

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER 95-04**

### **MANDATING THE USE OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION TEAMS**

**WHEREAS**, the number of children in the United States who face violence in their own homes is growing dramatically as more families experience poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse problems; and

**WHEREAS**, the rate of child abuse and neglect in our country has increased by 48 percent over the past eight years; and

**WHEREAS**, the state's child welfare system is struggling to keep up with growing caseloads and to respond effectively to increasingly severe cases of family dysfunction; and

**WHEREAS**, no reliable research-based approach exists to identify those families who are most at risk for child fatalities, thereby increasing the need for enhanced professional evaluations; and

**WHEREAS**, law enforcement officers, physicians, mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, child guardians ad litem, public health nurses, school counselors, and other professionals collectively possess the skills and expertise that can help to reliably assess risk to children, and;

**WHEREAS**, the checks and balances provided by an "outside" community review of state agency actions can improve outcomes for children and their families; and

**WHEREAS**, current law permits, but does not require, the Department of Social and Health Services to use community-based, multidisciplinary teams of service professionals for consultation in certain child protection cases;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, Mike Lowry, Governor of the state of Washington, by virtue of the power vested in me, do hereby order the following:

I. The Department of Social and Health Services shall utilize the multidisciplinary community protection teams established pursuant to RCW 74.14B.030 as follows:

A. In all child protection cases in which the risk assessment results in a "moderately high" or "high" risk classification, and the child is age six years or younger;

B. In all child protection cases where serious professional disagreement exists about a risk of death or serious injury;

C. In all child protection cases that are opened on the basis of "imminent harm"; and

D. In all complex child protection cases where such consultation will help improve outcomes for children.

II. The Department of Social and Health Services shall establish, maintain, and staff multidisciplinary community protection teams sufficient to review these cases as soon as feasible and shall continue to develop a broad array of team members who will work with the department to make the best decisions possible to protect and improve the lives of the children in our state.

III. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State of Washington to be affixed at Olympia this 27th day of July A.D., Nineteen hundred and ninety-five.

Mike Lowry  
Governor of Washington

**BY THE GOVERNOR:**

Assistant Secretary of State

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