



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Charlie Crist
Governor

George H. Sheldon
Secretary

DATE: June 25, 2010

TO: Regional Directors

THROUGH: Pete Digre, Assistant Secretary for Operations
David L. Fairbanks, Assistant Secretary for Programs

FROM: Alan Abramowitz, State Director, Office of Family Safety

SUBJECT: Statewide and Local Advocacy Councils' Offices Closing

ACTION REQUIRED: Suspend notifications pursuant to s. 39.302(4), F.S.

DUE DATE: Effective immediately

PURPOSE: To notify all regions and circuits that the Statewide and Local Advocacy Councils' offices are no longer in operation and notifications pursuant to s. 39.302(4), F.S., are suspended immediately until further notice.

BACKGROUND: Sections 402.165 and 402.166, F.S., establish the requirements for the Florida Statewide Advocacy Council and Florida local advocacy councils to use citizen volunteers to undertake discovery, monitoring, investigation, and determination of the presence of conditions or individuals that constitute a threat to the rights, health, safety, or welfare of persons who receive services from state agencies.

The Florida Legislature did not fund the Statewide and Local Advocacy Councils for FY 2010-2011. However, the statutory provisions that address the Councils remain in place. On June 3 all Local Advocacy Councils ceased operations to prepare for closure of their offices effective June 30.

Section 39.302(4), F.S., states: "The department shall notify the Florida local advocacy council in the appropriate district of the department as to every report of institutional child abuse, abandonment, or neglect in the district in which a client of the department is alleged or shown to have been abused, abandoned, or neglected, which notification shall be made within 48 hours after the department commences its investigation." Due to the closure of the local offices, the Department is unable to fulfill the requirements of this section.

ACTION REQUIRED: Notifications pursuant to s. 39.302(4), F.S., of allegations of institutional abuse, abandonment or neglect to Local Advocacy Councils are suspended immediately until further notice.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Jane McElroy at (850) 921-2917 or jane_mcelroy@dcf.state.fl.us.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency