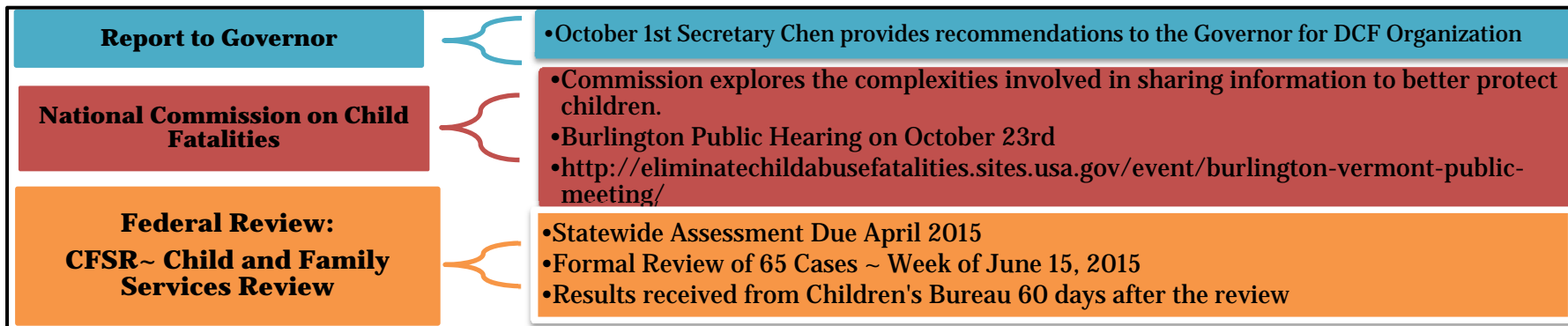
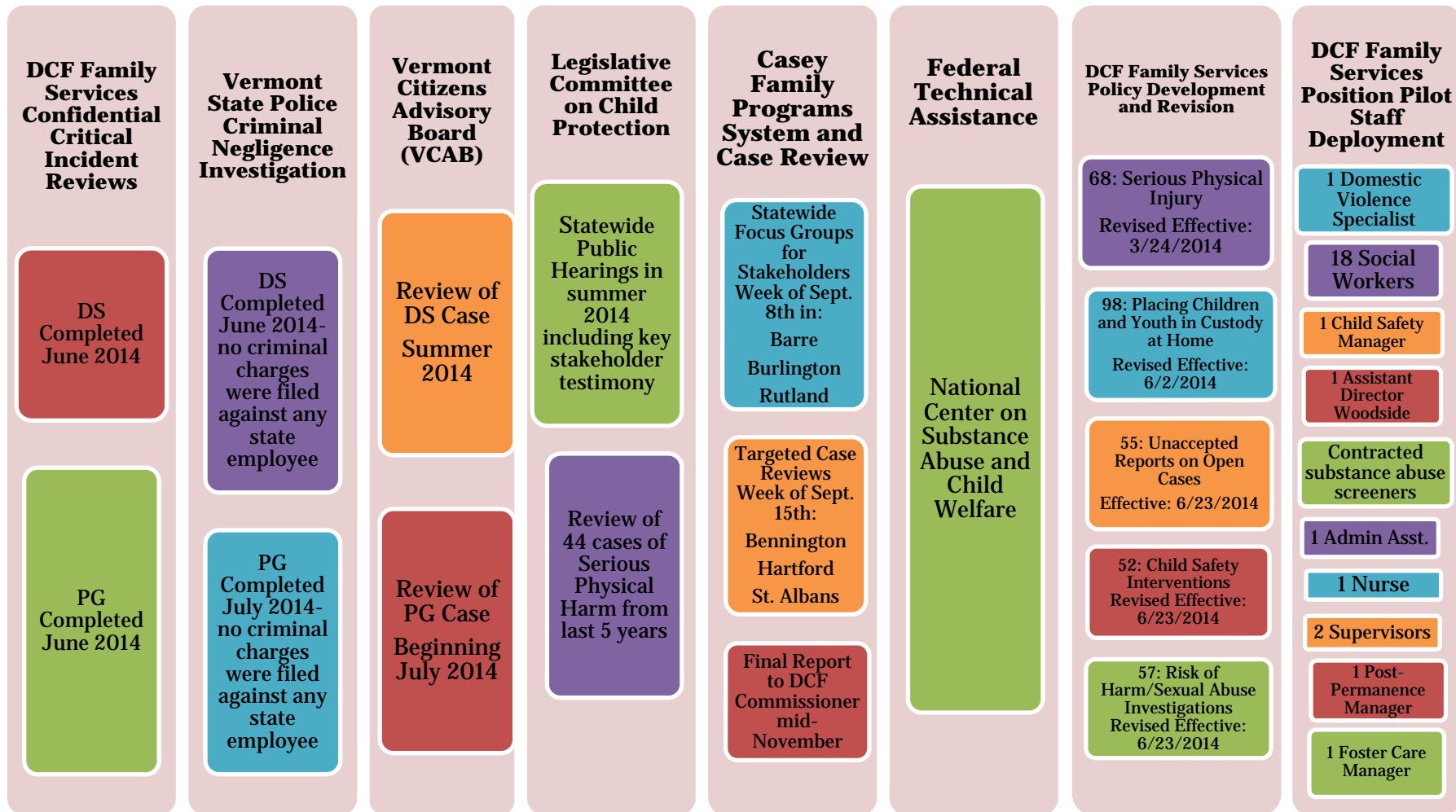


Strengthening DCF Family Services: Policy & Practice Focus

As a result of child fatalities that occurred in February and April, 2014



DCF-Family Services, Focus Area Summaries

DCF Family Services Confidential Critical Incident Reviews

- FSD Central Office reviewed all materials, case files, transcripts and case plans to assess and analyze adherence to policy and to inform future practice/policy.

Casey Family Programs System and Case Review

- Casey Family Programs is performing an assessment of the Vermont child welfare system by analyzing Family Services policies, conducting focus groups with stakeholders, families, youth, kin/foster parents and by conducting a targeted case review. The case review will be targeted at the three points of involvement families may have with FSD: intake, ongoing family support and custody (including reunification practice). There will be 10 cases reviewed in each of the three target districts with the following characteristics: a child under the age of 3 and where opiate use was a factor in DCF becoming involved in the case.

Federal Technical Assistance

- Identified areas of focus to address include:
 - *Acceptance policy regarding substance abuse allegations
 - *Safety planning with parents who use/abuse substances
 - *Drug testing with parents-determining when and how this is appropriate
 - *Implementation of evidence-based tools and training for FSD staff

DCF Family Services Policy Development and Revision

- Policy 68: Serious Physical Injury was revised and pulled out of Policy 52 (Investigation and Assessment Policy) to mandate district staff consult with central office staff on all serious physical injury cases for investigations and case planning.
- Policy 98: Placing Children and Youth in Custody at Home was revised to specify that for children placed with a parent in a residential treatment program, trial reunification begins when the parent is discharged from the program to live independently.
- Policy 55: Unaccepted Reports on Open Cases was developed to create clarity of expectation where a new report is received but does not meet criteria for an investigation or assessment and there is already an open case with an assigned worker.
- Policy 52: Child Safety Interventions was revised by pulling out the the Serious Physical Injury appendix to make it a stand alone policy (68) and pulling out the appendix on Risk of Harm/Sexual (57) to make it a stand alone policy.
- Policy 57: Pulled out of Policy 52 to make it a stand alone policy.

DCF Family Services Position Pilot Staff Deployment

- As of 9--26-2014, FSD has hired a Child Safety Manager, 2 supervisors (St. Albans and Barre), 18 social workers (3 Hartford; 1 Springfield; 3 Brattleboro ; 2 Rutland; 5 St. Albans), an Assistant Director for Woodside, 1 Admin Assistant (St.Albans) and a Domestic Violence Specialist (Rutland).
- The contracted substance abuse screeners are going to be hired through an already existing effective grant with Lund. These screeners will be deployed to four districts (2 districts-Burlington and St. Albans already have screeners for a total of six screeners)to fully capitalize on this dedicated support to district offices with the highest level of substance use/abuse population and a lack of other available resources to address this issue.