



From: Ted Dallas, Acting Secretary, Department of Human Services

Date: March 23, 2015

Re: ChildLine Status Update

At the Department of Human Services (DHS), the safety and protection of Pennsylvania's children is one of our top priorities. Unfortunately, issues at ChildLine associated with implementing all 23 new child protective services laws that took effect on December 31 have created a backlog of clearance applications. Since the day I joined the Wolf Administration in mid-January, I have been committed to resolving these issues. I am writing to provide you a brief update on the Department's progress on this important issue.

The changes described below are already improving the speed at which we can complete clearances. As of March 20, DHS had decreased processing times from 26 days at the start of the Administration to 18 days. While we are not yet at the 14 days described in statute, we are moving in the right direction. Additionally, last week we processed 28,339 clearance applications, approximately 4,000 more than the week prior.

I have been working very closely with Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) Deputy Secretary Cathy Utz to improve the Department's implementation of these laws through the following four steps:

1. Increasing ChildLine staff

- 19 new temporary staff are assisting with clearances on the hotline and 9 annuitants returned to process clearances or take hotline calls.
- Department officials completed 20 interviews for new permanent staff last week.

2. Enhancing our IT systems

- In March and in July, DHS will implement upgrades to make our IT systems more user-friendly and enhance caseworker efficiency.
- The upgrades will also expedite the processing of child abuse reports and enable real-time sharing of information between the state's child abuse hotline and law enforcement and social service agencies.

3. Improving staff efficiency

- DHS has temporarily redeployed the Chief of Staff for the Office of Children Youth and Families to ChildLine to assist with training and accountability.
- Enhanced oversight will help ensure that all staff are completing their fair share of the work and meeting productivity targets.

4. Encouraging online reporting/applications

- DHS is encouraging individuals to complete applications online by visiting www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov. Applications filled out online are processed immediately with a return email.
- 65 percent of applications receive an immediate auto-clear result and they don't need to leave the comfort of their homes.

Thank you for interest in helping to protect Pennsylvania's children.