submit:

- Emerging trends affecting children and families
- Systemic concerns or barriers
- Promising practices and successful local approaches
- Recommendations for improving child welfare policy or practice
- Issues that may benefit from regional or statewide review

Information submitted through this process will be shared with the appropriate regional CRP leadership and will help inform panel discussions, future data requests, and recommendations for system improvement.

To submit information to your regional CRP, please use the following link: [Community Feedback Link](#)

We encourage counties to share information as issues arise. The most effective recommendations will be those informed by the experience, expertise, and observations of local communities across North Carolina.

Should you have questions regarding the CRPs or this process, please contact Kathy Stone at kathy.stone@dhhs.nc.gov

Sincerely,



Kathy P. Stone Section Chief, Safety
Division of Social Services, Child Welfare
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Cc: Lisa Tucker Cauley, Division Director, Human Services, Child, Family, and Adult Regional Support
Donna Fayko, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Services
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Meredith Houchins, Interim Section Chief, Operations
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Crystalle Williams, Section Chief, Workforce and Staff Development

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NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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