

Overview: The Rapid Response Team is a community-based service that utilizes a strength-based approach to supporting families in accessing supports and achieving individualized goals.

Challenge: Several years ago Nevada County Child Welfare Services embarked on an internal audit of Departmental practices such as the types services provided, gaps between referrals for services and when services were implemented, the effects of extremely high caseloads on service delivery, recidivism and current Federal outcomes. Through this process we discovered that due to existing barriers (difficulties in obtaining releases of information, geography, real time delays due to extremely high caseloads between referring a family to services and implementation, lack of timely follow up due to high caseloads, and lack of services for non-MediCal families) it was clear there was an opportunity for improvement. This realization was the birth of the Rapid Response Team, a collaborative partnership between Nevada County Child Welfare Services and Victor Community Support Services.

Solution and Innovation: The Rapid Response Team (RRT) works in tandem with Nevada County Child Welfare Services in a three-pronged approach: First, a member of the RRT participates daily in Review Evaluate Decide (RED) Team with the Nevada County Child Welfare Emergency Response Unit to assess all referrals that come to the Department to determine the appropriate response and if a referral should be made to the RRT. Second, when a referral is assigned, social workers and members of the RRT respond together to initiate service from the very first contact. This collaboration eliminates the time gap that the Department had recognized as a needed improvement to engage families, promote safety, decrease recidivism and mitigate higher levels of intervention. Third, whenever a client is placed outside the county and initiating services takes time, the RRT can provide immediate support until more permanent services are implemented. This approach meets the immediate needs of the family and prevents the possibility of a higher level of intervention.

Some of the services offered through Rapid Response include but are not limited to:

- Immediate and long-term safety planning.
- Linkage to necessary community services and supports such as mental health and SUD treatment.
- Coordination with schools and other existing systems and natural supports.
- In-home support to address behavioral needs and/or provide coaching to caregivers.

- Child and Family Team meetings to create systems for sustained change and improvement.
- Monetary assistance to families for emergency and immediate needs such as paying electricity bills and garbage, rental assistance, car repairs, food, gas, etc.

Results: The Rapid Response Team went live in August 2020. Since then the following outcomes have been achieved:

- 59 referrals have been made to the Rapid Response Team
- 21 families have successfully completed their case plan goals
- The Rapid Response Team has provided an additional 400 contacts with families separate from tandem visits with Child Welfare.
- The most important results and success of the Rapid Response Team, thus far, has been that 8 children have remained home with their families that without Rapid Response Team intervention and support, would have been placed in a higher level of care.

Replicability: Nevada County Child Welfare Services was able to fund the Rapid Response Team in partnership with Victor Community Support Services by utilizing 2011 realignment dollars along with funds that were made available due to the Nevada County Youth Center closing its doors. Other counties could replicate this program by evaluating their realignment dollars, conduct county asset mapping and partnering with local service providers. MediCal billing can be leveraged for eligible activities and individuals, and by partnering with our local wraparound provider, we are able to provide more services and link families with longer term services more seamlessly.

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