DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814

January 25, 2007

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL
[ ] State Law Change
[ ] Federal Law or Regulation Change
[ ] Court Order
[ ] Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
[X] Initiated by CDSS

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-03-07

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGERS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE SPECIAL PROJECT CODES IN THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES/CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

REFERENCE: Bulletin 9/8/05 – Implementation of Differential Response Special Project Codes in Pilot Counties

The purpose of this notice is to inform county child welfare agencies of data entry requirements for Differential Response (DR) in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). Eleven counties have been piloting Differential Response in specific geographic areas and communities since July, 2004. Additional counties have also begun to implement DR. In an effort to gather consistent data relative to DR we would like to ensure that the Special Project Codes described below are entered into the CWS/CMS system in a uniform manner.

There are three Special Project Codes in the CWS/CMS specific to DR. These codes are selected on the Special Project page when a referral is entered into the CWS/CMS. These codes identify three levels of agency response. They are arranged in progressive order of severity when allegations run between low to high levels of risk.

These codes are currently active in the application and have been backdated to January 1, 2005. All counties implementing DR are required to utilize the codes described below. Some counties have also implemented their own DR codes. While some of them are similar or duplicative, counties may continue to use their own codes at their discretion as long as the codes below are also utilized consistently. Without the use of these codes, the data extracts and analysis will be incomplete and counties will not receive recognition for their many efforts.

Differential Response Codes:

- **S-Path #1: Community Response**
  This path is chosen when allegations do not meet statutory definitions of abuse or neglect, yet there are indications that a family is experiencing problems that could be addressed by community services. This code should be used to document the DR referral by which these familes are linked to services in the community through partnerhips with local organizations.

- **S-Path #2: Child Welfare Services and Community Response**
  This path is chosen when reports meet statutory definitions of abuse and neglect, and assessments indicate that with targeted services a family is likely to make needed improvements to improve child safety. In these cases safety and risk assessments determine a child's risk for reabuse is low to moderate. County child welfare agencies work with these families and other county agencies and/or community based organizations to identify the family's risks and strengths and to provide services for improving child and family well-being. The focus of this path is on a family's willingness to make needed improvements. This code is used to document a joint community response. In the case where the partner organization identifies further safety issues and makes a subsequent safety report, the CWS agency intervenes as needed.

- **S-Path #3: Child Welfare Services Response**
  This path is most similar to the child welfare system's traditional response and, like Path #2, is chosen when reports meet statutory definitions of abuse and neglect. This is the path chosen when children are not safe and includes situations where the risk is moderate to high for continued abuse or neglect. Actions may be taken with or without the family's consent, court orders may be involved and criminal charges may be filed. With Differential Response, social workers seek to engage families more fully and work with other county agencies to provide focused services so that there is the best possible opportunity to make needed improvements.

Special Project codes for Path assignment should be entered pre-contact on the Special Project page in the Referral Information Notebook. If the referral is coded as a Path 1 Response, it can be referred to a Community Based Organization (CBO) at that point. No further documentation should be coded in CWS/CMS from the CBOs. The CBOs will need to keep their own documentation for tracking purposes.

When a Child Welfare Services (CWS) worker is involved and the user has selected Path 2 or 3, the documentation of the CBO used and the types of services offered should be entered on the "Associated Services" page in the Contact Notebook.

Users would do this by clicking on the "+" in the "Associated Services" grid and recording the services and participants on the Associated Services Page. For both Paths 2 and 3, it is important that the CBO and other provider's be documented on the, "Associated Services" page.

Any questions regarding this ACIN should be directed to Nancy Goodman, Manager of the Policy Development and Support Unit at (916) 651-6160. Questions related to CWS/CMS should be directed to Terry Patton, Program Policy Manager of the CMS Support Branch at (916) 651-7884.

Sincerely,

MARY L. AULT
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division