

**Clyde Saiki, December 2016 Legislative Days, Senate Human Services Committee**

One of the major efforts we have in Child Welfare is called the Critical Incident Response Team.... It is a critical piece of safety.

This is something that was established statutorily.... And it directs the Department to within 24 hours of the fatality of the child... to form a CIRT to review the case and try to identify systemic issues, procedural issues, policy issues that may have contributed to the outcome and how we are going to improve on our process so we can prevent things like that from happening in the future.

I also have the authority to convene a CIRT for incidents that don't actually rise to the level of a definition provided in statute... In at least two cases where after reviewing a case file I said "We've got to take a deeper dive into this and look into this because I'm really concerned about how we got to where we got to."

I have been very involved in the process. I've sat in on all the meetings since I've been there. I'm the final reviewer of the reports. I think there is a lot of useful information to be gleaned from those reports and information that will really help us be a better organization.

The statute also directed the Department to adopt administrative rules to guide the CIRT process. One of the things I've discovered is that we haven't done that. We've drafted the rules, but they've never been adopted and I was surprised by that.

I don't know why we didn't adopt the final rules and no one can explain that to me.

<Explains outstanding CIRTs>

These CIRTs have taken longer than I thought they should have.

<Discusses staffing>

The other issue is that in reviewing some CIRTs that actually had already been in the final stages, Dr. Richardson at that point in time was serving as our interim Child Welfare Director ... We sat down and looked at them. And really they didn't say anything. They had been almost written in a way or sanitized so that they didn't really say anything. So we reopened those CIRTs and sent them back. Because our expectation is that while respecting confidentiality we want to put as much information, relevant information, as we can in those reports. And then once those reports are finalized we post them on the website.

So in at least two of the three open CIRTs are ones we've sent back and said we need to rewrite these or we need to relook at these because....I... It's hard for me to explain this, but I think in the past the Department had a certain view on how CIRTs were to be written and put forth.

And I, we've let people know that what our expectation is around the way these reports should be written and from this point forward that is what our expectation is for staff.

The final piece around the CIRT issue is that one of the issues I've struggled with in the Department is kind of the accountability and follow up. . . you know Senator Gelsler you as we did the Governor's Independent review some of the things the independent reviewer found were actually things that had been mentioned in 3 or 4 previous reports. Some of the issues that were identified were issues we've known about for 5, 6, 10 years. So as part of the CIRT process recommendations are made on what we need to change. And so, what we are going to do from this point forward is that as recommendations are made the ones we are going to accept we're actually assign staff people by name staff people who are responsible for following through on that. And then we are going to reconvene the group in 4-6 months to say ok so what have we done about it and what progress have we made. Because I think without that accountability piece it is really easy for these things to kind of go by the wayside and in fact history has shown that's what has happened to them.

So that's kind of what I had to talk to you about. So, really, the bottom line it really is a leadership issue. It's up to me and each of my program directors and my executive team to really deliver the message that safety is our top priority and the mission of safety has to permeate throughout the organization and that we are going to hold people accountable to make sure that happens.