

Division of Family & Children Services: Georgia's Differential Response Child Welfare Model

Presenter: Lisa Lariscy
DHS/DFCS Project Manager, Safety
Response System and Differential
Response

Presentation to: DHS Board

Date: June 20, 2012



Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

Mission

Strengthen Georgia by providing Individuals and Families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

Core Values

- **Provide *access to resources* that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.**
- ***Deliver services professionally* and treat all clients with dignity and respect. Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.**
- **Promote accountability, transparency and *quality in all services* we deliver and programs we administer.**
- ***Develop our employees* at all levels of the agency.**

A New Focus on the Safety of Children in Georgia

- To address practice inconsistencies
- Leadership changes
- Child welfare practice constantly changing and GA wanted a cutting edge practice implemented
- Improve outcomes for children and families of Georgia
- Review of our Diversion Practice



Differential Response (DR)

A state is formally recognized to have a DR model* when:

- **Responses to an accepted child maltreatment report are formally established via legislation, policy or protocols, and there are at least two discrete responses for screened-in reports—investigative response and a non-investigative response**
- **The child protection agency determines the type of response based on an array of factors (e.g., alleged maltreatment type, presence of imminent danger, risk level, number of prior reports or age of child);**
- **Initial response can change if the agency obtains new information that alters the risk level or safety concerns; and**

Differential Response

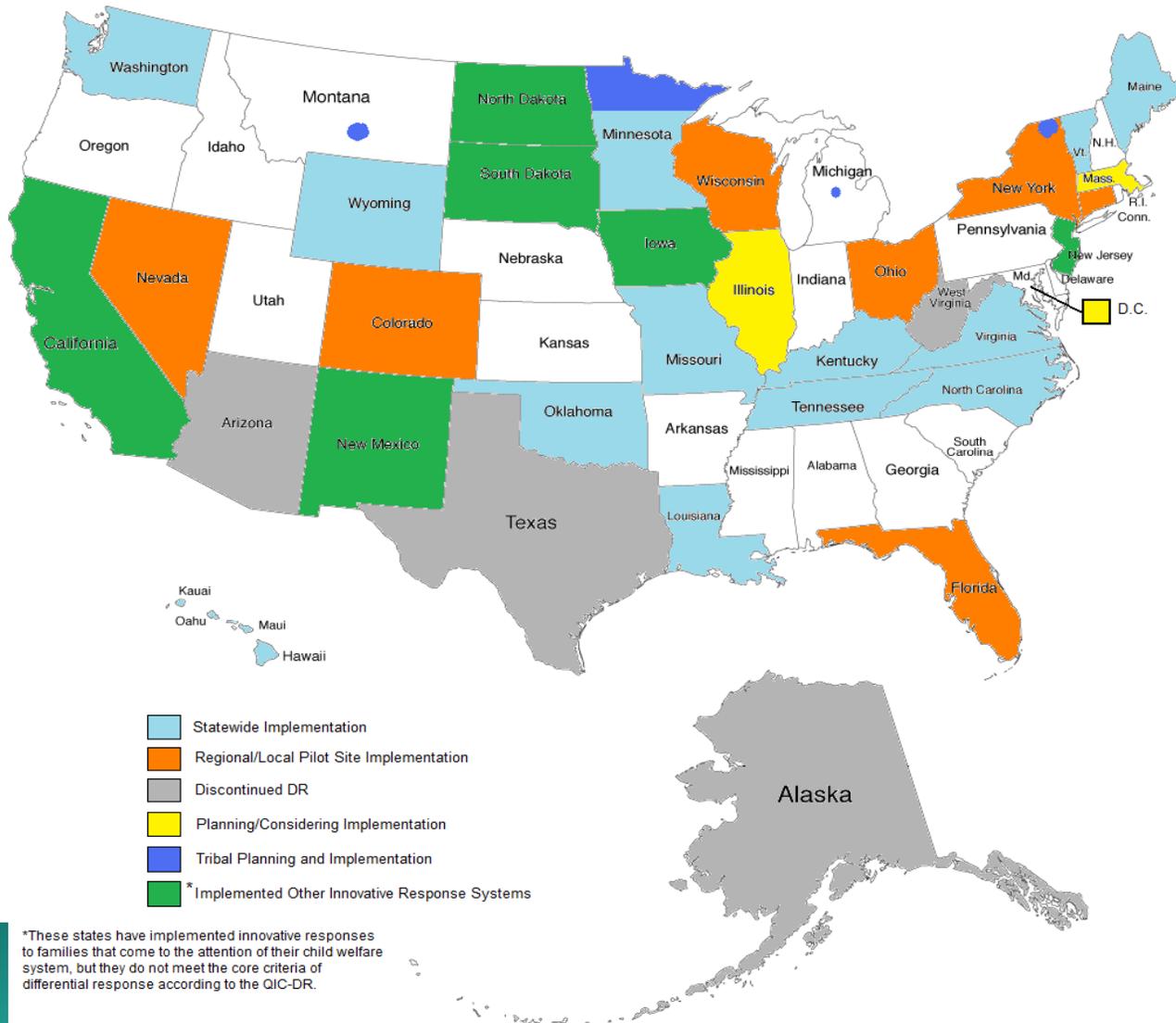
- In the non-investigative response (typically for low to moderate risk neglect),**
- **Services are voluntary – families may accept or refuse services so long as there are no safety concerns;**
 - **There is no formal determination of child maltreatment; and**
 - **No one is named as a perpetrator.”**

*American Humane Association and the Child Welfare League of America

DR Outcomes in Other States

- **Vast majority of families reported for child maltreatment are not found to be maltreating but instead need a connection to services to shore up their family foundation.**
- **Children are better protected over time through engagement of parents during the process**
- **The rate of subsequent repeat reports to CPS has been demonstrated to decrease**
- **Child safety is uncompromised**
- **Both families and agency child protection workers are more satisfied with the outcomes**
- **Involvement of larger systems of support**
- **The approach is cost neutral or saves money over time**
- **Less child trauma from removal**

Differential Response in the U.S.



A New Focus on the Safety of Children in Georgia

- What agency could best support our new focus on safety?
- How could we ensure a state of the art child welfare practice with a cutting edge Differential Response child welfare model?
- How could we implement this new practice and ensured we did so with fidelity to the practice?



Georgia's Safety Response System (SRS)



Accomplishments To Date



Centralized Phone Intake

- ✓ September 2011

Differential Response

- ✓ Implemented Interim DR Protocol April 01, 2012
- ✓ Meets National Tenets

Accomplishments to Date

- Collaborating with American Humane Association, Casey Family Programs and the Quality Improvement Center for DR
- Continued technical assistance provided by NRCCPS and ACCWIC.
- Monthly Statewide Cadence Calls re: DR Protocol
- Monthly Calls with Region DR Expert Feedback and Support Group
- Utilization of Implementation Science with the DR Protocol (Regional Plans; Reviews; DR Experts, Implementation Leads, Lessons Learned)
- Pilot Counties Identified for Implementing SRS – Richmond and Sumter
- Diligent and continual review of intakes with discussion and learning cases
- Overview of the DR Child Welfare Model provided to Council of Juvenile Court Judges, GA CASA, Barton Center, GA Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children

Georgia's Differential Response Model

- **Lisa C. Lariscy**
**Project Director, Safety Response System
and Differential Response**

lclariscy@dhr.state.ga.us

912-222-5296