



Date May 29, 2019

To: The Honorable Holly Mitchell
Chair, Budget Conference Committee

Honorable Members
Budget Conference Committee

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

**RE: CHILD WELFARE SERVICES – CANS TRAILER BILL
LANGUAGE: ADOPT ASSEMBLY ACTION**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) supports the action taken by the Assembly to adopt trailer bill language requiring the Department of Social Services (DSS), in collaboration with CWDA, to track the utilization, workload and costs associated with implementation of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment tool, and incorporate any necessary budget changes as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 State Budget.

The proposed 2019-20 budget includes \$9.8 million General Fund on a one-time basis for counties to implement the CANS assessment. The CANS tool assists the Child and Family Team (CFT) in identifying how well a child/youth is functioning across several domains, so that the CFT can more readily identify areas for needed focus and support, as well as determine if the child is improving based on the services and supports provided through the team. The CANS tool supports the goals of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) effort to reduce use of congregate care and achieve positive outcomes for the children, youth and families served by the child welfare program.

We are supportive of the implementation of the CANS assessment and appreciate this one-time funding. However, we respectfully request that the Legislature adopt trailer bill language to track actual expenditures to inform future budgeting of this work for the following reasons:

- The department and CWDA worked together to identify initial implementation activities and costs for the FY 2019-20, which are reflected in the proposed budget. The on-going workload and costs of CANS implementation are still unknown, as the counties and State continue to test and refine implementation of this new assessment tool. It is therefore too early to conclude that there will be no new additional workload

and costs associated with the CANS tool in FY 2020-21. Pursuant to Proposition 30, the State has an obligation to fund the additional workload costs associated with new mandates in the child welfare program.

- The State has provided counties with up-front funding to address the costs of other new activities associated with CCR implementation, including CFT's and Level of Care rate determinations. However, due to Realignment of child welfare funding, any savings associated with the implementation of CCR activities will be reflected in local county funding. For this reason, the State and counties agreed to a true-up process that would identify actual costs and savings resulting from the implementation of CCR. Unlike other CCR activities, the CANS implementation will not be captured as part of this true-up process as there is no established mechanism to do so, and none is planned for the foreseeable future.

Our proposed language establishes a collaborative process for continued discussion with the department, and a mechanism to reflect actual utilization, workload and cost, absent another mechanism to accomplish this under the true-up process, and is consistent with Proposition 30 requirements. For these reasons, we urge adoption of the ASSEMBLY action.

Thank you for your consideration.

cc: Jason Sisney, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Gail Gronert, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Mareva Brown, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Chris Woods, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
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