



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for
Human Services

May 8, 2020

SUBJECT: County MOU Agreements

REQUIRED ACTION: Information Only

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Thank you for all you are doing to serve the individuals, children, and families in our state. Your hard work and dedication to ensuring that everyone, from your team members to your constituents, is safe and healthy is evident.

COVID-19 continues to impact our daily business. While the State remains committed to providing the support you need to weather through this storm, we recognize that there are new barriers that are difficult to overcome when meeting the performance measures outlined in the 2019-2020 MOU. As noted in our February 17, 2020 letter, the decision was made to not issue formal corrective actions relating to MOU performance during SFY 2019-2020.

We know that the focus of our work is on providing services to our families and you are all doing your very best to meet those demands. To help you navigate this unprecedented crisis and acknowledging that we will face challenges for some time to come, we believe now is not the time to issue a new MOU for SFY 2020-2021.

While we believe this to be the right decision, we are faced with the statutory requirement for the Department and County to enter into a written agreement each year. To meet this requirement, the Department has determined that the next MOU will be issued for an effective date of January 1, 2021 to continue through June 30, 2022.

In the interim, the Department will provide counties with a document setting forth the current performance measures. While there will be no formal agreement binding the counties to these performance measures for the duration of this calendar year, we all need to continue to work to meet or exceed these standards. The performance measures are based upon federal or state requirements and if, as a State, we fail to meet these metrics we may see an impact to funding for our programs or be placed under corrective action as a State. Additionally, adherence to

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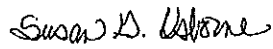
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these metrics is an indicator that we are fulfilling our duty to North Carolinians by providing appropriate and timely access to benefits and services.

Until a new MOU is in place, the Department will continue to provide direction and technical assistance to County staff for all program areas. This will occur through monthly site visits (virtual while travel is limited), data review, training, and the development and monitoring of continuous quality improvement plans. Additionally, the Department will continue to provide counties with their data on the performance measures. None of these actions as they relate to the performance measures are intended to be punitive, but rather, we hope to work collaboratively with the counties that are having difficulty consistently meeting the standards.

Thank you once again for all you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan G. Osborne".

Susan G. Osborne
Assistant Secretary