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MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

LINDA S. SPEARS
Commissioner

February 19, 2016

The Honorable Karen E. Spilka
Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Brian S. Dempsey
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Jennifer L. Flanagan
Chairwoman, Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
State House, Room 208
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Kay Khan
Chairwoman, Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
State House, Room 146
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs:

This letter is responsive to language line item 4800-1100 of chapter 46 of the acts of 2015 which states:

“...provided further, that the department shall report monthly to the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and means the current average caseload for social workers and how many workers may need to be hired to get to a 15 to 1 caseload ratio for every worker.”

The language above asks for the Department to report on 1. the current average caseloads for social workers in each month and 2. the number of social workers needed to achieve a 15 to 1 caseload ratio. Data from the first three months of FY2016 are currently available.

1. Current Average Caseload

The statewide average weighted caseload for social workers in July of 2015 was 20.66 to 1.

The statewide average weighted caseload for social workers in August of 2015 was 19.75 to 1.

The statewide average weighted caseload for social workers in September of 2015 was 19.03 to 1.

2. Number of Social Workers Needed to Achieve a 15 to 1 caseload ratio

To achieve the Department's goal of having no more than 15 families assigned per ongoing worker, with no more than 10 children in placement and no more than 28 children overall, the Department will need to attain a statewide average weighted caseload of 18.0:1. [An average of 18 weighted cases = 15 families assigned (approximately)]. This number is set by Supplemental Agreement Q of Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Commonwealth and SEIU Local 509 which was ratified by the Legislature and Governor as Chapter 359 of the Acts of 2014.

In July, the Department would have needed 285.9 additional social workers to achieve a weighted caseload average of 18 to 1.

In August, the Department would have needed 190 additional social workers to achieve a weighted caseload average of 18 to 1.

In September, the Department would have needed 118.2 additional social workers to achieve a weighted caseload average of 18 to 1.

Additional supervisory and management staff would be required to support these positions. Please also note that these numbers assume a static caseload and do not account for any impact new policy and practice being implemented could have on caseloads.

If you have any questions, please contact Leah Robins, Legislative Director at 617-748-2193.

Sincerely,



Linda S. Spears
Commissioner