From: Denise Killian
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2015 8:56 PM
To: Theresa Freed
Cc: Rachel Sommerfeld; Michael Myers; Chuck Knapp; Todd Fertig; Brittany Glas; Raoul Cortez
Subject: Re: follow up questions regarding CINC response

Ms. Freed,

Please allow me to introduce myself: I'm the News Director at KSN.
As a former television reporter, certainly you can understand that television is a visual medium. Having a person respond instead of a graphic is far more powerful.
Secondly, emails are excellent for background information. The multiple emails you have exchanged with my Executive Producer are just that: background. Now that we have background, we are ready to do an in-person interview. That is the protocol for both print and television journalism.
Third, the context of this story, as Rachel laid out in the previous email, involves the death of a child in a home that had been the target of many investigations and welfare calls. I believe responding to these questions, and the concerns and allegations the child's father has brought to us, deserves an on-camera interview.
Fourth, the complexity of this story is too great to conduct entirely by email. As you know, you've been emailing with Rachel about background for over a month. Those emails are merely over protocols and procedures. We are now past protocols and procedures.
Fifth, you recently told Rachel someone from the Wichita office could speak about procedures. We felt that since the story involves more than just a policy explanation, it would be unfair to interview someone from a local office. We need to speak to someone in Topeka.
Sixth, our responsibility and our ethics at KSN is to get both sides of a story. We've heard the Blansett's side. We believe DCF has a story to tell - staff shortages, etc. I would really hate for this story to be one-sided. I would hate for our story to have only Mr. Blansett on-camera, and a statement that "DCF refused to sit down for an interview for this story" would not be in anyone's best interest.
I ask you to reconsider you position.
Brittany Glas and Raoul Cortez will be at your office in Topeka Friday morning at 8AM. They will be available all day for an interview.
If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a call - my personal cell phone is: 214

Best,
Denise

Denise Killian
News Director
KSN News

Sent by magic

On Apr 16, 2015, at 8:22 PM, Theresa Freed <Theresa.Freed@dcf.ks.gov> wrote:

You have not provided any reason why written response is insufficient. You have asked a long list of questions and follow up questions that require research. We have addressed your questions. If you have more, we will continue to address by email.
Mr. Myers, Mr. Knapp, Ms. Freed, Mr. Fertig,

**Please see the attached PDF document in regards to this email. You may have received this email twice, and if so, I apologize for the redundancy. Due to the size of the email, that includes all of my previous communication with DCF, it may have not gone through. The entirety of this email and all previous correspondence is in the attached PDF. Limited emails are below. **

I am writing to follow up on the below emails and multiple phone calls regarding requests for information from DCF. KSN has requested an on-camera interview with a senior level staff member (specifically Michael Myers, Dianne Kech and/or Maryann Peerenboom) regarding the ongoing KORA request first submitted to DCF on March 23, 2015 regarding DCF policy concerning case response times and follow-up procedures.

After my phone conversation this Tuesday, April 14, with Ms. Freed, I was informed that she needed additional information about the nature of our request for an on-camera interview so she knew who to set it up with. We discussed the details listed in the emails and KORA request below. She asked me to further clarify in an email, also attached below. After leaving two voicemails, I received the email below saying that we would not be granted an on-camera interview and that all answers would come in written form. The below emails also indicate her response that it is in “the best interest of your viewers to receive full and accurate responses that are best relayed in writing.”

I wanted to follow up and I called Ms. Freed multiple times this afternoon, leaving two voicemail messages, but received no answer. I also reached out to Mr. Myers’ office at the phone number listed on the DCF website. It led me to a voice mailbox for Maryann Peerenboom, where I left a message. I also called the number listed for Interim Deputy Secretary Jaime Rogers, and it went to a voicemail for Tammy Alexander in Economic and Employment Services. I spoke to Pamela Beach who informed me Mr. Knapp is Ms. Freed’s supervisor. I reached out to Mr. Knapp’s office and was given a number in the Lt. Governor’s office where I left another voicemail.

KSN respectfully requests that we are granted an on-camera interview for our story. We have specific questions and clarifications regarding response times and policies, as well as allegations regarding the timely response in the specific case regarding Caleb Blansett. We believe it is best to give DCF the opportunity to respond in an on-camera manner to the extensive questions regarding policy, both in general, and for the Blansett case. We have also requested the interview cover DCF staffing and workload, in response to the DCF press release in March that said that “DCF typically has approximately 50 vacant social worker positions, which it struggles to fill.” (Source: http://www.dcf.ks.gov/Newsroom/Pages/03-06-2015.aspx)

KSN will be sending a crew to Topeka tomorrow, Friday, April 17. Our reporter, Brittany Glas, and photographer, Raoul Cortez, will be at the DCF office located at 915 SW Harrison, at 8 a.m. They will be available the entire business day for an on-camera interview regarding these requests.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me at my cell phone listed below 316-
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rachel Schrag Sommerfeld
Executive Producer
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833 North Main St. Wichita, KS 67203
Newsroom: 316-292-1111
Direct: 316-292-1141   Cell: 316-

From: Theresa Freed [mailto:Theresa.Freed@dcf.ks.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2015 2:24 PM
To: Rachel Sommerfeld; Todd Fertig
Subject: RE: follow up questions regarding CINC response

We will continue to address your questions. We believe your questions are best answered through email. I appreciate that on-camera interviews are helpful when putting together television news story, but it’s in the best interest of your viewers to receive full and accurate responses that are best relayed in writing.

Theresa Freed
Director of Communications
Kansas Department for Children and Families
Desk: 785-296-0537
Cell: 785-296-0537

From: Rachel Sommerfeld [mailto:Rachel.Sommerfeld@ksn.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2015 1:57 PM
To: Theresa Freed; Todd Fertig
Subject: RE: follow up questions regarding CINC response

Ms. Freed, Mr. Fertig,

I have pasted the below questions that are still outstanding from my previous requests. I will await a response on those specific questions.

I’m also curious as to why an on-camera response has been denied. We are willing to schedule our interview at the department’s earliest convenience. Is there a reason why the request for an interview is not granted?

Thank you.

Previous questions:

1) You indicate that “of all child and adults reports received through the Kansas Protection Report Center (KPRC), 97% of initial assessment decisions were completed by the end of the next half working day. Do all reports go through the KPRC? Would this include reports from the public, reports from law enforcement, etc.? Are there other ways that DCF receives reports? If that is the case, what is the percentage of on-time responses for initial assessment to those cases that do not go through the KPRC?

2) You indicate that in both 2014 and 2015 through January, “of all reports assigned for abuse/neglect concerns with either a same day or 72 hour response time,” 97% had a timely
contact with victim/family. What is the response time for reports that were *not* assigned for abuse/neglect concerns with either a same day or 72 hour response time?

a. Additionally, I would like further clarification on what “timely contact with the victim/family” means. I have looked through the policy manual online and have been unable to locate the policy that states what the timeframe is to be considered “timely.” Is this 24 hours, 72 hours, etc.? I presume the requirements are different for a same-day response time and a 72 hour response time. What are those specific requirements to be considered “timely” contact with the victim or family?

b. Additionally, what are the requirements to be met for the deadline of “same day” or “72 hour” response time? Is contact with victim/family the only thing considered to ensure that the reports are being handled in a timely matter? Are there other factors that are included in that same day/72 hour response time? If so, what are the on time responses for those other factors, beyond contact with victim/family?

c. In reference to question 2) above, would cases that do not meet the criteria for same day or 72 hour response time, be applicable for a 20-day response time? What is the on-time percentage and documentation for those CINC/NAN with a 20-day response time?

3) I would also like to see documentation of the response times listed, for preliminary inquiry, initial assessment and reports assigned for abuse/neglect. I would like to formally request the documentation process for how DCF tracks these policies.

4) The original response to my KORA said “DCF does not track the time from the beginning of the report to the completion of each step.” It is unclear to me how DCF does not track this time, but has percentages on how many are done on time. Can you better explain to me the process of how DCF tracks its policies on timely responses? What documentation exists that shows the progression of timely responses?

5) You state in a previous email that “The maximum time allowed to make an Initial Assessment decision or request a Preliminary Inquiry is the end of the next half work day from the time the report is received.” You have also previously stated that “The Preliminary Inquiry information shall be obtained as soon as practical and should not exceed three (3) working days from the date the report is received by the agency.” What is the on-time percentage and documentation regarding when Preliminary Inquiries are completed? I would like to also formally request the documentation for determining the response time for Preliminary Inquiries.

6) There are places in the DCF policy manual that make reference to PPS forms. A google search led me to this link: [http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/PPSFormsandAppendices.aspx](http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/PPSFormsandAppendices.aspx) Am I correct in understanding that these are blank copies of the forms required to document various stages of an investigation/inquiry, etc.?

Thank you.

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From: Theresa Freed [mailto:Theresa.Freed@dcf.ks.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2015 12:30 PM
To: Rachel Sommerfeld; Todd Fertig  
Subject: RE: follow up questions regarding CINC response

We welcome your questions by email. We will decline an on-camera interview.

Sent from my Windows Phone

From: Rachel Sommerfeld  
Sent: 4/16/2015 11:01 AM  
To: Todd Fertig; Theresa Freed  
Cc: Rachel Sommerfeld  
Subject: RE: follow up questions regarding CINC response

Ms. Freed,  
I’m just following up on the below request. I also left you a couple of voicemails. Just wondering where we are on the process of an on-camera interview for the questions discussed in the below emails and previous KORA requests.

Thanks!

Rachel Schrag Sommerfeld  
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From: Rachel Sommerfeld  
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2015 8:06 AM  
To: Todd Fertig; Theresa Freed  
Cc: Rachel Sommerfeld  
Subject: RE: follow up questions regarding CINC response

Ms. Freed,  
Thanks for taking my call yesterday regarding an on-camera interview. After our conversation, I found an organizational chart regarding the supervision/chain of command for DCF, linked here: http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/PPSORGChart.pdf

If this online chart is still accurate with correct names/positions, I would like to formally request an on-camera interview at the soonest possible date with one (or more) of the following individuals: Michael Myers, Dianne Keech, Maryann Peerenboom. As we discussed last night, I believe it would be appropriate to issue these questions on why policies are the way they are, how they were developed, etc. with an individual in the Topeka office, as I am looking for more information than a simple explanation of a policy, as I have been able to do extensive research on the policies on the online policy database, located here: http://content.dcf.ks.gov/PPS/robohelp/PPMGenerate/ (Thanks for your help in directing me towards this helpful document!)

As we also discussed last night, I would like the opportunity to discuss and ask questions on the DCF/Kansas Protection Report Center’s procedures and policies that I’ve been discussing in my KORA requests including, but not limited to, the process of Initial Assessment, Preliminary Inquiry,
Investigation; policies on timely responses, how those policies work, why they are what they are, what the procedures are for following up, failure to respond in a timely matter, how those determinations of what is “timely” are made, on-time percentage rates and their further documentation, what the follow-up procedure is for failing to have timely responses in cases, how a case is handled after it has not had a timely response, etc. I would also like to discuss the process of contact with victim, family, alleged perpetrator, how the case progresses, what elements are involved in an investigation, etc. As the flow of my KORA requests has shown, I am interested in cases involving children/child abuse & neglect, child protective services, etc. not adult protective services.

I’m also interested in finding out more about the DCF staffing and workload. I understand from a variety of your press releases in the past, that DCF can struggle with finding qualified social workers willing to take on the challenging position of working in DCF. Your March 6, 2015 press release said that “DCF typically has approximately 50 vacant social worker positions, which it struggles to fill.” (Source: http://www.dcf.ks.gov/Newsroom/Pages/03-06-2015.aspx) I’d like to discuss more on that concern and how the agency works under the constraints of staffing shortages and the effort to fill those positions, such as through the Recruitment and Retention Workgroup.

Thanks again for your continued help with the additional KORA questions listed below, and in setting up an on-camera interview. I look forward to your response and an opportunity to schedule that interview as soon as possible.

Thank you.

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*******PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PDF DOCUMENT FOR EMAILS FROM March 23, 2015 THROUGH TODAY*********