

441—175.43 (235A) Child protection services citizen review panels. The purposes of the child protection services citizen review panels established in this rule are to comply with requirements set forth by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and to take advantage of this process to identify strengths and weaknesses of the child protective service system as a whole, including community-based services and agencies. The specific objectives are to clarify expectations for child protective services with current policy; to review consistency of practice with current policy; to analyze trends and recommend policy to address them; and to provide feedback on what is or is not working, and why, and to suggest corrective action if needed.

175.43(1) Establishment of panels. The department shall establish at least three panels, with at least one panel each at the state level, multicounty level, and county level. The department may designate as panels one or more existing entities established under state or federal law, such as multidisciplinary teams, if the entities have the capacity to satisfy the requirements of the function of a citizen review panel set forth in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and the department ensures that the entities will satisfy the requirements. The department shall establish procedures to be used for selecting the panels.

175.43(2) Membership of panels. Each panel established shall be composed of a multidisciplinary team of volunteer members who are broadly representative of the community in which the panel is established, including members who possess knowledge and skills related to the diagnosis, assessments, and disposition of child abuse cases, and who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse. The membership of each panel shall include professionals practicing in the disciplines of medicine, nursing, public health, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, social work, child development, education, law, juvenile probation, law enforcement; or representatives from organizations that advocate for the protection of children. The panel shall function under the leadership of a chairperson and vice-chairperson who are elected annually by the membership. Members shall enter into a contract with the department.

175.43(3) Meetings. Each panel established pursuant to this rule shall meet not less than once every three months.

175.43(4) Functions. Each panel established pursuant to this rule shall:

a. Evaluate the extent to which the department effectively discharges the child protection responsibilities in accordance with: the state plan and the child protection standards under subsection (b) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1996; the child protection duties of the department set forth in Iowa Code chapters 232 and 235A; and any other criteria that the panel considers important to ensure the protection of children, including:

(1) A review of the extent to which the child protective services system is coordinated with the foster care and adoption programs established under Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 USCS 670 et seq.); and

(2) A review of child fatalities and near fatalities.

b. Provide for public outreach and comment in order to:

(1) Assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community; and

(2) Make recommendations to the state and the public on improving the child protective services system at the state and local levels.

175.43(5) Redissemination. No panel member shall redisseminate child abuse information obtained through the citizen review panel. This shall not preclude redissemination of information as authorized by Iowa Code section 235A.17 when an individual panel member has received information as a result of another authorized access provision of the Iowa Code.

175.43(6) Department not bound. The department shall consider the recommendations of the panel but shall not, in any way, be bound by the recommendations.

175.43(7) Confidentiality. Members and staff of a panel may not disclose child abuse information about any specific child abuse case to any person or government official and may not make public any information unless authorized by the Iowa Code to do so.

175.43(8) Reports. Each panel established under this rule shall prepare and make available to the public, on an annual basis, a report containing a summary of the activities of the panel.

175.43(9) Staff assistance. The department shall provide staff assistance to citizen review panels for the performance of their duties, upon request of the panel.

175.43(10) Access to child abuse information. Citizen review panels shall be under contract to carry out official duties and functions of the department and have access to child abuse information according to Iowa Code section 235A.15 [2“e”(2)].

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