

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

DATE: June 15, 2012

POLICY: SSA #12-30

TO: Local Department of Social Services, Directors,
Assistant Directors, In-Home Family Services Supervisors
And In-Home Family Services Workers

FROM: Carnitra D. White, Executive Director
Social Services Administration

RE: BIRTH MATCH REPORTS

PROGRAM AFFECTED: In-Home Family Services

ORIGINATION OFFICE: Child Welfare Practice and Policy

BACKGROUND: Instructions and clarification on the responding to Birth Match Reports

ACTION REQUIRED OF: All In-Home Services Workers

REQUIRED ACTION: In Home Family Services Staff to provide a report including the safety assessment of the newborn on the Birth Match Report

ACTION DUE DATE: July 1, 2012

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Background:

In October 2009, HB144/SB 421-Birth Match became law. This bill amends Family Law Article § 5-715 *Disclosure of identifying information of parents responsible for child abuse or neglect* and requires the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to periodically provide the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) with an updated list of parents who have had their parental rights terminated within the last 5 years as a result of an incident of child abuse or neglect. The DHMH's Vital Statistics Division matches the names provided by DHR against a list of parents with newborns and advises the Social Services Administration (SSA) of any matches. When SSA receives notification of a match, that Birth Match notification is then passed to the local department of social services (LDSS) where the parent resides or the address given at time of birth. The LDSS is required to conduct an assessment of the home consistent with a safety and risk assessment done for a Services to Families with Children case.

Purpose:

This policy directive provides guidelines for completing assessments following Birth Match Reports to ensure the safety and well-being of newborns and to provide services to parents who have had their parental rights terminated where abuse or neglect were contributing factors regarding the Terminated Parental Rights child. The reports are required to be completed in a timely manner and forwarded to DHR/SSA.

RESPONSIBILITY OF DHR/SSA

- Receives weekly list of new birth matches from DHMH
- Conducts a MD CHESSIE search of parent whose parental rights to a child were terminated to determine if there is an active case
- Completes and forwards the Birth Match reporting summary within 48 hrs to each LDSS in which the address listed for the parent is located. (In the event the address is not provided, the name of the hospital where the delivery occurred will be provided.)

RESPONSIBILITY OF LDSS**A. If Case is Inactive and opened as a result of the Birth Match**

- The first step in the assessment process is for the In Home Family Services or Child Protective Services (LDSS choice) supervisor/appointee to review records on the parent to determine if the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) stemmed from an abuse or neglect concern. Staff shall conduct a clearance in MDCHESSIE to determine if there is an active case. In addition, the LDSS' Legal Dept. shall locate the TPR court reports/records. The choice to assign the assessment to a CPS or SFC-Intake Worker is left to each local department; however, the assessment should always follow SFC Intake Protocols.

- If the local department determines that the TPR stemmed from an abuse or neglect concern, immediately contact the family to conduct an assessment and offer appropriate services to prevent abuse or neglect. The service is opened as In Home Family Service, SFC subprogram intake and a home visit needs to occur within the SFC guidelines.
- In each case a SAFE-C and Maryland Family Risk Assessment must be completed and entered into MD CHESSIE. Include any information as to the basis for the TPR. You do not need to repeat an Assessment for any case in which an assessment has already been completed which includes the newborn in the household.
- If the LDSS representative is denied entry into the home, the representative shall make a CPS report *ONLY if* there is suspicion of abuse or neglect. Otherwise the case is closed.

Time Frames

All time frames for local activity are consistent with COMAR 07.02.01.04D (1) (C)

- The referral to the ldss for services will be initiated by DHR/SSA
- Within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the referral from DHR/SSA:
 1. LDSS is to review the previously TPR'd record.
 2. If TPR was the result of abuse or neglect, a Non-CPS referral shall be generated in MDCHESSIE and a SFC-Intake service case opened.
 3. LDSS shall initiate contact with the family to assess the safety of the newborn and determine if the family has a need for services.
 4. If the family is unavailable during the 7 calendar days, documentation shall be clearly recorded in MD CHESSIE with an explanation of various attempts made to visit with the parent(s) and see the newborn.
- Within in thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of referral from DHR/SSA
 1. The worker shall complete a safety (SAFE-C) and risk assessment (Maryland Risk Assessments-MFRA) in MDCHESSIE.
 2. The LDSS designee shall provide the DHR/SSA representative with a written report of the activities conducted for the case including:
 - a) the dates of the SAFE-C and MFRA;
 - b) a summary of the type of services provided, if any; and,
 - c) the name of the worker.

B. Active Case Prior to Birth Match Report

- If the SFC supervisor/appointee discovers that there is currently an open service or investigation case providing home-based services, the SFC supervisor/appointee will meet with the supervisor of the program where the case is open to determine if a SAFE-C and MFRA have already been completed that

reflect the presence of the newborn in the home. If no SAFE-C or MFRA was completed, the action steps listed above shall be followed. If a SAFE-C and MFRA have been completed the report described below shall be forwarded to DHR/SSA.

- If, at any point, the local department suspects child abuse or neglect, it shall open a Child Protective Services investigation.

Time Frames

All timeframes for local activity are consistent with COMAR 07.02.01.04D (1) (C)

- Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of referral from DHR/SSA
 1. The worker shall complete safety (SAFE-C) and risk assessments (Maryland Family Risk Assessments (MFRA) in MDCHESIE.
 2. The LDSS designee shall provide the DHR/SSA representative with a written report of the activities conducted for the case including:
 - a the dates of the SAFE- C and MFRA;
 - b a summary of the type of services that will be provided, if any; and,
 - c the name of the worker.

C. LDSS Reports to SSA

Whether the case is Active or Inactive when the Birth Match notification is received by the local department, the LDSS must submit a report to DHR/SSA In Home Services Manager or designee with a brief summary on each Birth Match which includes:

1. Newborn's and casehead's demographics;
2. Date of the Birth Match notification;
3. Type of case that was opened or active at the time of the Birth Match was received;
4. Date of the initial SAFE-C and MFRA that includes the newborn;
5. Name of worker and supervisor to which the case was assigned;
6. The outcome of the assessment (i.e. case closed or other child welfare service opened);
7. Details if it was an incorrect match;
8. Immediate notification to DHR/SSA if the family cannot be located or contacted.
(For suggestions for locating children please refer to Policy Directive SSA 12-22)

MD CHESIE

A Services to Families with Children- Intake (SFC) case shall be opened in MD CHESIE. Complete a SAFE-C and MFRA referencing the newborn. Contact Notes should be current. Please direct all inquiries to the contact persons listed on the first page.