



## Policy and Procedures

<b><u>Department Name</u></b>		
Quality Management		
<b><u>CHAPTER:</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT:</u></b> Use of Professional Opinions and Resolving Opposing Medical Opinions	<b><u>POLICY NUMBER:</u></b> QM-035
<b><u>APPROVAL:</u></b>	<b><u>EFFECTIVE DATE:</u></b>	<b><u>REPLACES (policy # and date):</u></b> New Policy

- I. **PURPOSE:** To provide guidance regarding the necessary and appropriate consideration of clinical assessments and professional recommendations submitted to Child Welfare Case Managers in regards to their families. It details procedures for documentation of professional opinions, documentation of the safety implications raised in these reports, and resolution process to work out differences of opinion.
  
- II. **REVIEW HISTORY:** New policy.
  
- III. **CONTACT:** Quality Management Department.
  
- IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** Children’s Network of Southwest Florida Staff.
  
- V. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the Children’s Network of Southwest Florida to assure that caseworkers fully consider professional opinions from the local Child Protection team and/or other medical or mental health professionals or document their rationale for not acting on these opinions and recommendations. It also provides a resolution process for opposing medical opinions.
  
- VI. **RATIONALE:** Describing actions needed to assure that all information provided from mental health or medical professionals is analyzed and appropriate actions are taken to assure the safety and well being of children and their families.
  
- VII. **CROSS REFERENCES:** Department of Children and Families memos dated April 25, 2006 and October 12, 2006.
  
- VIII. **PROCEDURES:**

In order to ensure compliance with the intent of Florida Statute the following actions should be implemented:

**Children's Network of Southwest Florida**  
**Use of Professional Opinions and Resolving Opposing Medical Opinions**

1. The Child Welfare Case Manager will document in Homesafenet the date and time that information is received from the professionals to whom the referral was made, detailing the specific information and recommendations provided. Any written documentation received from the professionals must be included in the case file.
2. The Child Welfare Case Manager will document in HomeSafenet all follow-up activities that have been made in regards to all recommendations provided by the medical or mental health professional. The Child Welfare Case Manager shall request written documentation of the progress of the medical or mental health service and such documentation shall be included in the case file.
3. In instances when differences of opinion between the CMO contracted agency and other professionals occur, the Child Welfare Case Manager will notify his/her immediate supervisor and a staffing/consultation will be coordinated with the Program Director. The results of this staffing/consultation must be documented in HomeSafenet with a rationale of the reasons such recommendations were made.
4. In cases where a professional consensus can not be reached by the outside professionals and the CMO contracted agency then a second staffing/consultation will be conducted to include the COO or an appointed designee of the Children's Network. The results of this second staffing/consultation must be documented in HomeSafenet with a rationale of the reasons such recommendations were made.