



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEVPUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director,
Human Services

September 24, 2026

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

SUBJECT: Child Welfare Fatality Information System User Acceptance Testing and Rollout

REQUIRED ACTION: ☒ Immediate ☒ Time Sensitive ☐ Information Only

Dear County Director:

NC DHHS DSS is committed to strengthening our collective ability to learn from the experiences of children and families involved with the child welfare system. When a child dies while involved with a child welfare agency, a thorough and thoughtful review of practice provides an important opportunity to understand what occurred, recognize what was done well, identify opportunities for improvement, and strengthen practice across North Carolina.

Recent legislative changes have resulted in important updates to North Carolina's child welfare fatality review process. These changes provide an opportunity to further strengthen the consistency, timeliness, and quality of fatality record reviews while maintaining a focus on learning and improving child welfare practice. The goal is not simply to review individual cases, but to use what we learn to inform practice, policy, supervision, and system improvement.

As counties implement these changes, NC DSS is also taking an important step toward improving the way fatality notifications are submitted and managed. NC DSS is pleased to announce the phased rollout of new Child Welfare Fatality Information System (CWFIS) functionality that will allow county users *at the Supervisory role and above* to submit child welfare fatality notifications through the Partnership and Technology Hub for North Carolina (PATH-NC) directly into CWFIS.

This new functionality will create a more streamlined and consistent process for submitting fatality notifications and will support the timely initiation of the review process. It is an important component of ongoing efforts to strengthen the infrastructure supporting child welfare fatality record reviews.

CWFIS Rollout

To support implementation and provide counties with an opportunity to prepare for this change, User Acceptance Testing will be conducted October 5th through 8th. This will include hands-on testing activities for County testers with the final day for collecting and consolidating feedback.

After UAT feedback has been incorporated into training materials, Counties will receive additional information regarding their assigned rollout group and implementation timeline.

Supporting Counties Through Implementation

NC DSS recognizes that successful implementation requires partnership, preparation, and opportunities for questions and feedback. We will provide multiple forms of training and technical support throughout the rollout, including:

- User Acceptance Testing (UAT): Opportunities for designated county users to test the functionality and provide feedback prior to implementation.
- CWFIS Demonstration: A demonstration of the new functionality and the process for submitting a fatality notification.
- Office Hours: Opportunities for county staff to ask questions, receive technical assistance, and discuss implementation issues with NC DSS staff.
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): A resource addressing common questions related to the fatality notification process and use of the new CWFIS functionality, which will be updated as needed throughout implementation.

County leadership is essential to the successful implementation of these changes. We ask that county directors ensure appropriate supervisory staff are aware of the updated fatality review process, understand their responsibilities for timely notification, and participate in the training and technical assistance opportunities provided by NC DSS. If your supervisory staff would like to participate in the User Acceptance Testing, please email Lynda.stephens@dhhs.nc.gov by October 1, 2026.

North Carolina's child welfare system is strengthened when we are able to look honestly and thoughtfully at our practice, learn from what we find, and translate those lessons into meaningful improvements for children and families. We appreciate the continued partnership of county child welfare agencies as we implement these changes and work together to strengthen child welfare practice across our state.

Additional communication regarding training, technical assistance, and specific rollout dates will be provided as implementation progresses.

Thank you for your continued leadership and partnership in this important work.

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
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CWS-70-2026

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