

**GOOD CAUSE ESTABLISHMENT,
COMPLIANCE AND CURING OF
SANCTIONS**

**CALWORKS
WELFARE - TO - WORK PROGRAM**

JULY 2001

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CALWORKS WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAM SANCTION SURVEY

- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) was required to report to the Legislature, by April 1, 2001, on the rates of good cause establishment, the compliance process, and the imposition and curing of sanctions in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program. CDSS was also required to provide recommendations for improving the current good cause, compliance and sanction processes.
- CDSS conducted a survey of counties and advocate groups to collect data on WTW policies and procedures; recommendations for improvement of the good cause, compliance, and sanction processes; and the number of sanctions imposed and cured for the period July 1999 to September 2000.
- The survey was conducted on the 19 largest counties. A modified survey, consisting only of the recommendations portion of the original survey, was sent to the 39 small counties and 6 advocate groups.
NOTE: One advocate group sent the modified survey to several other advocate groups. A total of 27 groups responded.
- The following charts summarize findings and recommendations for good cause, compliance and sanctions processes.
- A complete copy of the report can be found in ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-40-01 dated May 23, 2001.

GOOD CAUSE

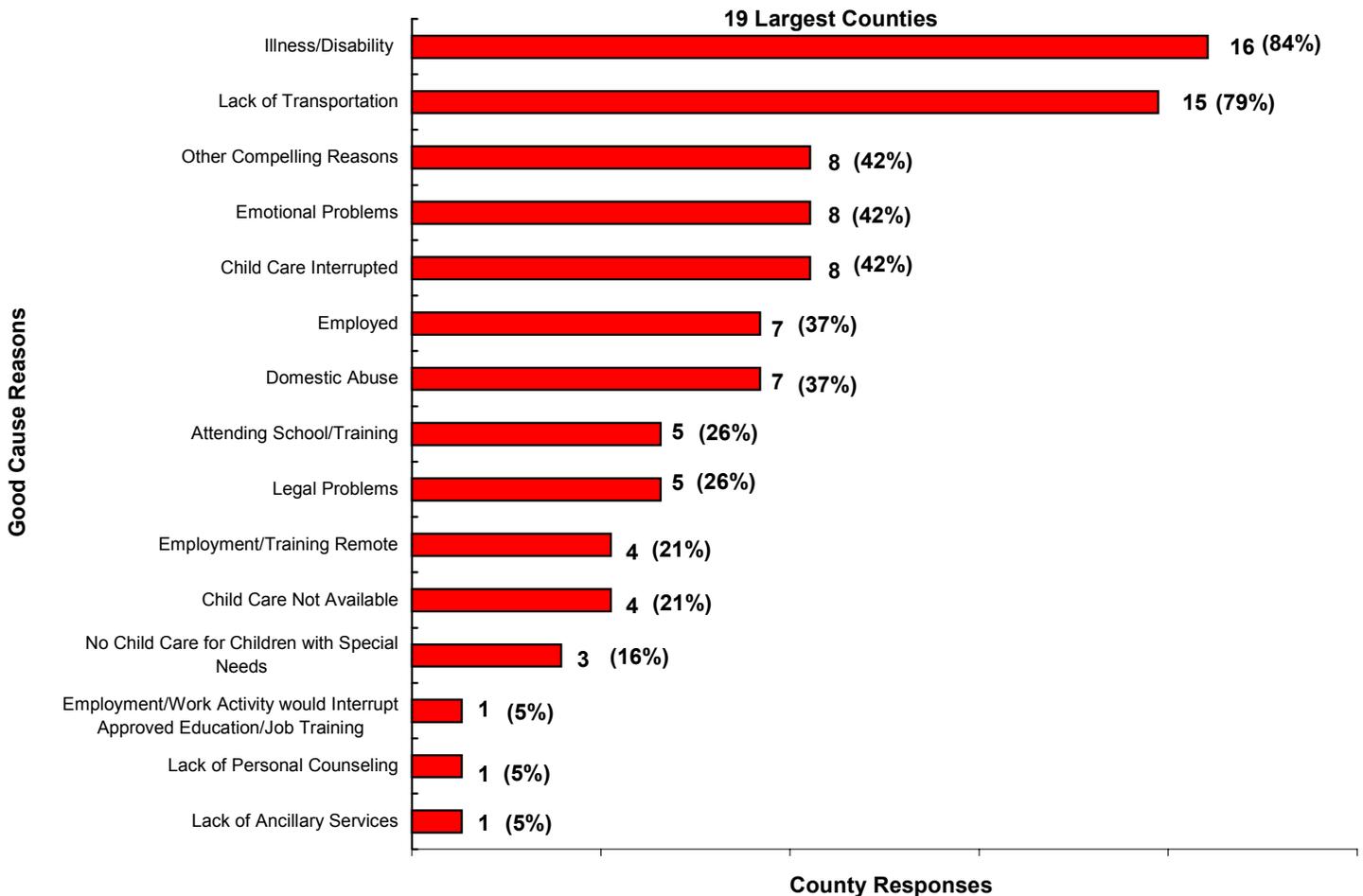
Summary of Survey Questions and Findings

GOOD CAUSE - CURRENT POLICIES

QUESTION: “Check the FIVE most frequently cited good cause reasons for not participating in WTW activities.”

- 16 (84%) counties cited illness or disability of an individual or family member as the most frequently cited good cause reason.
- 15 (79%) counties cited lack of transportation.
- 8 (42%) counties cited an individual’s emotional problems.
- 8 (42%) counties cited child care arrangements which have been interrupted.
- 8 (42%) counties cited other compelling reasons which have been determined by the county (e.g., homelessness).

**MOST Frequently Cited Good Cause Reasons for Recipient Not Participating in Work Activities
(5 Responses Allowed Per County)**

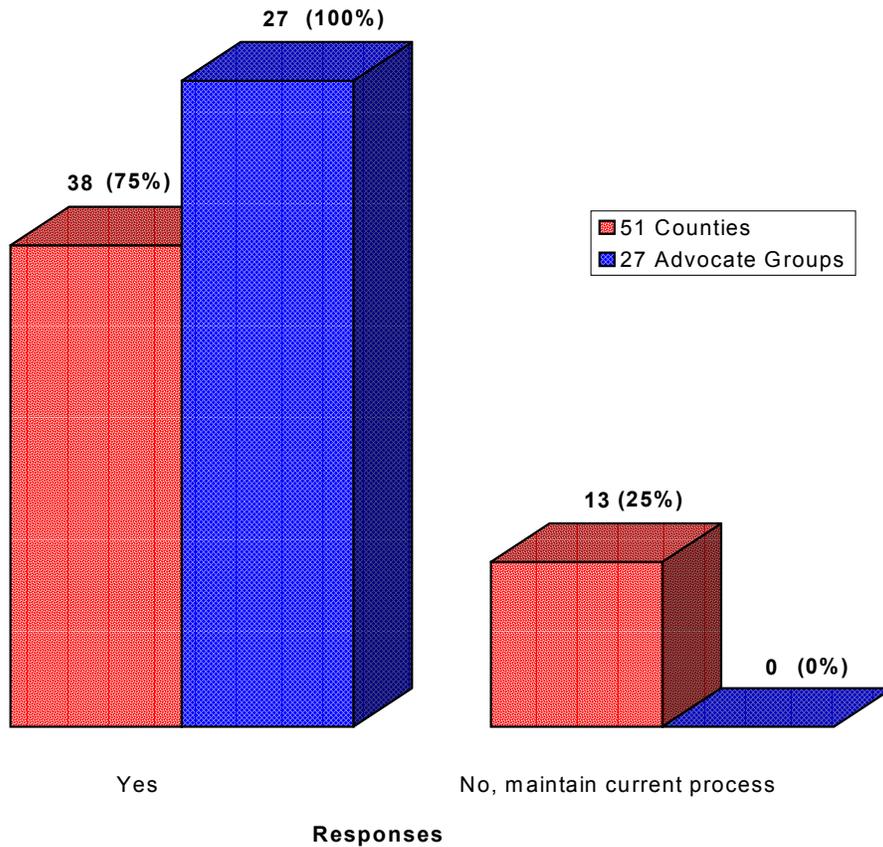


GOOD CAUSE - NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS

QUESTION: “Does your county/organization believe that improvements are needed in the area of good cause determination?”

- 38 (75%) counties suggested that improvements are needed to the current process of good cause establishment.
- 13 (25%) counties proposed to maintain the current process.
- 27 (100%) advocate groups overwhelmingly agreed that changes are needed to the current process of establishing good cause.

Counties and Advocate Groups Indicating Good Cause Determination Improvements are Needed

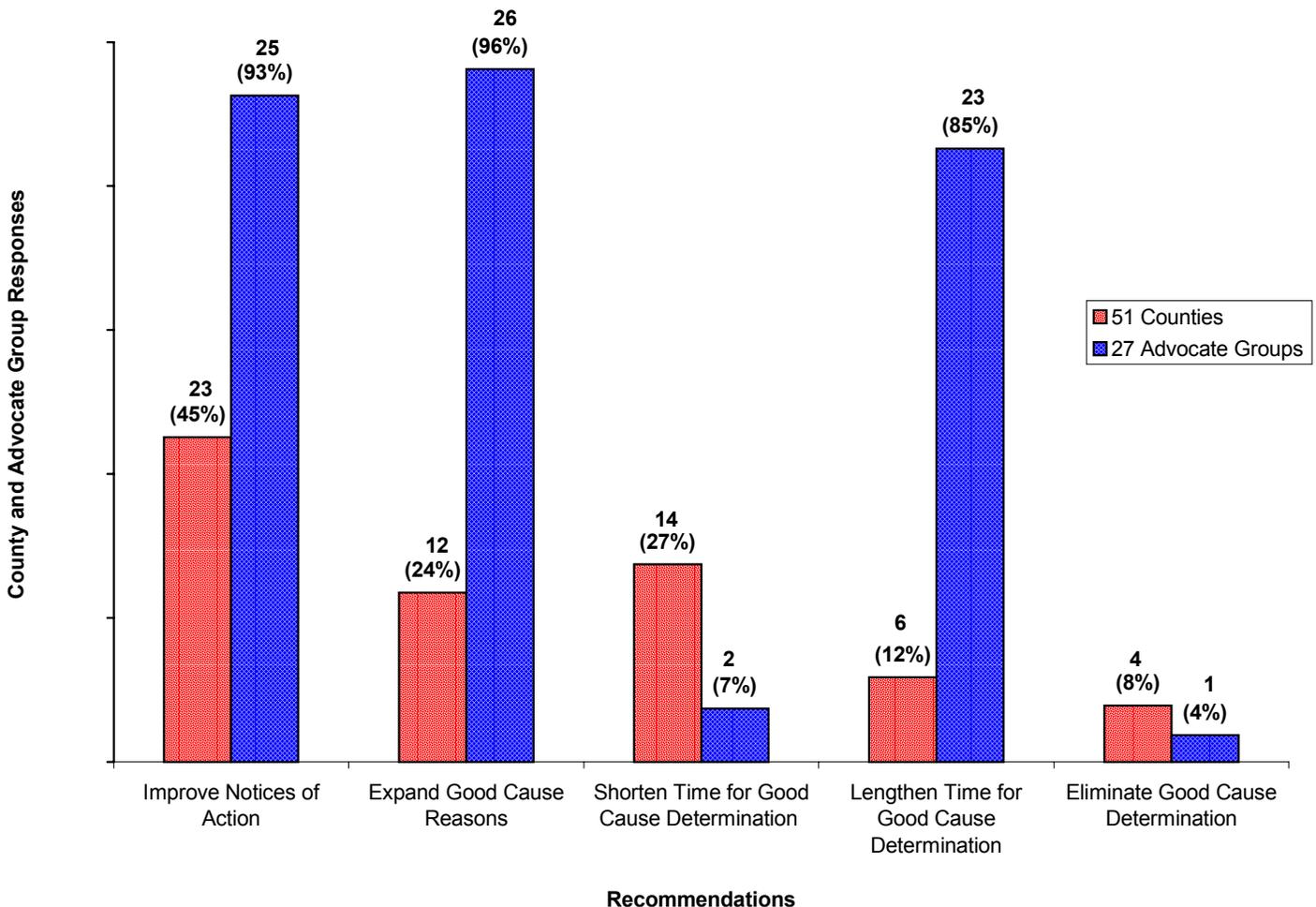


GOOD CAUSE - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The respondents were asked to identify areas in the good cause determination process that need improvements.

- 23 (45%) counties and 25 (93%) advocate groups believed that the Notice of Action should be improved.
- 12 (24%) counties and 26 (96%) advocate groups recommended expanding the reasons for granting good cause.
- 14 (27%) counties and 2 (7%) advocate groups wanted to shorten the time for good cause determination.
- 6 (12%) counties and 23 (85%) advocate groups preferred to lengthen the good cause determination process.
- 4 (8%) counties and only 1 (4%) advocate group suggested eliminating the process.

Recommendations for Improving Good Cause Determinations



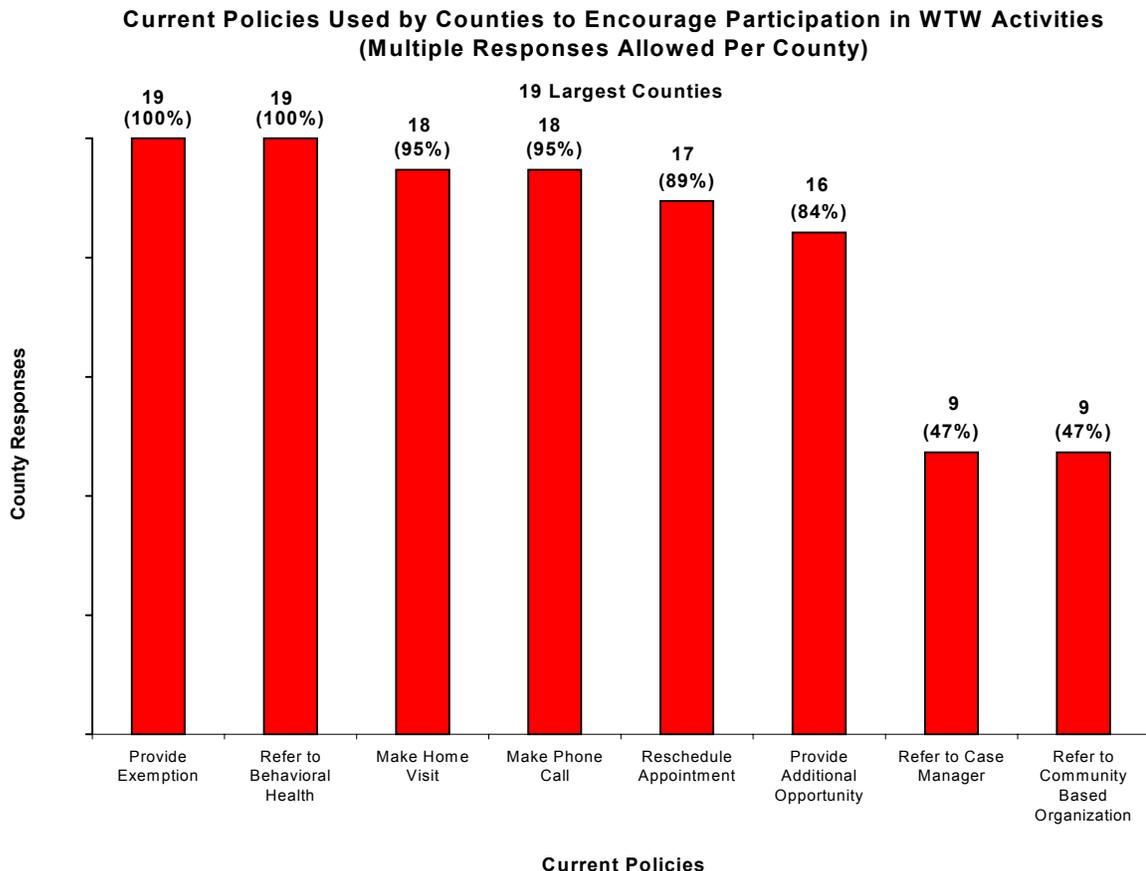
COMPLIANCE

Summary of Survey Questions and Findings

COMPLIANCE - CURRENT POLICIES

QUESTION: “Check ALL of the following policies currently used in your county to encourage those individuals who are experiencing difficulties to continue participation in WTW activities.”

- 19 (100%) counties exempt and/or refer individuals to behavioral health services.
- 18 (95%) counties use phone calls and/or home visits to encourage individuals to comply with WTW requirements.
- 17 (89%) counties reschedule appointments to give individuals another opportunity to participate.
- 16 (84%) counties provide additional opportunities to meet with their WTW clients.
- 9 (47%) counties find it necessary to refer clients to a case manager and/or refer them to a community-based organization for additional services designed to assist the individual in participating in WTW activities.

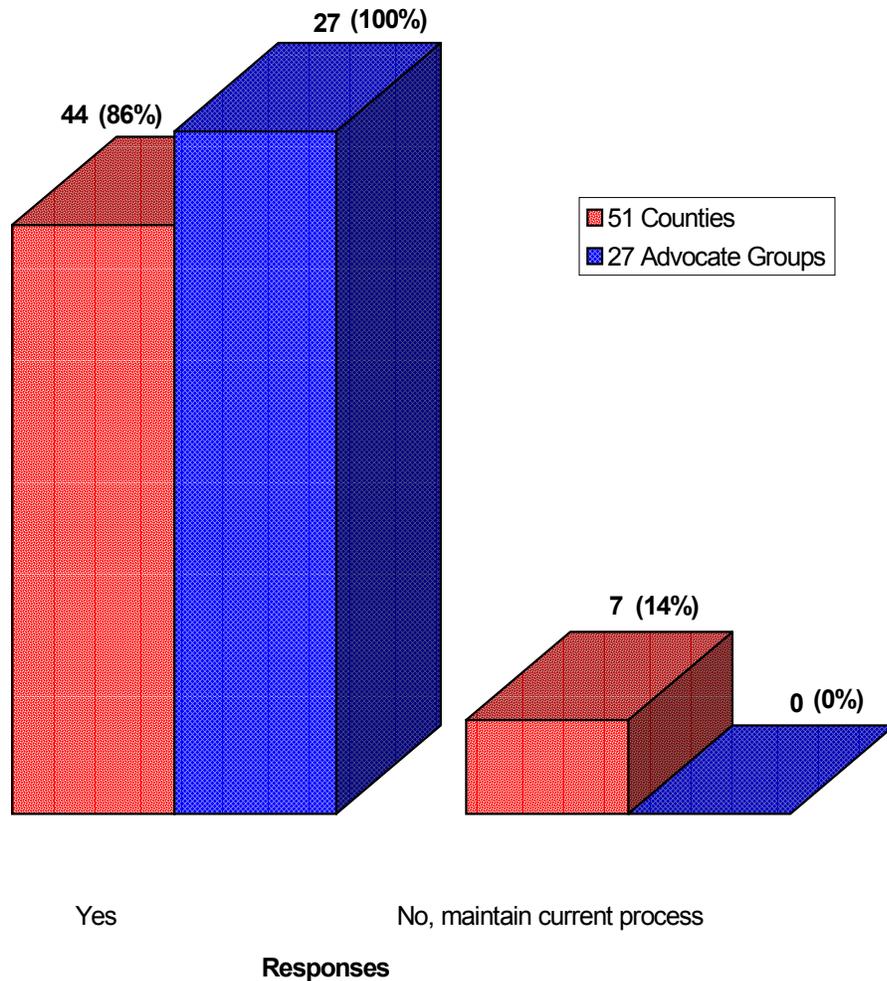


COMPLIANCE - NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS

QUESTION: “Does your county/organization believe that improvements are needed in the area of compliance?”

- 44 (86%) counties suggested that the compliance process is in need of improvement.
- 7 (14%) counties proposed to maintain the current process.
- 27 (100%) advocate groups overwhelmingly agreed that changes are needed to the current compliance process.

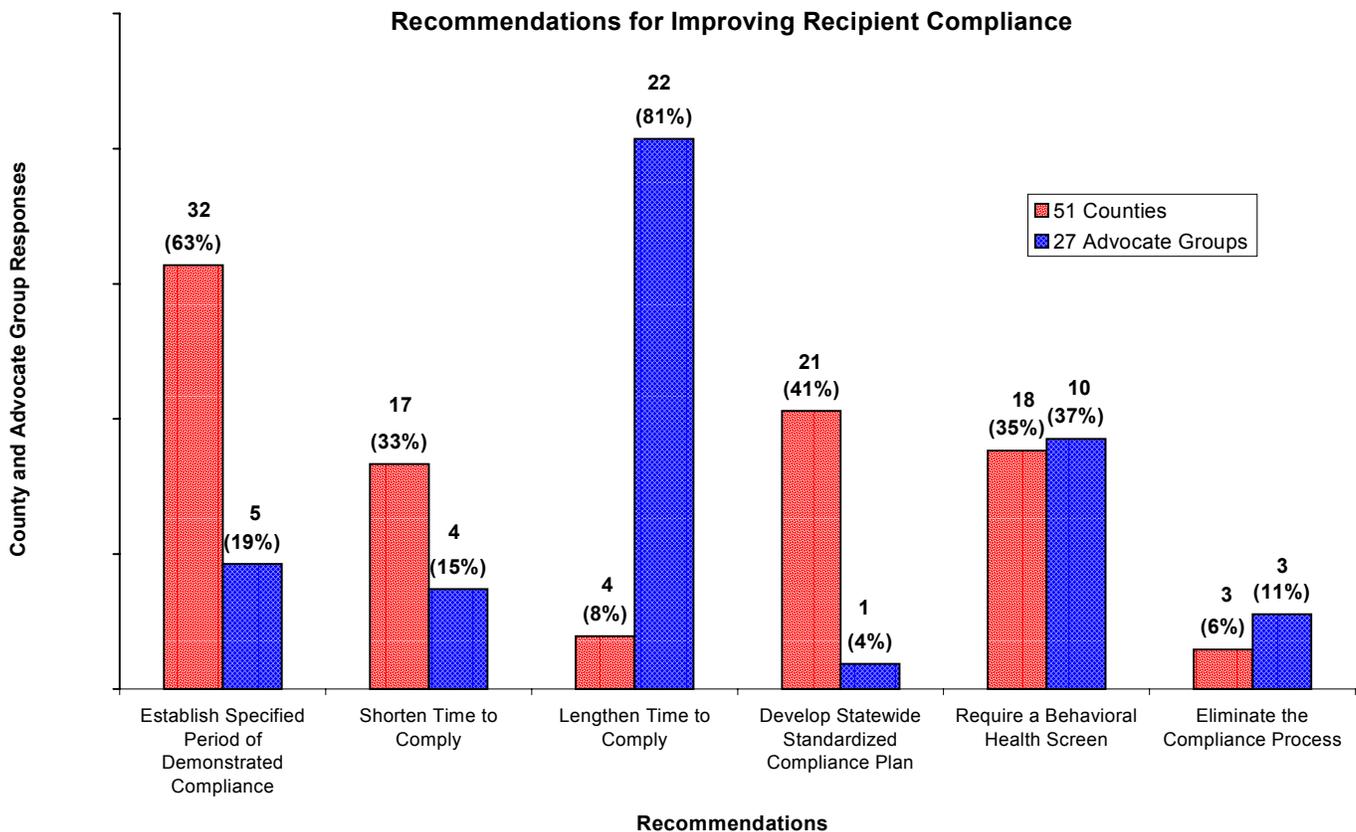
Counties and Advocate Groups Indicating Compliance Improvements are Needed



COMPLIANCE - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The respondents were asked to identify areas in the compliance process that need improvements.

- 32 (63%) counties and 5 (19%) advocate groups indicated that individuals should comply for a specified length of time before the compliance process is considered complete.
- 17 (33%) counties and 4 (15%) advocate groups agreed that the length of time to comply should be shortened.
- 4 (8%) counties and 22 (81%) advocate groups agreed that the time to comply should be lengthened.
- 21 (41%) counties and only 1 (4%) advocate group recommended a statewide standardized compliance plan.
- 18 (35%) counties and 10 (37%) advocate groups agreed that a behavioral health screen should be required.
- 3 (6%) counties and 3 (11%) advocate groups suggested elimination of the compliance process



SANCTION

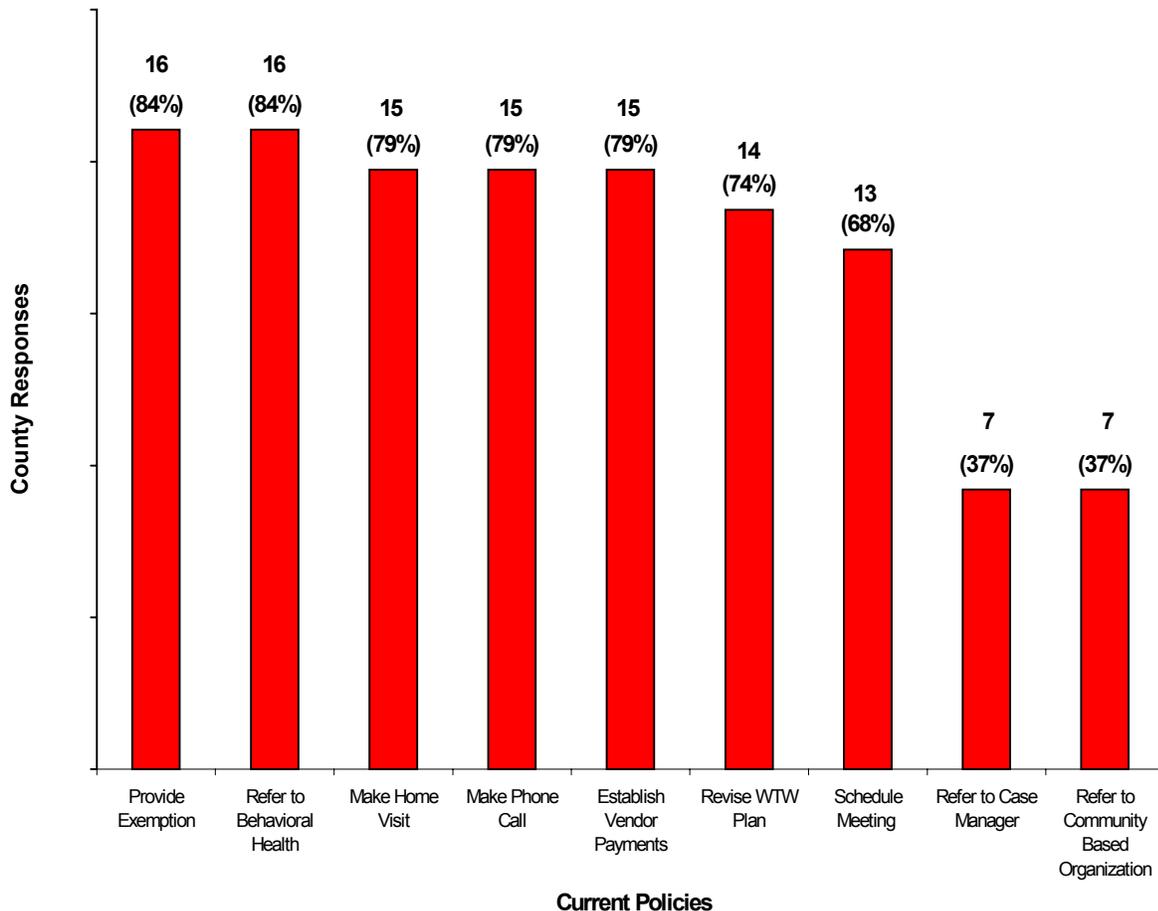
Summary of Survey Questions and Findings

CURING OF SANCTIONS - CURRENT POLICIES

QUESTION: “Check ALL of the following policies currently used in your county to encourage sanctioned individuals to cure the sanction and begin participating in WTW activities.”

- 16 (84%) counties exempt or refer clients to behavioral health services.
- 15 (79%) counties use home visits, phone calls, and the establishment of vendor payments to encourage participants to cure sanctions.
- 14 (74%) counties work with the client to revise the WTW plan to encourage participation.
- 13 (68%) counties schedule meetings with the sanctioned individuals to discuss the Welfare-to-Work plan.
- 7 (37%) counties refer the individual to a specialized case manager or to a community based organization.

**Current Policies Used by Counties to Encourage Individuals to Cure Sanction
(Multiple Responses Allowed Per County)
19 Largest Counties**



IMPOSING AND CURING SANCTIONS

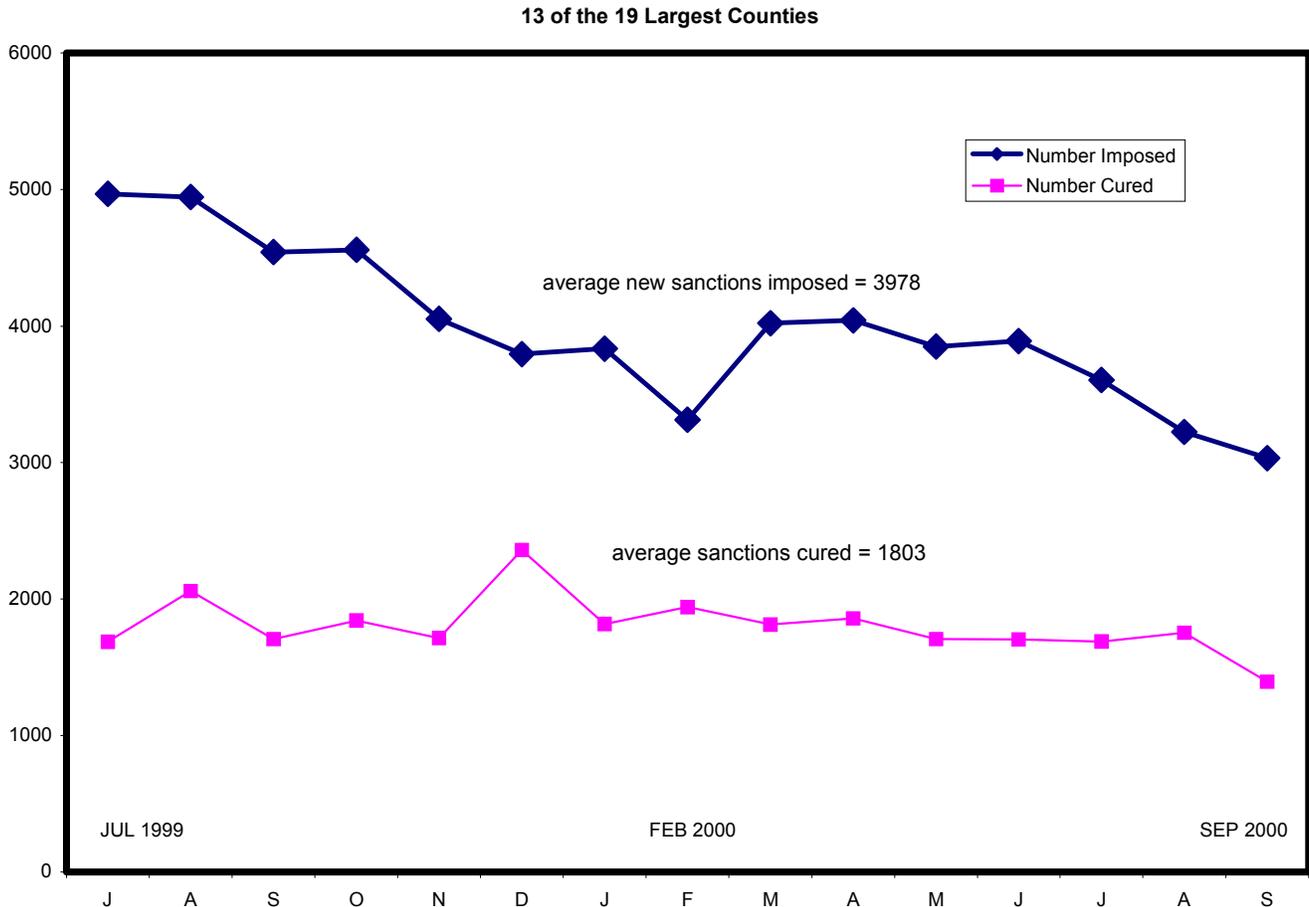
Six of the 19 largest counties were unable to provide complete data on the number of sanctions imposed or the number of sanctions cured for the period July 1999 through September 2000.

For the 13 remaining counties that reported data for the same period:

- the monthly average number of new sanctions imposed was 3,978
- the monthly average number of sanctions cured was 1,803.
- the sanction cure rate was 45 percent.
- the monthly average CalWORKs caseload was 416,074 adults.¹

¹ Source: CA 237 Caseload Report

**Number of New Sanctions Imposed and Sanctions Cured Each Month
for the Period July 1999 through September 2000**

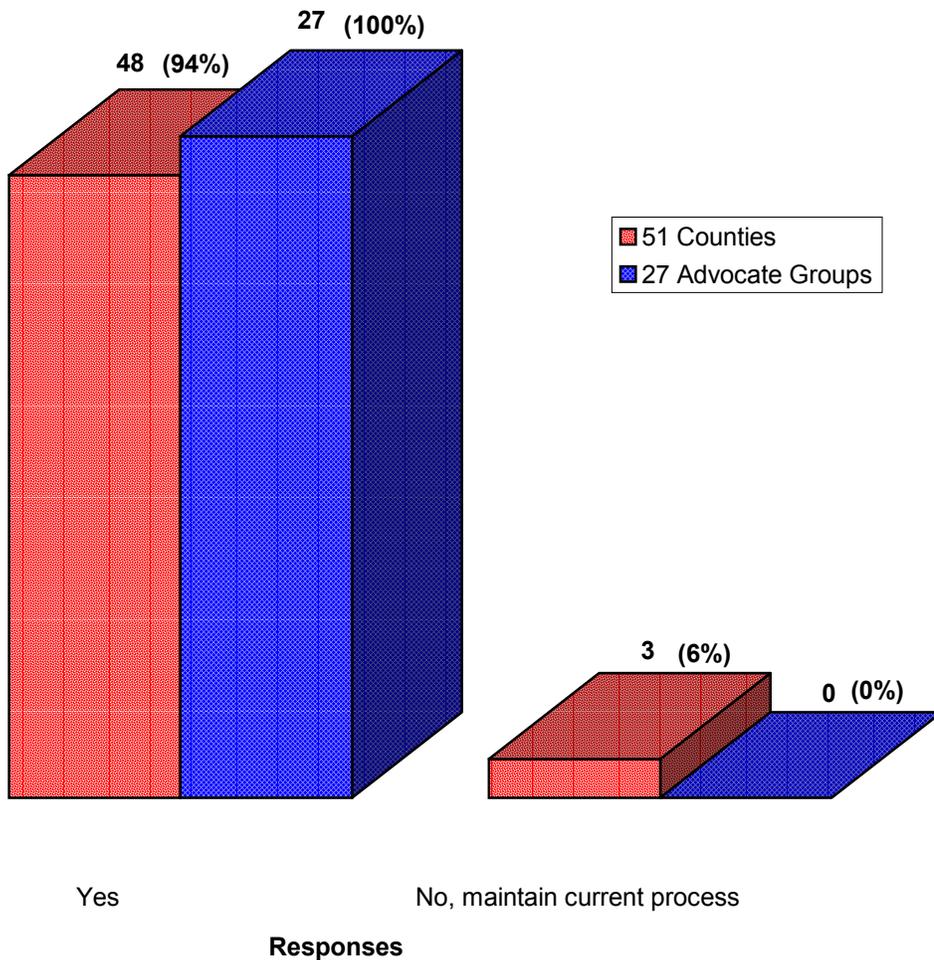


SANCTION - NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS

QUESTION: “Does your county/organization believe that improvements are needed in the area of sanctions?”

- 48 (94%) counties indicated a need for improvement in the area of sanctions.
- 3 (6%) counties proposed to maintain the current process.
- 27 (100%) advocate groups overwhelmingly agreed that changes are needed to the current process of imposing sanctions.

Counties and Advocate Groups Indicating Sanction Improvements are Needed



SANCTION - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The respondents were asked to identify areas in the imposition of sanctions process that need improvements.

- 26 (51%) counties and 23 (85%) advocate groups felt that if good cause is determined after a sanction has been imposed, the sanction should be canceled and not count as an instance. While this is current practice, the policy may need clarification.
- 34 (67%) counties and 9 (33%) advocate groups believed that improvement is needed to clarify that a spouse cannot act on behalf of the other parent's sanction in order to cure that sanction.
- 24 (47%) counties and 18 (67%) advocate groups expressed a need to provide additional standardization of what constitutes a cured sanction.
- 34 (67%) counties and only 4 (15%) advocate groups recommended that once the sanction is imposed the CalWORKs time clock should not be stopped.
- 15 (29%) counties indicated that sanctions be imposed until hearing is decided. None of the advocate groups recommended this.
- 29 (57%) counties and 5 (19%) advocate groups indicated that counties should not sanction, but discontinue a recipient if they do not participate in community service.
- 25 (49%) counties and 6 (22%) advocate groups suggested that the two parent family sanction be eliminated and require both parents to participate to enhance their potential for self-sufficiency.
- 5 (10%) counties and 5 (19%) advocate groups indicated that aid to WTW participants be reduced (prorated) for failure to comply with WTW requirements.
- 12 (24%) counties recommended that full family sanctions be implemented. No legal advocate group surveyed recommended implementation of a full family sanction.

Recommendations for Improving the Sanction Process

