

## Integrated Family Care & Support (IFCS) Questions

### IFCS Kick Off Event (ODs)

1. Can we move a FAR case to IFCS if we switch tracks and do not substantiate?
  - *If a track change is appropriate based on case circumstances and a decision has been made to not substantiate the allegations, the family can be referred to the IFCS program. If a track change is not appropriate, the family could potentially receive services from the Community Partner Agency following completion of the FAR.*
2. Is IFCS completely voluntary?
  - *Yes services are voluntary. In order to refer, the family must be willing to engage in the program. If during the investigation, the family appears reluctant, staff from the IFCS program can conduct a joint visit with the assigned DCF worker to explain the program and encourage their participation.*
3. Do we need a release from the family to refer to Beacon?
  - *Yes, Releases are required at time of referral.*
4. What happens if another report comes in after we transfer to Beacon?
  - *If a subsequent report is received after the family has transitioned to the IFCS Program, a release signed by the family would need to be completed in order to share information, provide updates, and avoid duplication of services. The outcome of the intake will determine if IFCS will remain involved with the family. If the investigation is substantiated and/or Neglect Petitions are filed or recommended, IFCS will transition the family back to DCF and IFCS will close their case. Community services that are involved with the family at time of disposition can continue, if appropriate.*
5. If Mother has an unsubstantiated case, can we Transfer to Beacon if father has a substantiated case but doesn't live in the household?
  - *In circumstances when a CPS report is accepted, parents reside in separate households, both parents are alleged perpetrators in the report but only the father was substantiated, the mother is not eligible for services as there is a substantiation connected to the case (protocol). As with any new implementation of a program or practice, it is important we begin conservatively and stay true to the model. We could adjust criteria in the future following implementation and review of data.*
6. What happens if at transition doesn't happen within 5 business days?
  - *If neither the DCF Social Worker nor Supervisor are available, another DCF staff person can attend only if they have worked with the family during the most recent investigation. If DCF staff cannot participate in a Transition Meeting within 2 weeks of the referral, the Contractor will meet with the family independently. The DCF case will remain open until the Transition Meeting occurs.*

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7. When can DCF close the case?
  - *The DCF case will remain open until the transition meeting has occurred. The protocol can be approved to ensure timely completion. If there is a delay in the Transition Meeting which causes the case to remain open, the DCF Social Worker is still responsible for visiting the family, in accordance with policy, until the case is closed.*
8. Where does the warm transfer meeting happen (physically)?
  - *Preferably in the environment that is most comfortable for the family – (e.g. parent/relative home, DCF office, Beacon site, or other community setting).*
9. What do you think the intake staff's response will be when we roll this out?
  - *During the kick-off event, the overall consensus from participants, was that most staff will be excited about this new program and will readily embrace it as we continue to lift up the voice of our parents and children in our work. Staff have experienced this type of community transition with the Community Support for Families Program in their respective region. With any new program or practice change, we do anticipate some staff being reluctant to transition families to IFCS, but it is important we educate staff about the program to enhance their understanding, the services the family will receive during the intervention, as well as address their concerns. The messaging of this program is critical as it will impact utilization and overall success of our implementation efforts.*
10. Will the Careline get this training too? Concerned Careline will take a case knowing that the family will end up getting help from Beacon.
  - *We can certainly provide an overview of the program for Careline staff but this should not have a bearing whether a report meets the statutory definition of abuse/neglect. The Careline has and will continue to implement a CQI process to review accepted reports and ensure the SDM Careline Assessment Tool is completed accurately and validly.*

### **Region 5 Presentation**

11. Will IFCS have access to DCF Contracted Services?
  - *Yes, IFCS will have access to all DCF contracted service types.*
12. What is meant by the "warm hand off?"
  - *Ensuring the family, DCF and Beacon communicate jointly and have a good understanding of the reasons for referring the family to IFCS, including discussions around concerns, strengths, goals, and needs of the family. It helps demonstrate partnership, collaboration and transparency for all those involved.*
13. What will be the impact of this program on DCF?
  - *The implementation of this program will have significant impact on DCF operations. In addition to the benefits it affords families, it allows staff in ongoing services to focus on families that truly require CPS involvement due to safety concerns and presenting risk factors that are impacting child safety. As a result of this program, caseloads and staffing will likely decrease over time.*

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14. If for example a child has Autism or a behavioral health need, can Beacon access these services internally?
- *Yes. Families will have full access to all services Beacon provides to children/families.*
15. If there is no capacity in a particular office or region and no wait list for the program, how can Beacon accommodate the need?
- *As Beacon will be providing the service statewide, they can tap into staff from other regions to provide coverage when there is no capacity. If that is not possible, Beacon will notify the DCF SW promptly if there is any delay in service delivery and a timeframe when the service can begin. In these circumstances, Beacon will follow up with the family directly and establish an interim support plan until such time IFCS staff are available to respond to the referral. We anticipate Beacon being able to respond to referrals given the flexibility in staffing assignments.*
16. How will Beacon address families who tell DCF they are willing to accept IFCS services but have no intention of participating in services?
- *Initially, engaging families will be the primary focus of IFCS intervention. Beacon is fully aware of the "yes factor" and how some families may feel pressured by DCF to engage in services. All staff will be trained on the Wraparound model which focuses on strategies to engage families and to ensure services are family driven. Repeated efforts will be made to engage the family, explaining the benefits of their participation. In addition, Beacon can assist in the engagement process by conducting a joint home visit with the investigator. We have encountered similar experiences with the CSF program and overall, the referral only numbers (families who do not engage in services) are fairly low.*
17. If there is a delay in having the Transition Meeting, what are the expectations regarding visitation?
- *If the investigation assignment remains open while waiting for the Transition Meeting to occur, staff are still required to maintain visitation requirements as defined in policy. Initiating the referral to IFCS as early as possible is important to ensure a timely transition to IFCS.*
18. Many of the cases that are referred involve educational neglect, how will Beacon address these concerns?
- *As part of the wraparound philosophy and approach, it is important for IFCS staff to engage the family and their supports in problem solving and planning, specifically addressing the areas of concern and the underlying causes of the presenting issues. In this example, IFCS will follow up directly with the school to address concerns, identify the underlying reasons and work with the school and parent to develop strategies and help improve these relationships. The IFCS staffing model also includes a Peer Specialist who can advocate on behalf of the family.*

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19. What is the Aftercare Plan for families following discharge from the program? Can families call for assistance?
- *Families may call their IFCS worker following discharge from the program but they will not be able to re-engage in services, as DCF is the only referral source for the program. Self-referrals or referrals from the community will not be accepted. Prior to case closing, a Family Team meeting will be held, inclusive of the family and their team, to establish a discharge plan for the family that will support them beyond IFCS closing.*
20. Is there a special Release of Information used for this program?
- *No, our standard release will be used and is submitted at time of referral to IFCS, accompanied by the completed URF.*
21. Is this a family or individual program?
- *IFCS is a family program and will fully engage all household members.*
22. What happens when a subsequent report is made following the transition to IFCS and the family is engaged in services?
- *See response to Q4.*
23. Are we able to contact Beacon once we have closed our case to see how the family is doing and whether they are engaged in services?
- *Once we have closed our case, legally we have no authority to contact Beacon to obtain any information about the family's participation in services.*
24. What happens if the family refuses to sign a release? With their current CSF program, the Contractor's release is for a year and they are able to connect with us if needed.
- *If the family refuses to sign a release, legally, we are unable to contact Beacon directly to gather any information about the family's prior involvement with the program. Based on our case review, we will be able to determine whether the family was referred to IFCS which can then prompt a discussion with the family around IFCS intervention.*
25. Will the program be obtaining arrest records or conducting judicial website searches for the families they are working with?
- *No, there is no expectation the IFCS program will be seeking this information. Much of this information is obtained during the course of the current DCF investigation leading up to the referral to IFCS. IFCS may obtain some of this information (arrests/court involvement etc.) through interviews/contact with the family during the course of their involvement.*
26. If the family's substantiation is reversed, can the family access IFCS services?
- *No.*

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27. IPV is a common risk factor in DCF families. Will IFCS staff be able to effectively deal with these types of cases?
- *Yes. Beacon offers a wide range of training opportunities for their staff as part of their staff development plan. In addition, Beacon has identified several different training programs offered by DCF that IFCS will have access to - IPV has been identified as a mandatory training session for all IFCS staff.*
28. Will there be a handout about IFCS to give to families?
- *Yes. Beacon is currently developing an IFCS brochure. Once finalized and approved by DCF, it will be disseminated to the Area Offices.*
29. What is the frequency of IFCS contact with families?
- *For the first 5 weeks of the intervention, IFCS will have weekly face-to-face contact with families to promote engagement as well as to help inform their assessment of the family. Following that period, IFCS will have face-to-face contact with the family every other week and phone contact in between to ensure there is weekly contact with the family. The frequency of contact will increase in times of crisis.*

### Region 4 Presentations

#### Manchester

30. Can the family be referred to IFCS if they have prior substantiations and/or court involvement?
- *Yes the family can be referred to IFCS. The family would be ineligible if the current investigation was being substantiated or if Neglect Petitions were being filed or recommended.*
31. Our cases are typically in the mother's name in LINK, is IFCS restricted to working only with that parent (name of case)?
- *No. If father is the primary caregiver and mother is whereabouts unknown and the case remains in mother's name, IFCS will engage with the father as long as he meets eligibility criteria. If parents reside separately and child spends time in both households, IFCS will work with both parents as long as they are eligible for the program. This latter scenario would constitute one referral, not two.*
32. Prior to the transition to IFCS, if parents signed a release, can we communicate with IFCS? Can we communicate after the case is closed as long as the release has not expired?
- *We may communicate with Beacon as long as there is an active release allowing communication between DCF and Beacon and the case is open with DCF. Upon DCF case closing, the release is no longer valid and we can no longer communicate with Beacon.*

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33. Should DCF continue to refer the family for services if we intend to transfer the family to IFCS?
- *Yes. Staff may refer families for services, particularly when there is an immediate need, as it helps build the family's team. The services the family has been referred to or is receiving will be discussed during the Transition Meeting to avoid duplication of services or effort.*
34. Will IFCS have access to translation services?
- *Yes.*
35. If a subsequent report is received after transition to IFCS and is substantiated, what happens to the family?
- *IFCS will close their case and the family would be transitioned back to DCF if the case were to remain open. The family would continue to receive services from the community that were referred by IFCS during their intervention. Prior to IFCS closing, a Family Team meeting would be held to ensure the family has sufficient supports.*
36. Following the transition to IFCS and a new report is accepted, do we need updated releases to talk with Beacon? If so, what happens if the family does not sign the releases?
- *Yes updated releases are required to be able to communicate with Beacon directly around the family's involvement with IFCS. The investigation disposition window in LINK will be updated to indicate the family was referred to IFCS. If the family refuses to sign a new release, we can talk to the family about IFCS involvement to determine whether the service remains involved. Likewise, if the family is active with IFCS, they may inform IFCS staff that a new report was called in.*
37. What steps can be done to ensure the Transition Meetings occur in a timely manner?
- *Rather than wait until the end of the investigation, the preferred approach would be to refer the family early on in the investigation once enough information is collected to inform the finding and the assessment. DCF staff may include several options for possible dates for the Transition Meeting within the URF which could expedite scheduling and ensure DCF participation. Scheduling the Transition Meeting is also dependent on the family's availability. If after two weeks of the referral and no Transition Meeting has occurred, Beacon will meet with the family independent of DCF. These circumstances should be rare and not the optimal approach to promoting partnership and collaboration. The Transition Meeting will still need to occur before DCF can close the case.*
38. Will a flier be developed for IFCS that could be distributed to families during a home visit? Might also be important to develop "an elevator speech" for IFCS and how the voluntary nature of the program is communicated to the family.
- *Yes, Beacon is in process of developing a brochure about IFCS that can be distributed to families and the community. It will be translated into Spanish. It is recommended that we not use the word voluntary with families based on our prior experience with CSF. Families should be encouraged to participate and be informed about the benefits of receiving IFCS intervention. Creating an "elevator speech" about IFCS would be helpful as it would promote greater consistency in how we are communicating with families around the IFCS program.*

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39. What is the process for sending referrals to Beacon? Will emails be encrypted?
- *All emails exchanged between the Department and Beacon will be encrypted. All referrals will be sent to a unique email address [CTIFCSREFERRALS@beaconhealthoptions.com](mailto:CTIFCSREFERRALS@beaconhealthoptions.com). Please do not put the family's name on the subject line when sending referrals. The IFCS liaison will be sending the referrals to Beacon once they review and approve the URF. When you receive an e-mail from Beacon, you will need to create a password which can be saved to prevent the user from having to re-enter their password to open the message. Please remember, like with other community agencies, e-mails expire if they are not picked up in a timely manner.*
40. What hours will IFCS staff be working? Will they work past 5 PM?
- *IFCS staff will have flexible hours to be able to meet with families based on their needs and availability (before 8 AM or after 5 PM if needed). They will work a total of 40 hours per week. This has been discussed with all applicants during the interview process and at time of hiring.*
41. If the substantiation is reversed, will the family have access to IFCS?
- *No. Hearings can be requested by the family at any time and it would be difficult to transition the family to IFCS.*
42. Can IFCS go out and meet with the family prior to making a referral?
- *Yes, the DCF SW or SWS may contact Beacon to arrange a joint visit with the family prior to initiating a referral to the program. This is an opportunity for the family to hear more about the program, the wraparound philosophy and approach and the services the family may receive during the course of their intervention.*
43. When can DCF staff start sending referrals?
- *The program can start receiving referrals in Regions 4 and 5 on February 18<sup>th</sup>.*
44. Can you explain how wrap funds will be dispersed?
- *Families involved with IFCS will have access to wrap funding that will be managed by Beacon. Funding will be used as a last resort after community resources have been exhausted. Funding is limited and should not be a means to engage the family in the program. All funding expended must be connected to the family's Plan of Care. Beacon will be developing quarterly reports to document how the funding was used which will be shared with DCF.*
45. Was hiring of staff done through a racial justice lens?
- *Yes. Beacon is committed to ensuring the staff hired reflects the race/ethnicity of the population being served. Efforts have been made to ensure the bilingual and cultural needs of the Area offices are met. Of the 42 IFCS Coordinators hired, 22 are bilingual.*

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46. Is the length of stay flexible?
- *Yes. IFCS offers a range of service delivery (6-9 months) to be able to accommodate the needs of the family. It can be shorter than 6 months or exceed 9 months if necessary. If the length of service is extended, there will be clear expectation about what the family will receive during that period of time.*
47. What training or coaching will IFCS staff receive?
- *All IFCS staff will be trained on the wraparound model and will participate in Care Coordination meetings for ongoing support and training. In addition, Beacon provides an array of training opportunities for staff to enhance their skills and arrangements are being made for the IFCS staff to participate in DCF specific trainings, including IPV.*
48. Will this overview or training be offered again as new staff transition to investigations?
- *Yes. Overviews can be provided in the future when needed. We also hope to have families served by the program to come in and share their experiences with DCF staff, similar to the approach used by several Community Partner Agencies.*
49. Will Beacon have the option to refuse the referral if they believe the family requires child protective services?
- *As long as the family meets eligibility criteria, they will be accepted for services. IFCS staff are mandated reporters and will contact the Careline when necessary.*
50. Do you advise families that you are mandated reporters?
- *Yes. Beacon believes in full partnership and transparency with families. If a report needs to be called in, they will not remain anonymous and will discuss with the family the reason for contacting the Careline.*

### Hartford

51. If the recommendation is to refer early, the investigations summary may not be completed. How should this be handled?
- *Yes, we are recommending referrals be made as soon possible as long as we have sufficient information to determine whether the allegations should be substantiated and an assessment has been completed, including safety, presenting risk factors, strengths and needs. If the investigation summary is not completed at time of IFCS referral, the worker will need to document the pertinent information so Beacon has a basic understanding of the family and the areas needing follow up during their intervention.*
52. Can Beacon initiate referrals for services if we identify service needs?
- *Yes, Beacon can follow up and initiate referrals.*
53. Will this program be involved with youth that are JJ involved?
- *Yes, as long as the family meets eligibility criteria.*



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54. What happens if after the referral is made, the family decides they do not wish to engage, would we need to transfer the case to ongoing services?
- *Following the referral, if the family decides they don't wish to engage in the program, there are no repercussions for the family and we would close their case as planned. We may want to consider initiating services in the community on behalf of the family prior to case closing should there be a need. Beacon will make concerted efforts to engage the family in the program and will enlist the help of the Peer Specialist to do so.*
55. What services will Beacon have access to?
- *Beacon will have access to all DCF contracted services, programs/resources in the community, as well as all programs Beacon offers.*
56. How is this program being funded?
- *DCF state funding.*
57. With IFCS involved, would a referral to Care Coordination be duplicative?
- *Beacon will collaborate with all entities providing services to families to avoid duplication of services and/or efforts. Service delivery will be coordinated through Family Team Meetings.*
58. Is this program our attempt to comply with Family First?
- *IFCS is not a direct result of Family First legislation but aligns nicely and is consistent with this new legislation. The development of this program initially began during the prior administration.*
59. How frequently will Family Team Meetings be held?
- *At a minimum, Family Team meetings will be held every 2 months. Additional meetings may be scheduled dependent on family circumstances, level of need, or crisis.*
60. Who from DCF needs to be present for the Transition Meeting? Who else should be present?
- *The DCF SW or SWS will need to attend the Transition Meeting. If neither are available, another SW can attend the meeting as long as they have some familiarity with the family during the most recent DCF involvement. Parents/guardians are required to attend and their supports (both formal/informal) will be invited. Children/youth (dependent on age and developmental status) can also be in attendance.*
61. Can IFCS work with teenage parents?
- *Yes, the program is willing to work with this population. It does present some challenges in terms of who can provide consent to treat since the youth is a minor. Beacon is confident they can work through these issues and provide the necessary services to support teenage parents.*

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62. IFCS has been working with mom and the father of her child resides in a separate household. A subsequent report comes in on father and his girlfriend, who reside together, involving her children. If this report was substantiated, would the mother from the first referral have to end services?
- *No. The referral on father's girlfriend represents a different household. The mother from the first referral would continue to receive IFCS services and the new substantiation would not impact her eligibility. Father's girlfriend, however would not be eligible to receive services. If in this same scenario, father had been receiving IFCS services as a result of that initial investigation that was unsubstantiated, his participation in IFCS services would end as a result of the subsequent substantiated investigation on his household.*