Richard O. Brajer
Secretary

Wayne E. Black
*Senior Director for Social Services
and County Operations*

December 1, 2016

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Attention: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS, DATA ENTRY STAFF

SUBJECT: PREPARATION FOR NC FAST DATA CONVERSION

As you know, we will begin the implementation of NC FAST in July 2017. In order to facilitate the transition for county staff, NC FAST will convert as much data as possible from the legacy systems directly into NC FAST. This will reduce the time it will take county staff to build the case in NC FAST as children with active cases will have already been populated into NC FAST. Children with open services in the Services Information System (SIS) will be converted into NC FAST and children on the same case in SIS will be linked to the same case in NC FAST.

Overview of Pre-Conversion Activities

To ensure that the most accurate data is converted into NC FAST, it will be necessary to review and update data in SIS as well as the Child Placement and Payment System (CPPS). While we do acknowledge that this will take some time and staffing resources on the part of each county, we believe that doing so in the legacy systems will take significantly less time than correcting the errors in NC FAST if inaccurate data is converted. We anticipate four parts to this process. They are as follows.

I. Closing out Service Codes in SIS

It is common for services to be left open in SIS after the service has terminated. Unless all services on a DSS-5027 have a Date Terminated (Field 12) entered, the record remains in open status. Since NC FAST will be converting children with open cases, if cases are not closed, children will be converted into NC FAST who do not actually have active cases. These conversions are unnecessary and will result in inaccurate data in NC FAST.

II. Resolving DSS-5027/DSS-5094 Discrepancies

When a child is in Foster Care, not only should they have 109 services open in SIS, they should also have an open DSS-5094 in CPPS. However, there are cases where only one of these two systems is showing as active. Children will be pulled from SIS for conversion, so if a child in foster care has an open DSS-5094 but does not have 109 open in SIS, NC FAST would not pick them up for conversion. This would cause the county to have to key that child into NC FAST manually.

III. Requiring Entry of a County Case Number on all SIS Records

Currently County Case Number (Field 6) is not required in SIS. NC FAST will utilize this field to link individual children on the same case as the indicator for children within a family case. Ensuring that each entry has a case number that reflects the family unit will ensure accurate data conversion.

～Nothing Compares ℠～

Department of Health and Human Services | Division of Social Services / Child Welfare Services
820 South Boylan Avenue | 2406 Mail Service Center | Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2406
919 527 6340 T | 919 715 6714 F

IV. SIS Client ID Cleanup

This cleanup effort will be similar to the SIS ID Merge conducted in the past. There will be a focus on cleaning up "close matches". These are records that match on all but a few fields. It is necessary for someone to look at both records and determine if the mismatching fields are correct as is, in which case the records represent two individuals, or if there has been a keying error and in fact the records are the same person and can therefore be merged.

Over the next few months you will receive additional instructions regarding the different parts of this review process. Each letter will go into more detail about the specific concerns with the current data, explain how addressing the issues presented will be beneficial to county staff, and will provide tools to assist with reviewing and updating the applicable data. In addition to the summary information just provided, this letter includes additional information on the initial task – closing out service codes for services that have terminated.
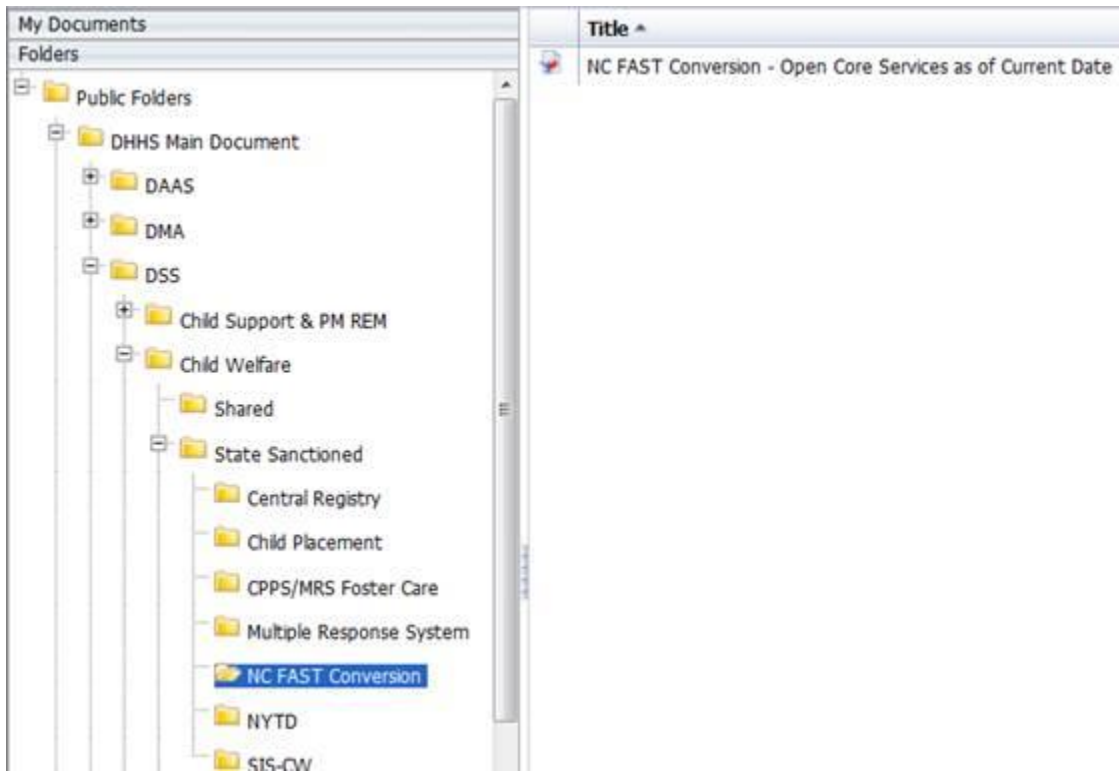
Data Entry Backlogs

Although there will not be a specific letter regarding this issue, some counties may have a backlog of DSS-5027, DSS-5104, and DSS-5094 forms that have not been entered into SIS, Central Registry and CPPS. These counties need to address how they will eliminate the backlog. If the data from these forms is not in the appropriate legacy system when the county converts to NC FAST, the data cannot be converted. If the data is not converted the county will then have to manually create the case in NC FAST, which will be much more time-consuming than it would have been to key the information into a familiar legacy system. In addition, shortly after going live with NC FAST, counties will no longer be able to key into legacy systems. It is critical that paper forms are not waiting to be keyed when access to the legacy systems is switched to read only.

Step #1 – Closing out Service Codes in SIS

As mentioned above, there are often instances when service provision has terminated, but the service does not get closed out on the DSS-5027. Since NC FAST will be converting all children in SIS with open cases, children whose DSS-5027 incorrectly reflects open services will be converted, even if they no longer have any interaction with the agency. Converting these children into active NC FAST cases will populate our new system with inaccurate information from the beginning and require counties to close these records out in NC FAST. It will be much easier for counties to close these records in SIS, which will also result in a cleaner conversion.

To assist in this cleanup, the Children's Program Representatives (CPRs) will be sending each county a workbook listing SIS Client IDs with open core services in SIS. (Core services, in this instance, are 210, 215, 109, 009, and the LINKS codes.) Each Service Code will have a separate tab (spreadsheet) in the workbook, making it easier to distribute the list to the appropriate service areas within the county. The spreadsheets will show the services open as of a given day. Obviously some of these services will still actually be open, but many are no longer being provided and should be closed out on the DSS-5027.

Although you are not required to use the Data Warehouse, as the CPRs will be sending each county their workbook, if you wish to check on your progress, we have provided a State Sanctioned query that you may use. That query is called "NC FAST Conversion – Open Core Services as of Current Date" and is in the new "NC FAST Conversion" folder under State Sanctioned queries.

We recognize that reviewing these services will take time and we appreciate that everyone is already working near capacity. However, taking the time to address these issues now will save time once you begin transitioning into using NC FAST. As there will be many new skills to learn at that time, any work that can be done prior to going live will have a positive impact on your county's transition process.

If you have questions about the data on your spreadsheets, you may contact your CPR or the Data Management Team at (919) 527-6260.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kelley, Section Chief
Child Welfare Services