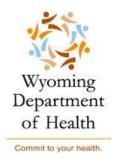
Laramie County Intensive Case Plan Supervision (ICPS) Program

Evaluation Report: The First Two Years

September 2007 – September 2009



Wyoming Department of Health Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division

For publication information, please contact:

Mindy J. Dahl, Ph.D., at 307-777-5480, or mindy.dahl@health.wyo.gov

For program information, please contact:

Marci Linde, J.D., at 307-221-4128, or marci.linde@health.wyo.gov

Eydie Trautwein, J.D., at 307-777-6493, or eydie.trautwein@health.wyo.gov

Executive Summary

This report serves as an evaluation of the Intensive Case Plan Supervision (ICPS) program, which has functioned in Laramie County, Wyoming for the past 2 years (beginning in September, 2007). This program is a joint venture between the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) and the Wyoming Department of Family Services, with the cooperation of the Laramie County Juvenile Court (First Judicial District of Wyoming). To date, the program has served 32 families who have been charged with child maltreatment (abuse and/or neglect) and/or a substance abuse related offense. The goal of the ICPS program is to assist families in completing their Department of Family Services (DFS) case plan in an efficient manner, while also moving the family expeditiously toward permanency for the involved children. The action associated with this goal is courtmandated participation in the ICPS program, alongside weekly monitoring by all persons/agencies involved in each case. Permanency could include reunification with the parent(s), placement with a family member, adoption, or relinquishment of parental rights; regardless of placement, a permanent living situation for the involved children is considered a success.

Information presented in the following report will show that the ICPS program has performed in accordance with its goals, and that program participants have experienced positive outcomes related to their participation in this program. Most notably, while 63% of children were placed in DFS custody at the outset of the ICPS program, only 7% remained in DFS custody at program end. Fully 50% of children were reunified with their original families through the course of this program, with an additional 7% who achieved guardianship; 21% were pending adoption; and approximately 15% who were placed in relative homes. These figures point to the effectiveness of the ICPS program in providing both monitoring and positive guidance for participant families.

Laramie County Intensive Case Plan Supervision (ICPS) Program Evaluation Report:

The First Two Years

The present evaluation serves to describe the process and preliminary outcomes associated with the implementation of the Laramie County Intensive Case Plan Supervision Program (ICPS), from September 2007 through September 2009. Results indicate that this program has been effective in promoting increased time efficiency toward child permanency or familial resolution, increased parental employment, and high levels of parental compliance with substance abuse treatment.

Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to complete an analysis of the Laramie County ICPS program. This evaluation will be used to describe current program functioning, as well as to inform and guide program development. At present, the number of families who have pending allegations of abuse or neglect, or whose children have been adjudicated as abused and/or neglected in Laramie County, Wyoming is a significant concern in the local community. Laramie County experienced an average of 108.25 out-of-home placements in 2008, the highest in the state of Wyoming (Wyoming Department of Family Services, Point in Time Placement Counts, 2008). The average length-of-stay in out-of-home placement in Laramie County is 362 days, or nearly one year, and approximately 28% of those placements will re-enter the system within 12 months of initial placement (Wyoming Department of Family Services, 2008).

The ICPS program began in 2007 when interested parties determined that the children of parents who had been charged with abuse/neglect and who had a substance abuse related offense were languishing in the system for far longer than they should. The ultimate goal of the program is thus to achieve expeditious permanency for children whose parent(s) have been party to a petition involving child abuse or neglect in the state of Wyoming. The action associated with this goal is court-mandated participation in the ICPS program, alongside weekly monitoring by all persons/agencies involved in each case. Permanency could include reunification with the parent(s), placement with a family member, adoption, or relinquishment of parental rights.

The Wyoming Department of Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division and the Wyoming Department of Family Services provide fiscal and personnel support to this project. Marci Linde, JD, serves as the hearing officer and is supervised by Judge Edward Grant (now Judge Campbell).

Program Goals

The original long-term goals of the ICPS program were as follows:

1. Reduce the number of children who are adjudicated as abused or neglected because of parental substance abuse and/or reduce repeated involvement in the child welfare system.

- 2. Increase the length of sobriety for parents with a substance abuse addiction or sustain the recovery of parents with mental illness.
- 3. Decrease the length of time it takes a parent to successfully complete his/her DFS case plan.
- 4. Decrease the amount of time a child spends in out-of-home placement.
- 5. Decrease repeat maltreatment.

Although many of these wide-reaching goals cannot be addressed in the present report (due to the lack of timely data, a comparison group, or access to information), we can report on data that is relevant to the overarching premise of the ICPS program. For example, the field now largely agrees that substance abuse is a contributing factor in the majority of dependency cases (e.g., Karoll & Poertner, 2003), and children whose parent(s) abuse substances are more likely to be placed out of the home for longer periods of time (NCASAC, 1999). Additionally, parental substance abuse also increases the likelihood that maltreatment will be reported again in the future (Wolock & Magura, 1996). There is a need for substance-abusing parents involved in dependency court situations to have more consistent supervision and access to a myriad of social services – things that are not presently afforded by the current overloaded juvenile court system or child protective services system (e.g., Stromwell, Larson, Hieri, Holley, Topping, Castillo, & Ashford, 2008). The ICPS program is one such incarnation of this philosophy in Laramie County, Wyoming.

Program Structure and Description

Families are identified for participation in the ICPS due to some kind of involvement with DFS and a substantiated allegation of child abuse or neglect. Families often have a substance abuse or mental health issue that has been brought to the attention of the court as well. After meeting with the team, the hearing officer will make a recommendation regarding the appropriateness of the case for ICPS to the Judge, who will then make the final decision regarding referral to the ICPS program.

Eligibility criteria for participation in the ICPS program include the following:

- Families must meet the following criteria:
 - 1. There is availability in the program;
 - 2. Permanency is a viable option;
 - 3. Abuse and neglect charges are suspected to be related to substance abuse or mental health concerns;
 - 4. The Core Team is in agreement to make a referral; and,
 - 5. The Judge makes the final decision.
- Ineligible families are identified through the following criteria:
 - 1. One or both parents have a medical or psychiatric condition causing a degree of impairment or instability such that it would interfere with program participation and functioning.

Once a family has been screened and accepted into the ICPS Program, their time in the program is structured according to three (3) Phases. Phase 1 involves an appearance before the hearing office at least one (1) time per week. Phase 2 involves an appearance before the hearing officer at least two (2) times per month. Phase 3 involves an appearance before the hearing officer at least one (1) time per month. Families will "graduate" from the program after completing all program phase requirements.

- Graduation Minimum Requirements include:
 - 1. Satisfactory completion of all three (3) Phases;
 - 2. Successful return of children to parents' home, if applicable;
 - 3. A plan is in place to resolve any outstanding legal issues identified by the team;
 - 4. Successful completion of case plan;
 - 5. Team approval of aftercare plan; and
 - 6. Team recommendation for graduation.

The ICPS program functions similarly to a court supervised treatment program, or "drug court" model (see Nolan, 2001), in that both supervision by officers of the court and involved agencies (e.g., DFS) is increased in frequency, and families are given both incentives and sanctions according to their progress through the program. Although there is a range of incentives and sanctions available to participant families, the frequency and duration of each is determined on a family-by-family basis by the hearing officer and Core Team. If a family is at any point considered to be no longer appropriate for program participation, the hearing office can make a recommendation to repeal the court-ordered participation in the program.

Evaluation Summary

The present evaluation will present both descriptive and outcome-based information that supports the gradual achievement of the above goals. The evaluation is limited by the usual stumbling blocks; lack of an experimental control group, and lack of resources to gather and analyze interagency data, to name a few. In future evaluations, a basic natural control group will be identified with the assistance of the Department of Family Services, matched on the basis of demographic and case characteristics, and outcomes and case plan achievements will be compared to determine the extent to which participation in the ICPS program has impacted length of time to case plan completion, length of sobriety, and so forth.

Methodology and Data Analysis

Methods

The data for this evaluation were gathered primarily by Marci Linde, JD, through both her case notes and the case plan and other legal documentation held by the court system. An Excel database was constructed by the evaluator (Mindy Dahl, Ph.D.) to house pertinent information, and Ms. Linde entered all data as needed. Gathered data included basic demographic variables (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity, race), start and end dates for relevant program segments, parental involvement information, parent employment at program start and program end, parent substance abuse treatment status at program start and program end, child placement outcome at program end, and ICPS hearing officer evaluation of the case, along with written comments. All data was analyzed using a statistical software package common to the social and behavioral sciences (SPSS 17.0).

Demographics and Participant Description

From September 2007 through September 15, 2009, thirty-two (32) families participated in the ICPS program. All demographic information includes both families who successfully completed the program, along with those released from the program prior to completion.

Family Composition. In terms of general family composition, nine (9) families reported having only one (1) child at the time of program involvement; eleven (11) families had two (2) children; seven (7) families had three (3) children; two (2) families had four (4) children; two (2) families had five (5) children; and, one (1) family reported having seven (7) children.

Child Placement. Not all children were involved in placement situations, however, and so data was gathered to determine the actual number of children in placement. Fourteen (14) families experienced the placement of one (1) child while involved in the ICPS program; ten (10) families experienced the placement of two (2) children; six (6) families experienced the placement of three (3) children; and, two (2) families experienced the placement of four (4) children.

Age and Gender. Data were also gathered on up to four (4) involved children from each family. The following tables show the age range and gender of each child. The average age of Child 1 was 5 years of age at program start (41% female); Child 2 was approximately 4 years old (44% female); Child 3 was approximately 4 years old (63% female), and Child 4 was approximately 3.5 years old (100% female).

Race and Ethnicity. With regard to Race and Ethnicity, most children involved in ICPS were White/Caucasian, with some distribution of Black/African American race or Hispanic ethnicity.

- Child 1 (N=32): Ninety percent (90%) listed race as White/Caucasian, with the remaining 10% reporting Black/African American race. Thirty-one percent (31%) were Hispanic/Latino.
- Child 2 (N=18): Eighty-nine percent (89%) listed race as White/Caucasian, with the remaining 11% reporting Black/African American race. Twenty-eight percent (28%) were Hispanic/Latino.

- Child 3 (N=8): Eighty-seven percent (87%) listed race as White/Caucasian, with the remaining 13% reporting Black/African American race. Fifty percent (50%) were Hispanic/Latino.
- Child 4 (N=2): One-hundred percent (100%) listed race as White/Caucasian.

Family Structure. Families can often involve one, two, or more parent or adult figures. In this sample of 32 families, there were twelve (12; 37.5%) one-parent families, eighteen (18; 56.3%) two-parent families, and two (2; 6.3%) three-parent families.

Mother Race/Ethnicity (N=32). Approximately ninety-four percent (94%) of mothers were White/Caucasian, six percent (6%) were African American/Black, and 8 of the 32 (25%) reported being of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Father Race/Ethnicity (N=21). Approximately ninety percent (90%) of involved fathers reported White/Caucasian race, with the other ten percent (10%) reporting African American/Black race. Ten percent (10%) also reported being of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Evaluation Results

Using the best data available, we are able to report on a number of different program functions and outcomes. These include child placement at pre- and post-program, the length of time to case plan completion, adherence of involved parents in treatment plans (if required) at pre- and post-program, and outcome for the child/children involved. It should be noted that at publication date, between four (4) and eight (8) families were still actively involved in the ICPS program at some level (even if it was a very end stage), so the reader is advised to look carefully at each section of information for the number of participants included in each calculation.

Program Duration. In general, families are identified for participation in the ICPS program by the Judge (Judge Grant, now Judge Campbell). Families may have been involved in the child welfare or criminal justice system for any length of time prior to being ordered to participate in ICPS, which is shown clearly by the number of days each family spent in the program. As well, information was gathered to depict the number of days each family spent actively participating in the ICPS program. The reader will note that many of the families spent less time in the ICPS program than they had spent in the 'system' prior to program entry. The following table shows the average number of days each family spent in the ICPS program as a percentage of the total amount of time between their initial petition and graduation/release/termination from the ICPS program (a detailed version of this table can be found in the Appendix). It should also be noted that the Judge is the final authority in determining a family's release or termination from the program.¹

Table 1: Timeline of ICPS Program Participation				
	Petition Date to Program Start Date	Program Start to Program End Date	Petition Date to Program End Date	ICPS duration as % of total time in System
Graduation Average	165	216	381	59%
Release Average	392	274	666	51%
Termination Average	300	101	341	31%

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¹ The hearing officer was asked to provide definitions of the Release and Termination Status. "1) Families are court ordered into ICPS and can only be ordered out of ICPS upon graduation, release, or termination. A family graduates from ICPS if they have complied with a majority of their case plan and their children have returned home. A family may be released if the goal is no longer reunification (e.g. relinquishment or guardianship). Since the family will no longer be working on a case plan, participant in ICPS ceases. 2) A family may also be released from ICPS if the family is no still working on their case plan but intensive case plan supervision is no longer necessary. The program may interfere with their employment, etc. In this case, the child will likely have permanency but the family may not have yet completed a majority of their case plan. 3) A family may be terminated from ICPS if they are not attending ICPS and not working on their case plan. The Judge may view termination from ICPS as evidence that the family did not want to complete their case plan, should the case proceed to a termination of parental rights (TPR) hearing." (Written communication with Marci Linde, October 16, 2009)

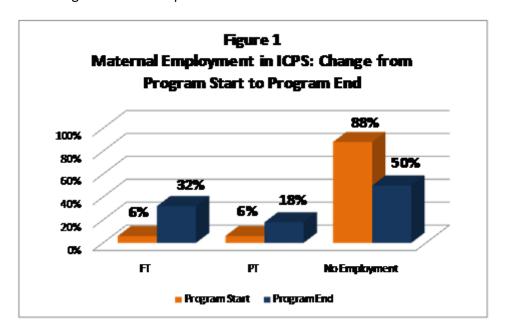
Program Outcomes. The ICPS hearing officer was asked to provide a general rating of each family's success in the program. She stated that two (2) families were not successful in their participation, where as 26 families have thus been "successful." Success here is defined as ensuring that the family received the appropriate services for their situations (whether that be in the ICPS program, or outside of the program). This is further bolstered by the fact that at program end, four (4, or 16%) children were placed in a guardianship situation; four (4, or 16%) achieved permanency outside the original home; two (2, or 8%) experienced a relinquishment of parental rights; and fifteen (15, or 60%) were reunified with their original families.

Child Placement. The hearing officer was asked to note the details of each child placement during the program and after the program. As can be seen in Table 2, while in the ICPS program, 63% of children were placed in DFS custody. Following the program, 50% of children were in parent custody, and another 21% were pending adoption. Only 7% (or 2 children) were still in DFS custody.

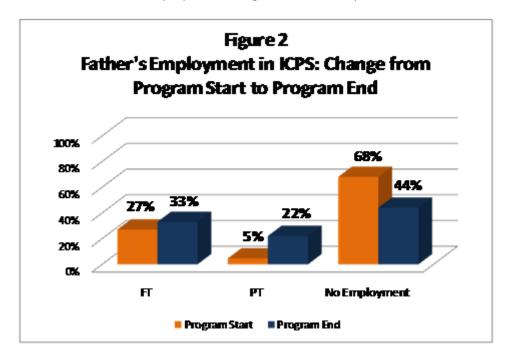
Ta	able 2: Child Placement Details		
		During Program	Post Program
	DFS Foster Home	20 (62.5%)	2 (7.1%)
	Guardianship	0 (0%)	2 (7.1%)
	Parent Custody	3 (9.4%)	14 (50%)
	Pending Adoption	0 (0%)	6 (21.4%)
	Relative Foster Care	1 (3.1%)	1 (3.6%)
	Relative Home	6 18.8%)	3 (10.7%)
	Therapeutic Foster Home	2 (6.3%)	0 (0%)
	Still Active in Program	n/a	4
	Total	32	32

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Mother's Employment. At the start of their involvement with ICPS (N=32), approximately 6% of mothers held full-time employment; 6% held part-time employment; and 88% did not have employment. Of the 28 families who had completed ICPS at the release of this report, 32% of mothers were employed full-time; 18% were employed part-time; and 50% were not employed at the time the program ended. See Figure 1 for a comparison across time.



Father's Employment. When the program began (N=22), 27% of fathers held full-time employment; 4.5% held part-time employment; and 68% were not employed. At the end of their involvement with ICPS (N=18), approximately 33% of involved fathers held full-time employment; 22% held part-time employment; and, 44% were not employed. See Figure 2 for a comparison across time.



Mother's Substance Abuse Status. At the start of each mother's involvement in the ICPS program, her substance abuse use and treatment status were evaluated. The following table depicts each descriptive category.

Table 3: Mother Substance Abuse Status					
	Frequency	Percent			
Case record describes caretaker SA	1	3%			
CPS Referral to alcohol/drug program	6	19%			
CPS Report indicates infant congenital drug problem	5	16%			
CPS Report involved alcohol/drug problem	13	40%			
No caretaker Substance Abuse issues indicated	7	22%			
Total	32	100%*			

^{*}Individual percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

At the end of the ICPS program, the hearing officer noted the mothers' compliance with substance abuse related treatment (as required or not required by the case plan). As can be seen in Table 4, 25% of mothers completed their required treatment while in the ICPS program, while 31% remained in treatment even though their formal participation in the ICPS program ended. Only 25% of mothers who were required to participate in treatment did not do so.

Table 4: Mother SA Treatment at Program End					
	Frequency	Percent			
Not Required to Participate	6	19%			
Required; but did not participate	8	25%			
Required; treatment completed	8	25%			
Required; treatment in progress 10 31%					
Total	32	100%*			

^{*}Individual percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Father's Substance Abuse Status. Of the 18 fathers involved in the ICPS program at the outset, 15 were classified as having some level of use of substances (Table 5).

Table 5: Father Substance Abuse Status					
	Frequency	Percent			
CPS Referral to alcohol/drug program	8	25%			
CPS Report indicates infant congenital drug problem	1	3%			
CPS Report involved alcohol/drug problem	6	19%			
No caretaker Substance Abuse issues indicated	3	9%			
Data Not Available	14	44%			
Total	32	100%*			

^{*}Individual percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Again, based on the 18 fathers for whom data was available at program end, treatment activities (as required by the case plan and ICPS team) were followed in 56% (10 of 18) of cases. Only 5 fathers (16%) did not participate in treatment as required.

Table 6: Father SA Treatment at Program End					
	Frequency	Percent			
Not Required to Participate	3	9%			
Required; but did not participate	5	16%			
Required; treatment completed	6	19%			
Required; treatment in progress	4	13%			
Data Not Available	14	44%			
Total	32	100%*			

^{*}Individual percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Program Perceptions. A list of ICPS program team members was acquired from the hearing officer in early September, 2009. Emails were sent to all members to request their participation in short online survey which measured team perceptions of various program processes and activities. Respondents were encouraged to reply in both multiple-choice response and written response format. A total of 18 respondents completed the survey prior to September 30, 2009. The survey questions (7 total questions were asked) and response distribution follows.

Figure 3. Survey Respondents' Agency/Entity

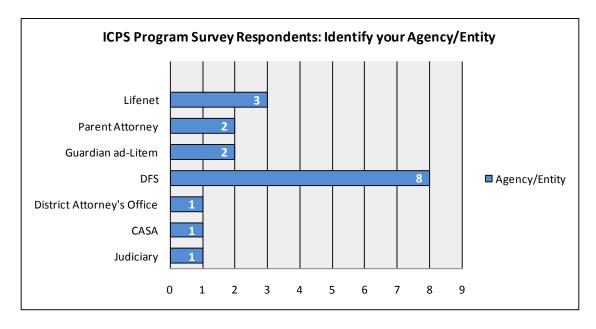


Figure 4. Survey Respondents' Months of Program Involvement

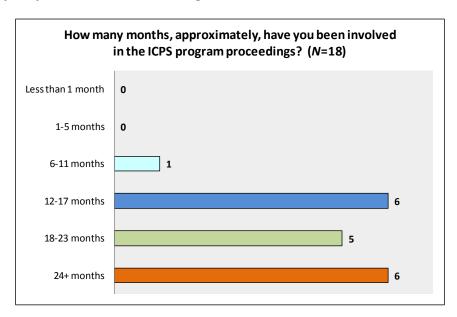


Table 7: Team Members' rating of ICPS Performance on Key Measures

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Monitoring and encouraging family compliance with court orders	72%	28%	0%	0%	0%
Identification of circumstances that may impede compliance	78%	22%	0%	0%	0%
Communication with the case worker regarding the sufficiency of the plan	61%	39%	0%	0%	0%
Recommending modifications to the plan to assist with parent compliance	67%	17%	17%	0%	0%
Recommending additional services that may be required	78%	17%	6%	0%	0%

Respondents were then asked three questions and given four (4) response choices: Yes, Definitely; Yes, a Little; No, not really; No, definitely not.

- 1. In general, do you believe the ICPS program is contributing to improved family compliance with case plan requirements?
 - 94% said Yes, Definitely
 - 6% said Yes, a little
 - 0 said No, not really
 - 0 said No, definitely not
- 2. Do you believe that the number of children adjudicated as abused or neglected due to parental substance abuse and/or repeated involvement in the child welfare system decreased in Laramie County since the inception of ICPS?
 - 28.6% said Yes, Definitely
 - 35.7% said Yes, a little
 - 35.7% said No, not really
 - 0 said No, definitely not

- 3. Do you believe that the length of sobriety for parents with a substance abuse addiction, or the sustained recovery of parents with a mental illness, has been elongated in participant families of the ICPS program?
 - 52.9% said Yes, Definitely
 - 35.3% said Yes, a little
 - 11.8% said No, not really
 - 0 said No, definitely not

Finally, respondents were asked to leave general comments about the program as well. Thirteen of the eighteen total respondents chose to leave comments; we have pasted these below, unedited.

Table 8: Respondent Comments about ICPS

- I believe this is a very valuable program--weekly monitoring for families can make a big difference--however it cannot work miracles in every case at the end of the day the parents must be willing to assist in their own recoveries and accept their parental responsibilities--no court and ICPS cannot force them to do so if they will not. Our juvenile courts are somewhat toothless--most of the parents could benefit from court ordered residential treatment programs, it is only after there are significant criminal matters that this is ordered through criminal courts and in every case it has been beneficial in the concurrent juvenile matter.
- Our agency is glad to have the ability to work hand in hand with other programs and feel it helps to better assist the families involved in the system.
- It is very time consuming for the DFS workers, so I strongly recommend any given work has no more than two cases active in the program.
- A lot of the success of this program depends upon the parents and their willingness to put their children first and do what needs to be done. Some people are resistant to the interference, others welcome all the help they can get. Some mistakenly think the process will be quick. I would be curious to see what kind of statistics you would get on an "exit poll" of the parents.
- Ms. Linde's compassion, patience and competence has provided many parents with the support and guidance needed to allow their families to be successfully reunited. She and the ICPS program provide an invaluable service to the community.
- Marci does a excellent job of walking the line between being supportive without being a pushover. Great program overall.

(continued)

- From my perspective, ICPS is the most valuable program I've encountered in my 18 months as a GAL. The team approach and Marci Linde's special talents and experience make this program a model on which I wish other family assistance programs would operate.
- I believe it is a VERY valuable program. I am thankful we have it and would advocate strongly for continued funding.
- I think ICPS is a great program for keeping ALL TEAM MEMBERS (not just parents) on track. The program is somewhat strength-based, but there are times when all Team members get caught up in everything that is not being completed correctly and/or in a timely manner; I feel this can impede progress because too much emphasis is placed on the negative aspects.
- ICPS is a positive program and I would like the program to continue. Marci Linde has grown in her role of the hearing officer. She's seemingly become more open to all players in ICPS and listens to each person's report and is thoughtful in her responses and assignments. Weekly meetings allow everyone an opportunity to report to the team and "keep everyone on the same page." Weekly meetings hold all players accountable whether it's the GAL, DFS caseworker, parents, etc. The greatest outcome I have seen is permanency for children being attained in a more timely manner.
- I believe this program is a valuable asset in helping these families. Not only does this program encourage completion of the case plan it encourages change. It contains a structure to setting and working toward goals. Often times these families are overwhelmed by the sheer amount of work they must do to reunify their families. This program helps break this work up into smaller more manageable peices. This program is very valuable assets to the juvenile court system and in my opinion should become a permanent program.
- Families with ICPS support have higher chances of reunification happening faster.
- I appreciate Marci Linde's approach to the clients/families. She is insightful and creative. ICPS makes my job at LifeNet easier and more directed.

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Discussion and Conclusions

The ICPS program has now been functioning in Laramie County for 2 full years, and has been involved in the cases of 32 families to date. The outcome information which was available to us at this time seems to indicate positive progress for those families, and is bolstered by the positive comments from program team members (representing multiple agencies) who have been involved in the program. It is important to note that at this time, there are no specific rules associated with the timing of a family's entrance into the ICPS program. The Judge presiding over child abuse and neglect cases in the County has the ability to order any families that he feels are appropriate for the program at any time in their case progression, and can also determine (alongside the hearing officer and team) when a family should be terminated or released from ICPS. This means that there are large, uncontrolled discrepancies in the amount of time (i.e., days) of 'system involvement' for each of the families represented in the present evaluation report.

Interpretation of Results. Based upon the available quantitative information, and qualitative survey data that we gathered, the ICPS program is performing in accordance with its goals and is achieving early outcomes in the desired direction. Many of the families who graduated from ICPS showed less time spent in the program when compared to the time they spent working on a case plan prior to attending ICPS (see Appendix A). This factor indicates that greater efficiency in case plan completion is occurring while in the ICPS program (particularly for the families in this small sample; generalizing beyond this sample is not possible at this juncture).

Permanency for involved children was a primary goal in the ICPS program vision. As can be seen in Table 2, while 63% of children were in DFS custody at the start of parent involvement in ICPS, only 7% of children remained in DFS custody at program end, and fully 50% of children were back in parent custody (with an additional 6% pending adoption). This fact is a great triumph for the ICPS program.

Additionally, many of the positive outcomes we would hope to see for families who are involved in both the child protective and criminal justice systems (i.e., increased employment, increased treatment attendance, etc.) were demonstrated by the Mothers and Fathers involved in the ICPS program. At the start of ICPS, 88% of mothers and 68% of fathers were unemployed. By the end of the program, 50% of mothers were employed (part- or full-time) and 55% of fathers were employed. As well, over half of mothers required to complete substance abuse treatment; only 31% of these mothers did not participate in the required treatment while in ICPS. Similarly, over half of the fathers for whom data was available were required to complete substance abuse treatment. ICPS fathers were more likely to attend and complete treatment (67%) than to not complete the treatment requirement of their case plans (33%).

Finally, it is important to recognize the survey and qualitative data presented in this report. Eighteen respondents completed the brief survey on the operations of ICPS over the past 24 months, represented primarily by the Department of Family Services (n=8, 44%). Over 94% of the respondents reported working with the ICPS program for at least 12 months or more. The majority of respondents (over 60% in all categories) rated program performance as 'excellent' when it came to meeting

program goals (i.e., monitoring and encouraging family compliance with court orders, identification of circumstances that may impede compliance, etc.). Ninety-four (94%) of respondents responded "Yes, Definitely" when asked whether they believe that the ICPS program is contributing to improved family compliance with case plan requirements. However, agreement was slightly less when respondents were asked about whether the ICPS program was contributing to decreasing the number of children adjudicated as abused/neglected due to parental substance abuse or repeated involvement in the child welfare system in Laramie County (28.6% said "Yes, Definitely"; 35.7% said "Yes, A Little"; and, 35.7% said "No, not really"). Just over half of respondents (52.9%) believe that length of sobriety from substances, or length of recovery from mental health issues, has been elongated due to parent participation in the ICPS program.

Most illuminating perhaps were the written comments from survey respondents. The reader is referred to page 17 of this report to view these verbatim comments. The overarching message appears to be one of praise for the program and its assistance to families who experience a multitude of issues that may prevent them from successfully completing their case plans without additional monitoring and guidance.

Future Directions. One possible future direction for a program of this type is to expand the number of families served; however, having only one full time hearing officer, the ICPS program cannot likely accomplish this type of goal. It would seem most important to focus energy on the areas of the program which may benefit from additional attention. For instance, the relatively unstructured manner in which families are chosen (ordered) to participate in ICPS makes it difficult for us to objectively analyze this process; in the future, the program could consider developing and using a screening tool for all families who are eligible to participate in ICPS. The program should consider developing a focus on a screening process for potential families to increase the likelihood of family completion/graduation from the program (decrease termination). Other areas of focus could include increased encouragement for fathers to participate in the program, and increased attention by the team to the process of recommending modifications to case plans to assist with parent compliance.

Obviously, the ideal situation in terms of program evaluation is to have an identified, matched control group with whom to compare the program participants. This was not an option at the time of this report, but it is a goal for the future. Of particular interest would be those families who are eligible to participate but choose not to do so; how long does it take them to complete their case plan in comparison with those who do choose to participate? Do they re-enter the system, and if so, at a different pace than those families who completed ICPS successfully? Do parents involved in non-participant families comply less with recommended substance abuse treatment services than those in participant families? It would also be useful to examine participant family members' perceptions of the weekly case management processes to discover those factors that are more significant to families in terms of ICPS program participation.

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Appendix A: Timeline of ICPS Program Participation (detail)

Timeline of ICPS Program Participation		on		
			Number of Days	
Family Status at Release from Program	Petition Date to Program Start Date	Program Start to Program End Dat	_	ICPS duration as % of total time in System
Graduation	40	541	581	93%
Graduation	286	163	449	36%
Graduation	330	175	505	35%
Graduation	132	238	370	64%
Graduation	0	175	175	100%
Graduation	132	104	236	44%
Graduation	427	213	640	33%
Graduation	170	99	269	37%
Graduation	75	317	392	81%
Graduation	58	139	197	71%
Release	394	329	723	46%
Release	678	393	1071	37%
Release	13	49	62	79%
Release	348	184	532	35%
Release	320	182	502	36%
Release	1202	135	1337	10%
Release	400	624	1024	61%
Release	55	282	337	84%
Release	120	286	406	70%
Termination	450	152	237	64%
Termination	618	22	640	3%
Termination	212	217	429	51%
Termination	45	3	48	6%
Termination	198	113	311	36%
Termination	279	100	379	26%