



**statewide  
adoption and  
permanency  
network**

**SWAN PRIME CONTRACT MANAGEMENT  
DIAKON LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
FAMILY DESIGN RESOURCES**

# Administrative Update

**2010 SPRING QUARTERLY MEETING**

## SWAN's New Portal to Roll Out in May

The new SWAN portal will be implemented in May 2010. During the spring quarterly meetings, counties and affiliates will receive comprehensive training on how to navigate the new system and its features.

Since April 2008 the SWAN prime contractor collaborated with Prelude Services, Diakon's IT provider, to update and redesign the SWAN portal.

All SWAN applications are being consolidated into a "single record" data

system. This redesign aligns prime contract systems with industry standards and allows us to gather and report information more efficiently and effectively.

One enhancement to the system allows counties to submit CY130 and CY890 forms electronically. Additionally, affiliates will be able to electronically submit the affiliate-referred family profile and CY131 form for all families needing to register with the Resource Family Registry.

## Family Group Decision Making in Pennsylvania

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) is one mechanism that can engage and empower families. In Pennsylvania, FGDM conferences entail extensive preparation, an opening and sharing of strengths, concerns and resources. A family presents the plan, to which the referring agency must also agree. Eventually, the plan is implemented and results monitored.

A recent SWAN prime contract survey of affiliates found that 55% of those responding use some type of family engagement services. Half used the program model FGDM, but nearly as many also used their own family team meeting process. The remainder used other family engagement processes.

Twelve affiliates are planning to begin FGDM or another family engagement model within the next year.

Half of the responding affiliates report their agency was asked to participate in county-sponsored FGDM meetings. Most often, FGDM is used with the Child Preparation and Child Specific Recruitment services, though the model is also regularly used with Family Profile and Placement, too.

The survey found that 88% of responding affiliates provided units of service to kinship families, with Family Profile the most commonly named service. Both Child Profile and Child Preparation were commonly referred for kinship families, and Post-Permanency services were also referred frequently.

### Special Points of Interest:

- New SWAN portal to rollout in May
- Counties and affiliates can enter forms electronically
- Training on the new system will be during the spring quarterly meetings

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### Registration with PAE Pays Off

Many children registered with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) already have a family identified for them at the time they are registered.

It is also true that many children do not have a family identified for them when they are registered with PAE. These are the children on whom PAE focuses its efforts to help locate a permanent resource.

PAE coordinators each share a third of the state: Jen Casner-Hockenberry in the southeast, Denise Maxwell in the central and Karen Lollo in the west. They work with county caseworkers and CSR workers to assure that each child gets the most appropriate recruitment services. Their work, together with that of the child's caseworkers, yields significant results.

During the past 18 months, 737 children registered with PAE were in need of a resource, and 285 are still seeking permanency. The vast majority of children who are no longer active with PAE have found permanency. Of the 452 children who are no longer active, 281, or 62%, have achieved permanency.

### Finalizations Update

During this fiscal year, from July 2009 through February 2010, 857 children have thus far benefited from the Finalization unit of service.

Children over the age of 13 represented nearly 10%, or 86 of those children. This 10% serves as a reminder that families

are seeking and adopting older children.

What do we know about these children? Some of the older children entered care in the 1990's; some were in residential treatment facilities; some were in foster homes, and some were in relative placements. While many older children had

finalized adoptions, our data shows that some of them waited 2 – 10 years before we located a permanent family. This points to our need to identify adoptive resources as early in the case as possible. To improve our Finalization outcomes, we must improve our other services.

### How Does “Shared Responsibility” Work?

Counties may refer for SWAN services children and youth who are in out-of-home care and in the custody of their county agency. This includes dually adjudicated youth and youth for whom the court orders that services must be provided by both the

county children and youth agency and county juvenile probation office. Allowing delinquent youth to receive Child Profile and Child Preparation services helps them and their caregivers develop important information and a better understanding about what happened to them, while planning to move ahead.

Although the Shared Case Responsibility bulletin will be released soon, county agencies may make SWAN referrals now if the above criteria are met. We suggest the county inform the affiliate that receives the referral about the youth's status and location to assure the affiliate is prepared.

## 2010 Spring Quarterly Meetings

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### Meeting the Needs of Older Youth

Over the past year the prime contractor responded to the increase in Child Preparation referrals for older youth by examining the different ways agencies in the network provide these services.

As part of the Child Preparation Proposal Addendum created in

July 2009, agencies will be asked to discuss how they meet the unique needs of older youth who receive Child Preparation services. Suggestions included in this addendum are the use of group work and its pairing with Independent Living.

Through these efforts, the prime contractor hopes to

promote good practices occurring throughout Pennsylvania and further assist agencies in developing stronger services that meet the needs of older youth to see them safely on a route towards a successful future.

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### LSI Coordinator and Warmline Update

SWAN's Legal Services Initiative (LSI) has added two new LSI coordinators. Jill Ferraro and Stephanie Mannering will serve in Region 5 (formerly LSI's north central region) and Region 1 (formerly LSI's northwest region), respectively.

All SWAN LSI coordinators supervise and guide nearly 70 SWAN paralegals now placed in

counties across the state. Paralegals also participate in Children's Roundtable meetings, county permanency committees and consult with counties that need to establish or revise legal protocols.

Don't forget about LSI's Warmline, which fields all legal inquiries from the network. The Warmline is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday

through Friday at 888-793-2512, then choose Option #2, or by e-mail at [lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org](mailto:lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org).

The Warmline is available for both families and child welfare professionals to call with their legal questions.

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