

# AGENCY INFORMATION PROJECT

A Report To  
The Montana Public Defender Commission

APRIL 23, 2010

# OVERALL PROJECT

- Review current information and reports to determine if they are useful and what purpose they serve
- If a report is not useful, determine if it can be fixed and if not discontinue its production
- Identify information useful to OPD that could be gained from other sources

# OVERALL PROJECT

- Survey agency stakeholders about their information needs to ensure the success of the agency
- Visit offices to determine:
  - 1. Are offices opening cases in the case management system?
  - 2. How offices are using the Case Weighting System (CWS)?

# OFFICE VISIT RESULTS

- ▶ 1. Are we opening cases?
  - Yes
  
- ▶ 2. Are we using the CWS consistently region to region, office to office?
  - No

# OPENING CASES IN THE CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- ▶ Are all offices inputting cases into the case management system?
  - Yes, as far as can be determined right now.
  - Every office has a formal or informal process to receive and open a case.
  - Incentives to open a case are:
    - Count the case
    - Provide a place for client information
    - Conflict checking

# CWS ISSUES

- ▶ Offices are generally not familiar with the Caseload Management Tool Step by Step Process that is utilized for the CWS.
- ▶ Most offices were aware of some, but not all, of the rules. The most commonly misapplied, or skipped rules, deal with:
  - “Client in a single transaction”
  - Reassignment of cases
  - Transferring cases to a new employee

# CWS ISSUES

- ▶ The CWS was being applied inconsistently within the same office depending on who was opening the cases.
- ▶ The CWS was also being interpreted differently from one office to the next.

# CWS ISSUES

- ▶ Some cases were not being recorded in the CWS.
- ▶ Most offices do not have a written record of case assignments or values recorded in the CWS or a way to verify the accuracy of the CWS numbers.

# CWS ISSUES

- ▶ Most offices are using the case management system print-outs to populate the CWS.
- ▶ CWS numbers are not being kept contemporaneously with the assignment.
- ▶ Some offices were not using the CWS as a yearly number. Instead, offices treated each month separately. In at least one office, the office started the spreadsheet over at the first of the year.

# CWS ISSUES

- ▶ The CWS is not being used by most offices to assign cases.
- ▶ Recommended caps are not being followed.
- ▶ Attorneys are not assigning the cases in the majority of the offices.

# CWS ISSUES

- ▶ Most offices maintain separate systems regarding the assignment of cases.
- ▶ There are instances where attorneys are not being assigned to cases, and cases are not being recorded in the CWS, until a significant amount of time after the appointment on the case.

# CWS ISSUES

- ▶ There is no auditable paper trail related to the assignment, CWS, reassignment, conflict, denial process and how they interact with the CWS number reported to Central Office.
- ▶ Not all regional managers are tracking their numbers in the CWS.
- ▶ Many offices do not see the value in keeping the CWS information.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Referral to the Labor Management Committee:
  - Clarify the instructions for the CWS
    - The CWS should be updated on a daily basis or at a minimum on a weekly basis.
    - The CWS must be maintained independent of the case management program.
  - Clarify stated purpose for the CWS
  - **Re-evaluation of case weights**
  - Visit each office, explain the instructions and discuss the office procedure

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Central Office:

- Offices must formalize their processes for opening cases and using the CWS.
  - Procedure should be in writing and submitted to the Central Office for approval.
  - Offices should use the form attached when assigning cases on a daily basis.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Central Office (continued):

- All cases in the OPD system should be:
  - assigned by attorneys;
  - assigned in consultation with the CWS;
  - assigned to an attorney as quickly as possible after the receipt of the notice of appointment;
  - opened in the case management system in the same way; and
  - opened in the same the way the court opens cases (if two cases with the court, two cases with OPD).

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Central Office (Continued):

- All attorneys, including managers, are to be measured by the CWS
  - Reach agreement on how much credit for management should be built into the CWS for management types.
- Reports should be adjusted for regional or office differences.

# Proposed Worksheet for Opening Cases and CWS Report Worksheet

Mon:	DC	DC	DC	DC	DC
	PTR	PTR	PTR	PTR	PTR
	DJ	DJ	DJ	DJ	DJ
	DN	DN	DN	DN	DN
	DG	DG	DG	DG	DG
	DI	DI	DI	DI	DI
	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK
	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.
Tues:	DC	DC	DC	DC	DC
	PTR	PTR	PTR	PTR	PTR
	DJ	DJ	DJ	DJ	DJ
	DN	DN	DN	DN	DN
	DG	DG	DG	DG	DG
	DI	DI	DI	DI	DI
	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK
	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.
Wed:	DC	DC	DC	DC	DC
	PTR	PTR	PTR	PTR	PTR
	DJ	DJ	DJ	DJ	DJ
	DN	DN	DN	DN	DN
	DG	DG	DG	DG	DG
	DI	DI	DI	DI	DI
	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK	CR&TK
	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.	Fug.
Thur:	DC	DC	DC	DC	DC
	PTR	PTR	PTR	PTR	PTR
	DJ	DJ	DJ	DJ	DJ

# Questions?