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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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Transmittal No: 90 LCM-161

Date: October 9, 1990

Division: Family and
Children Services

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: 1990 Foster Care and Preventive Services Study

ATTACHMENTS: There are no attachments to this release.

You received a copy of the report, Preventive Services: Moving into the 90's, prepared by the Division of Family and Children Services. The report documented our analysis of a sample of 1989 Preventive Services cases and compared them to a sample of Foster Care cases. Staff from several districts participated in the study by reading cases or by discussing their Preventive Services programs with state staff.

We are now preparing to study a statewide sample of 1990 Preventive Services and Foster Care cases. We have made some improvements to our methodology and, consequently, we expect the 1990 sample to yield results more representative of the state caseload. Our project plan calls for data collection to occur in October, for analysis and report writing to continue through the winter, and for the completion of a final report in Spring, 1991. We expect preliminary data to be available in early 1991.

We are randomly selecting a statewide sample of the Preventive and Foster Care cases that were opened between January and March, 1990. Except for New York City, most districts should have only a small number of cases in the sample. However, because the selection of cases is random, some districts may not have any cases in the sample.

The data collection component of this project will require each district to review the case records of any Preventive Services or Foster Care

cases from the district that are in the randomly selected sample. A brief form must be filled out for each case (we anticipate a time commitment of 20 minutes per case) and returned to our project team. If the statewide sample includes cases from your district, you will receive additional instructions prior to the data collection effort.

Last year's study was particularly helpful in portraying the many serious problems faced by families on our Foster Care and Preventive Services caseload and in communicating this information to the Governor and the Legislature. This was possible due to the cooperation of the sample districts and the interest and support of the New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA) and especially NYPWA's Services Committee. NYPWA has expressed continued support for this year's effort and we anticipate that this year's study will further our knowledge of Preventive Services and clarify some important relationships with the Foster Care caseload.

Last year, several commissioners reported that the study findings were useful in explaining Preventive Services issues to their local legislatures. One commissioner went a step further and read additional cases and prepared a version of the report for the local legislature.

Should any district be interested in reading additional cases for local purposes, Division staff are willing to share instruments with you or assist you in sample selection. Consultation is also available regarding data entry and analysis. If you are interested in such assistance, contact Larry Brown, Director, Performance Monitoring and Analysis Unit, 40 N. Pearl St., Floor 10-C, Albany, NY 12243 [1-800-342-3715, Ext. 4-7087] or (518) 474-7087.

Over the next month, my staff will be contacting those districts which have cases in the random sample and will work with your staff to ensure the collection of reliable and valid data. If you have any questions about this project, please contact your Regional Office Director. We look forward to this opportunity to work together to further our knowledge of the families we serve and to ultimately strengthen our policies for preserving families and ensuring the safety of children.

Joseph Semidei,
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Family
and Children Services