

Multidisciplinary Team Practice Guidance

Overview

Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) function as an advisory and consultation group to aid in resolving issues related to a case during the assessment process and throughout the Department's service case. MDTs are defined under the following:

- Iowa Code sections 232.71(B) and 235A.13(8)
- 441 Iowa Administrative Code 175.32 and 175.36(235A)

Form 470-2328 is the *Child Welfare Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Agreement* for the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. This form is specifically for use with MDTs defined under the Code citations above. Please note that there are different types of multidisciplinary teams outlined in other Iowa Code sections. Form 470-2328 and affiliated protocols are not transferrable to other types of MDTs outlined in other sections of the Iowa Code or Administrative Rules. The Department is not bound by MDT recommendations.

MDTs are composed of team members outlined in the code citations mentioned above. Members of a team shall include, but are not limited to professionals practicing in the disciplines of:

- Medicine,
- Nursing,
- Public health,
- Mental health,
- Social work,
- Domestic violence,
- Child development,
- Education,
- Law,
- Probation, or
- Other disciplines relative to serving children.

The members serve voluntarily and must be approved by the Department.

Foundational Elements

- MDTs shall be developed in county or multicounty areas in which more than 50 child abuse cases are received annually.
- MDT members are selected and established by the Department through execution of the *Child Welfare Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Agreement*, form 470-2328. The team is considered approved by the APS Director or designee as evidenced by signature on the *Agreement* annually, on or before July 1 of each year. Members can also be added on an ad hoc basis as needed with approval from the Department.
- MDTs shall be convened at the Department's request during the course of an abuse assessment or throughout the Department's service case.
- The specific function of the MDT is to assist the child protection worker, social work case manager, and their supervisor in the assessments and disposition of a child abuse assessment, as well as diagnosis, coordination of services, and possible referral information to meet the needs of the specific child and their family.
- The Department is not bound by the team's recommendations.
- Any written information distributed by the Department to the MDT should be collected upon termination of the meeting.

- Team recommendations or consultation should be documented in the contacts portion of the assessment or in the case notes portion of the case file.
- Copies of renewed *MDT Agreements* should be forwarded July 1 of each year to program managers for child abuse and dependent adult abuse. Please include any ad hoc additions to your teams.

Multidisciplinary Team Establishment

- Every service area must have MDTs available to child protection workers and social work case managers. The teams must consist of standing members who can be convened during an assessment or throughout the Department's service case. Ad hoc members can be asked to participate as needed but must be approved by the Department. Ad hoc members must also sign form 470-2328 when attending the MDT.
- Each service area needs to identify and mobilize local efforts to recruit professionals to participate in and sustain MDTs. The Department is required to have MDTs per Iowa Code.
- Identifying an MDT coordinator for each service area is recommended, but not required.

Procedures

- Team members must know what is expected of them. Each discipline has an area of expertise and the Department must clearly express the expectations of each member for an effective group process.
- Going over the *MDT Agreement* as a group is recommended to establish the scope of the team's role and expectations of the members.
- Multidisciplinary Team members have immunity from civil or criminal liability for aiding and assisting the Department in an abuse assessment or throughout the Department's service case.
- The frequency of the meetings is as needed. There is no minimum or maximum frequency or duration specified.
- Cases to be presented are selected by the Department. If a case is put forth for discussion by another team member, the Department must decide if the case can be reviewed by the team.
- Cases can be presented to the team in the way determined most efficient *for the worker* seeking consultation.
- Ad hoc members must sign in every time they are in attendance. The APS Director or designee should receive a copy of ad hoc member attendance.
- No visitors are permitted to attend Multidisciplinary Teams. Confidentiality concerning child abuse laws prevent anyone who is not a team member from attending. An exception to this is of course, the Department social worker presenting the case.
- Each *Agreement* must be renewed on or before July 1 of each year. A copy must be sent to Central Office. Each service area can retain copies at their discretion.