



Impact of Governor's Funding Cuts on WMPC

Millions cut from Governor Gretchen Whitmer's Budget Impacts Innovative Foster Care Model

Separate from the governor's \$1 billion line-item vetoes, there was an administrative transfer of \$2 million from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) contract with West Michigan Partnership for Children (WMPC). If not restored, WMPC will be unable to continue to oversee the placement and care for approximately 850 children receiving foster care and adoption services in Kent County. WMPC just beginning its third year of a five-year innovative foster care pilot in Kent County that had statewide support from public and private child welfare professionals and bipartisan legislative champions.

Who is WMPC

WMPC was developed in response to Public Act 59 of 2013, Section 503, which required the MDHHS to determine feasibility of performance-based funding, develop recommendations, and provide a pathway for implementation of an approach that aligned effective social policy with fiscal responsibility to deliver child welfare services.

Through a prospective case rate and increased flexibility in spending, WMPC invests in services, supports, staffing models, and best practices to address child-specific needs with the goal of increased stability, decreased length of stay, and improved safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. WMPC's work is transformative; rather than just administering foster care, WMPC is transforming the delivery of services, and doing so through an equity framework and trauma-informed approach.

Initial WMPC Outcomes

Two innovations implemented by WMPC that have been critical to positive outcomes include:

- **Enhanced Foster Care (EFC):** a new service WMPC created and rolled out in January 2018 to provide an intensive community-based approach by stabilizing current youth in foster care, diverting youth from being placed out of the community, and deliberately returning youth from residential care back to the community. During their weekly visits with WMPC partner agencies, WMPC's Care Coordinators identify youth who may benefit and qualify for this service due to behavioral and mental health needs related to their trauma experience. EFC builds the capacity of caregivers to meet the needs of the youth in a community-based placement (i.e., foster home or relative home) through family-centered treatment planning and intensive support to the child and caregiver by a behavioral specialist and clinical case manager. EFC is possible due to the flexibility of WMPC's funding model and has contributed to a reduction in utilization of residential settings by 5 percent and increased stability outcomes for young people.
- **MindShare:** WMPC's data platform allows WMPC to assimilate data in nightly feeds through the MDHHS MiSACWIS system. WMPC's performance and quality improvement team continually analyzes performance data, using MindShare dashboards, and engages with its network providers

formally on a monthly basis to discuss key performance measures, data quality, outcome measures, and quality improvement plans. WMPC also meets with providers on a quarterly basis as a condensed review of contract compliance and achievement of outcomes. MindShare has been critical in WMPC's utilization management and real-time understanding of what's happening with each case and has contributed to improvement in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) required by the state. WMPC has invested just over a quarter of a million dollars in this system, which would likely be discontinued and put on the shelf if the pilot were to be transitioned to state oversight.

WMPC is already seeing positive outcomes that were intended by the pilot. Since opening its doors on October 1, 2017, WMPC has:

- reduced the number of days that children spend in residential care per year by 20 percent;
- increased by 65 percent the number of licensed foster homes in the three Kent County zip codes with the highest child removal rates;
- decreased the length of stay for children in foster care by 5 percent;
- decreased placements of children in residential settings by 5 percent; and
- increased placements of children in relative care by 6 percent.

What is the impact if funding is not restored?

- Oversight of foster care would be transitioned to the public agency, which does not currently have the capacity to implement all of the key components of the WMPC model that have yielded improved outcomes for children and families.
- Continuity of care is a critical component of a child's reunification and timeliness to permanency, and any transition in their services threatens the very purpose of the foster care system and has a direct impact on child well-being.
- There has been a significant investment in time and resources developing WMPC's model to include: Enhanced Foster Care; WMPC's utilization management and care coordination models; the MindShare software and investment in performance and quality improvement; and additional supports, including family finders and case aides to support children and families. It is likely that MDHHS would be unable to continue these components.
- As of the end of FY19 Quarter 3, Kent County has met or exceeded statewide performance in 9 out of 11 KPIs under the WMPC model, and the children and families served by WMPC don't deserve to lose progress. Rather, we believe WMPC should be highlighted as a blueprint for how we can bring innovation to child welfare statewide. This is the future of child welfare, and Michigan has the opportunity to be one of the earlier states to adopt this approach. Without WMPC, our community will not have the capacity for the type of flexibility, testing, and innovation that WMPC provides, and our performance will backslide.
- If WMPC's funding is not restored, it will be forced to close, leaving 19 Michigan residents unemployed.

What can we do?

Please urge your legislators to submit a supplemental request to Governor Whitmer for complete restoration of WMPC funds, and contact the Governor to express your support of WMPC using this [ACTION ALERT!](#) **Timing is critical to ensure WMPC's continuation.**