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Issue 20-12

Date: 07/06/20

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES CALIFORNIA AUTOMATED AND ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM (CWS-CARES) CARES UPDATE

This FYI supercedes and cancels FYI 17-09, dated 03/02/17.

The Child Welfare Services California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES) will be replacing CWS/CMS that has been in existence since 1997, at some point in the near future.

CWS-CARES is being developed by Child Welfare Digital Services (CWDS). CWDS is a collaboration of California state and local government agencies that supports their customers through technology to assure the safety, permanency and well-being of children at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. CWDS maintains and operates the existing Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS), including implementation of operational changes. The CWS-CARES will provide:

- A new technology platform and suite of digital services and training which will be released incrementally over the next few years.
- New digital services are being developed as a collection of web applications and will include mobile access. The new system will support the business practice needs of users in a more effective, efficient, and economical manner.
- New digital services to support evolving child welfare programs, business processes and legislative improvements focused on protecting the safety of children and families.
- An intuitive user experience along with new capabilities not currently provided by CWS/CMS.

DCFS has been working with the CWS-CARES Project (Project) since 2015. The original approach to build the new system was based on transformative and innovative principles that involved a user-centered design approach, with a plan to build CWS-CARES over time; in distinct functional modules that would have been implemented in stages to be used concurrently with CWS/CMS until it completely replaces CWS/CMS. Using this process, three (3) modules were developed that are in various stages of implementation for statewide users:

1. Snapshot:

Snapshot is a tool that allows staff to search for clients who exist in CWS/CMS with current or prior child welfare involvement. It provides a quick view of a client's basic demographics, known relationships, and referral history. The referral history grid includes, but is not limited to,



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dates, victims and perpetrators names; allegations and the disposition of each; and, the reporting party's name. Also, the user is able to copy and paste search results into a Word document.

Note: Snapshot does not replace any current business practice, including but not limited to, investigations, assessments, or any decision-making process. Rather, it is intended to provide the user an efficient means of reviewing a client's basic information and history as discussed above. While use of Snapshot is not mandated, users may find it particularly useful when in receipt of a referral or when documenting a client's legal history since the information is provided at a glance via the adjustable grid mentioned above. Please note search results must still be verified in CWS/CMS prior to use in any official DCFS document.

2. Facility Search:

Facility Search includes key functionality, including direct access to information from Community Care Licensing, saving time and increasing efficiency. Facility Search allows users to perform functions that include but are not limited to the following:

- Search for facilities or homes in CWS/CMS and the Licensing Information System (LIS);
- View history of complaints from the Field Automation System (FAS);
- View CWS/CMS child information associated with facilities or homes; and,
- Search facilities in a specific county or entire State using criteria such as, one or multiple facility types and license statuses, facility ID, facility name, or facility address, or any combination of these fields.

3. Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Tool:

CANS is an assessment tool that provides a variety of actionable assessment items to support decision making, case planning and the level of care. It was developed from a communication perspective to facilitate the linkage between the assessment process and the design of individualized service plans, including the application of evidence-based practices. The CANS is easy to learn and is well-liked by parents, providers and other partners in the services system because it is easy to understand and does not necessarily require scoring in order to be meaningful to an individual child and family. The way the CANS works is that each item suggests different pathways for service planning. CWS-CARES includes an online CANS tool for certified CANS users to enter their communimetric scores which will be utilized at Child and Family Team Meetings.

Due to unanticipated challenges, there has been a shift in thinking and the strategical development of CWS-CARES. A significant obstacle has been the length of time of its development; thus, research is underway to identify methods to improve the rate at which the development of a fully functional system occurs.



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Since the start of the Project, there have been significant technological advancements in systems (or platforms). The Project will be utilizing Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) in order to achieve better and faster results.

During this time, the Project will continue to maintain CANS, Snapshot and Facility Search at its current functionality; however, there will not be any significant enhancements to these tools until a decision is made on how, or if, they will be integrated into PaaS.

Over the next few months, the Project will determine which of the PaaS market leaders is best suited for CWS-CARES and, with the support of the Department of Technology, Statewide Technology Procurement, the Project will procure the PaaS licenses and integration services. Along with many other transition planning activities, the Product Blueprint and Domain Models that represent the CWS-CARES product vision will be further refined for use in the procurement process.

Please visit the CWS-CARES information page on LA Kids <https://mylakids.dcfslacounty.gov/cws-cares/> for the latest news on CWS-CARES.



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