

# Northst★r Care for Children

## MACSSA Conference

Northst★r Care  
for Children

October 2, 2014

# Northst★r Care for Children

- **Northstar Foster Care**
- **Northstar Kinship Assistance**
- **Northstar Adoption Assistance**

# Northstar★ Care for Children



# Northst★r Care for Children

**Part A – What Changes Overview**

**Part B – Organizing for Northstar**

**Part C – MAPCY Field Test Results**

**Part D – Highlighted Issues**

There are four parts to today's presentation...

# A. What Changes: Closing Old Programs

## Legacy Programs Close at Thanksgiving

- To implement Northstar Care, no new legacy Adoption Assistance or Relative Custody Assistance cases may start after November 26.
- November 26 is the Wednesday right before Thanksgiving.
- That means that if the court hasn't finalized (adoption decree or order of permanent transfer of legal and physical custody) **on or before November 26, 2014**, all the legacy paperwork is void.
- Hurry up... or else wait.



# A. What Changes: Closing Old Programs

**Hazardous Period – Nov 27-Dec 31, 2014**



- Chances are, adoptions and transfers of custody with final court action between November 27 and December 31, 2014 will result in children being “marooned.”
- Unable to qualify for legacy programs.
- Unable to qualify for Northstar Care.
- ***Beware of this period.***

# A. What Changes: Background

## Previously benefits went down

- Northstar Care for Children is designed to increase the likelihood that young people who can't be reunified can acquire a new permanent family.
- Previously, when Minnesota foster parents wanted to become a child's permanent family through adoption or transfer of legal custody, the benefits went way down.
- Generally to **half or less**.



# A. What Changes: Background

## Northstar Care addresses the barrier

- The benefit discrepancy was a serious barrier, particularly American Indian children, African American children, sibling groups, and older children.
- Northstar Care eliminates that benefit discrepancy for young people age 6 and over – same benefits for foster care, kinship, and adoptions.
- It unifies benefits for children age 5 and younger as well, although the benefits are not uniform.



# A. What Changes: Background

## Moving toward permanent families



- Northstar Care is about assisting young people who can't be reunified in getting a new permanent family.
- As a result, it deals with *family foster homes* and *supervised independent living* settings.
- It makes no changes in group homes, residential treatment, or other similar out-of-home placement settings.

# A. What Changes: Perspective

## Northstar Care Changes

- From one point of view, Northstar Care doesn't change all that much.
- Child welfare good practice is still good practice.
- From another point of view, Northstar Care changes a lot.
- New tools and procedures change how we practice.



# A. What Changes: Perspective

## These **Don't** Change

- Who we serve, intake, decisions to open a case or not, etc.
- 10 best interest factors for deciding where to place a child.
- Need for licensed foster care.
- How we conduct Title IV-E eligibility determinations for foster care.
- Permanency timelines.
- Need to have adoption assistance benefit agreement signed before final court action.
- And lots more doesn't change...



# A. What Changes: Perspective

## These **Do** Change

- Benefits are unified from foster care to permanency (uniform for 6 and older).
- Single uniform assessment.
- Title IV-E Northstar Kinship Assistance replaces TANF-based Relative Custody Assistance.
- Background studies and licensing.
- Eligibility *more* uniform but still *not* uniform.
- Exactly who does what between legally responsible agencies and financially responsible agencies when they are different.
- Court legal processes and benefit paperwork, particularly for transfers of permanent legal and physical custody.
- Fiscal sharing of costs among feds, state, counties, and tribes.
- Lots of automation in SSIS.
- Previous programs continue, but phase out as young people exit.
- And more...

# A. What Changes: 3 Components

## Three Components, one for each Legal Status

- Each component lines up with a legal status.
- **Northstar Foster Care** for young people in family foster homes and extended foster care – supervised independent living.
- **Northstar Kinship Assistance** for eligible young people *in foster care* who undergo a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative.
- **Northstar Adoption Assistance** for eligible young people *in foster care* who are adopted.

## A. What Changes: Phase-in

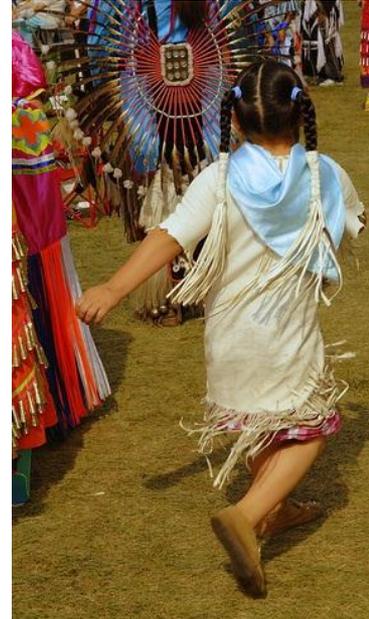
- Northstar Care for Children is for children who enter one of its components in 2015 or after.
- The Pre-Northstar Care legacy programs are retained for the children already in them and are slowly phased out as children exit.



# A. What Changes: Phase-in

## Legacy Programs Continue

- Northstar Care begins January 1, 2015.
- But all the “legacy” programs continue.
- There are **four** legacy programs:
  - Legacy Foster Care (LFC)
  - Relative Custody Assistance (RCA)
  - Legacy Adoption Assistance (LAA)
  - Minnesota Permanency Demonstration Project (MnPD – the proving ground for Northstar Care that added young people 2005-2010)



# A. What Changes: Phase-in

## Transitions are from the Legacy Programs



- Sometimes a young person *leaves a legacy program* and *switches to Northstar Care*.
- That's known as a *transition*.
- There are rules that apply to them.

# A. What Changes: Phase-in

## Status Transitions Phase-in

- A status transition is the primary way out from legacy foster care to Northstar Foster Care.
- Ordinarily, a young person residing in a family foster home setting prior to January 1, 2015, would remain in the legacy Pre-Northstar Care foster care unless a status change occurs.
- Status transitions occur automatically when a young person in foster care experiences specific changes in status, moving a young person ***out of legacy*** Pre-Northstar Care foster care and ***potentially into Northstar Care for Children***.

# A. What Changes: Phase-in

## Status Transitions in SSIS



- SSIS will automatically track foster care status transitions from legacy to Northstar Care.
- They will be based on where the young person was on December 31, 2014.
- Placements need to be up-to-date for year end!

# A. What Changes: Benefits

## Uniform Benefits for Those Age 6 and Above

- Northstar Care unifies benefits and makes them uniform for young people who are 6 and older.
- If a young person 6 or older who is in Northstar Foster Care is eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance or Northstar Adoption Assistance, then if they stay with the same caregiver(s), they get the same benefits when their legal status changes.



# A. What Changes: Benefits

## Pre-School Entry Alternate Rate

- Northstar Care unifies benefits but does **not** make them uniform for young people who achieve permanency at age 5 or younger.
- If a young person in Northstar Foster Care is eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance or Northstar Adoption Assistance, and stays with the same caregiver(s), then they get half of their foster care benefits when their legal status changes.



# A. What Changes: Benefits

## Pre-School Entry Alternate Rate



- Minnesota has not had much difficulty getting the younger children to permanency.
- This ***Pre-School Entry Alternate Rate*** is higher than they would have gotten under legacy Relative Custody Assistance (RCA) or legacy Adoption Assistance, but it is not uniform.
- This was one of compromises made to get Northstar Care through.

# A. What Changes: Benefits

## Three Main Benefits

For most young people, there are three main benefits:

- 1) Medical Assistance**
- 2) Monthly Basic Payment (based on age)**
- 3) Monthly Supplemental Difficulty of Care Payment (determined by the MAPCY)**

# A. What Changes: Benefits

## Medical Assistance

- Most young people on Northstar Care for Children will qualify for Medical Assistance.
- MA eligibility for non-Title IV-E kids varies by Northstar component.
- A small number of “at-risk” children on Northstar Adoption Assistance receive MA but no monthly benefit (Level A).



# A. What Changes: Benefits

## Monthly Basic Payment

Other than the at-risk children, all young people on Northstar Care receive a ***Monthly Basic Payment*** based on their age.

<b>Northstar Care Monthly Basic Payment Rates</b>	All Foster Care and entering permanency ages 6+	Entering permanency ages birth-5
Level A (at-risk)	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Basic: Ages 0-5	<b>\$565</b>	<b>\$283</b>
Basic: Ages 6-12	<b>\$670</b>	<b>\$335</b>
Basic: Ages 13+	<b>\$790</b>	<b>\$395</b>

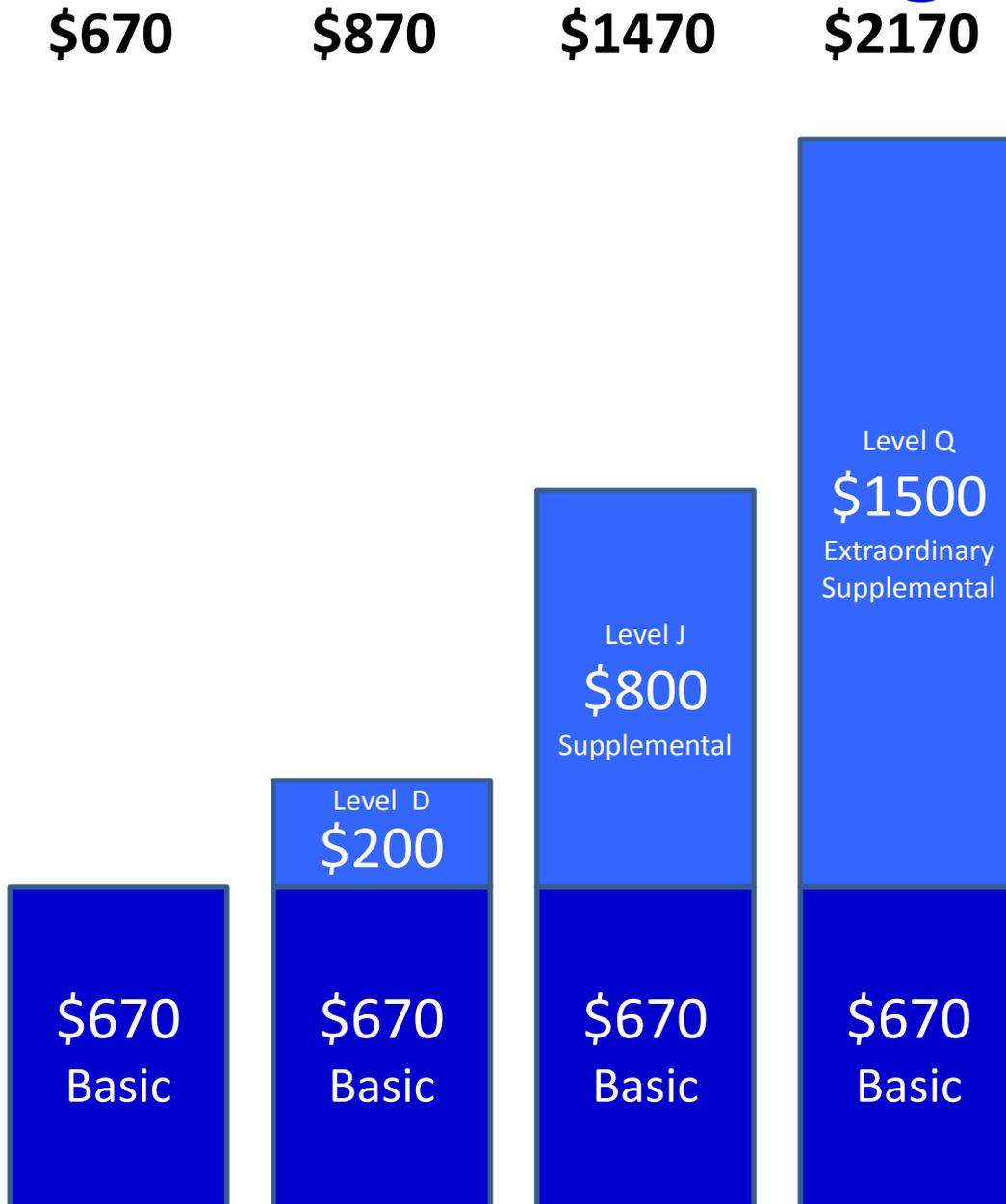
# A. What Changes: Benefits

## Monthly Supplemental Payment

- Most young people on Northstar Care also receive a monthly ***Supplemental*** payment based on their current MAPCY Assessment Level.
- This is the replacement for difficulty of care in legacy foster care.

Levels	FC and Enter Perm 6+	Enter Perm 0-5
<b>A</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>B</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>C</b>	\$100	\$50
<b>D</b>	\$200	\$100
<b>E</b>	\$300	\$150
<b>F</b>	\$400	\$200
<b>G</b>	\$500	\$250
<b>H</b>	\$600	\$300
<b>I</b>	\$700	\$350
<b>J</b>	\$800	\$400
<b>K</b>	\$900	\$450
<b>L</b>	\$1000	\$500
<b>M</b>	\$1100	\$550
<b>N</b>	\$1200	\$600
<b>O</b>	\$1300	\$650
<b>P</b>	\$1400	\$700
<b>Q</b>	\$1500	\$750

# A. What Changes: Benefits



- Adding the Basic and Supplemental together yields the total monthly benefit.
- Here are some examples for **6-12 year olds.**

# A. What Changes: MAPCY

## MAPCY Assessment Basics

- MAPCY stands for the Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth
- MAPCY is a consistent tool that follows the child from family foster home to permanency.
- The MAPCY assessment shifts the focus away from how “sick” the young person is.
- The assessment tool focuses on the child’s well-being, development, safety, and permanency.



# A. What Changes: MAPCY

## Assessment Approval

- When the Assessor is done, it must be approved by an agency-designated Approver.
- SSIS will not pay off of a MAPCY until it has been approved.
- For a small group of high needs kids, requested Extraordinary Level increases need to be approved by DHS.
- Until state approval is received, SSIS will pay the standard levels but not any extraordinary levels.



# A. What Changes: MAPCY

## Built-in Emergency Rate



- Counties and tribes are not required to use the MAPCY unless the young person is in a family foster home for 30 days or longer, although best practice would be to complete it by two or three weeks.
- There is a default **Emergency Rate** (Level D) that is available to counties and tribes without a MAPCY, but only for the initial 30 days of a continuous placement.

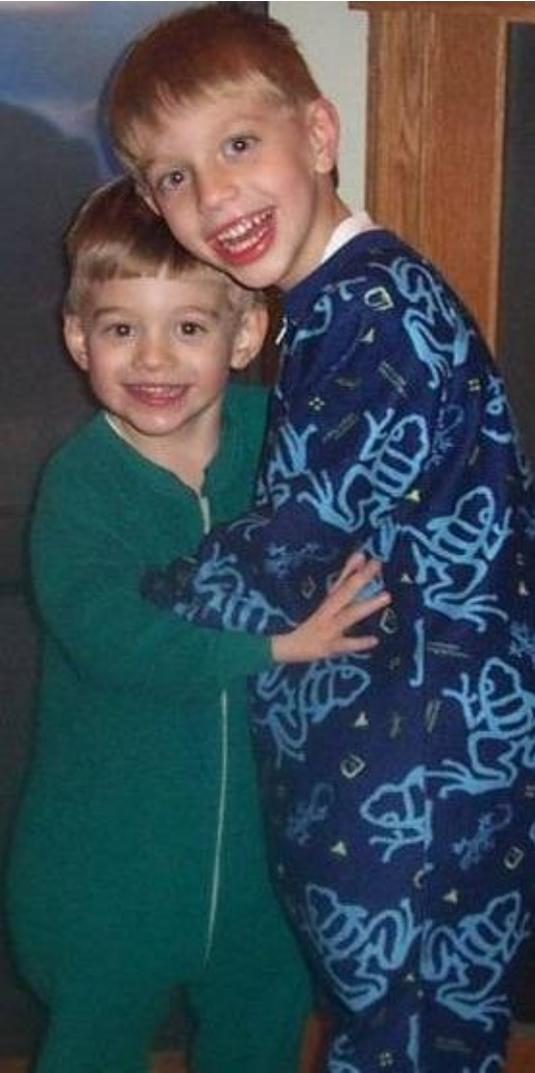
# A. What Changes: Eligibility

## Eligibility is **specific**

- The MAPCY assessment may be the same and the benefits may be unified across the three components.
- However, due to federal regulations, the eligibility varies for each of the three components of Northstar Care:
  - **Northstar Foster Care**
  - **Northstar Kinship Assistance**
  - **Northstar Adoption Assistance**

# A. What Changes: Eligibility

## Eligibility is **specific**



- As a result, not all young people who are in Foster Care will be eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance or Northstar Adoption Assistance.
- Also, some young people will be eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance but not for Northstar Adoption Assistance, or vice versa.

# A. What Changes: Eligibility

## Eligibility Not Quite Parallel

- The key point for ***Foster Care*** is being in a home that is licensed or getting licensed (first six months) or other special status situations.
- The key point for ***Kinship Assistance*** is the young person having been with that prospective relative custodian as a licensed foster parent for six months.
- The key point for ***Adoption Assistance*** is the special needs determination.

# A. What Changes: Eligibility

## Ineligible Settings – Not Northstar Care

- Respite care (BRASS Code 189).
- Northstar Care for Children ***does not ever*** include group homes, residential treatment centers, and the like.
- In these settings, rates paid to the setting are determined by contract rather than through the MAPCY, and they will not be included in Northstar Care for Children.



# A. What Changes: Eligibility

## Eligibility Overview Summary

- Eligibility remains rather complicated.
- Even though Northstar Care unifies benefits, it can't completely unify eligibility.
- Although it makes some progress, there are lots of federal Title IV-E regulations that are not consistent.
- And for foster care, eligibility is limited to settings where the young person might gain permanency.
- Background studies are important.



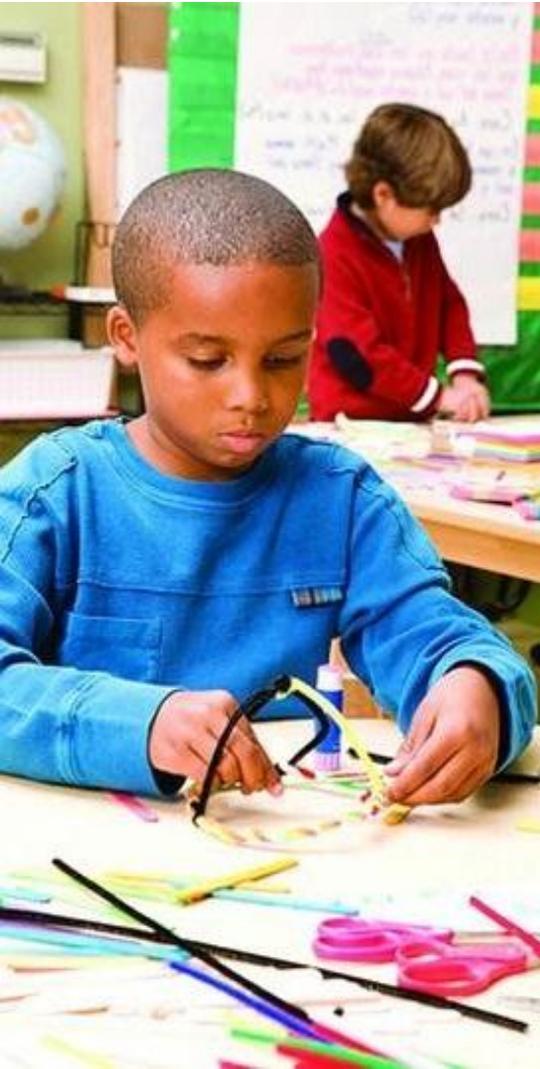
# A. What Changes: Permanency Process

## Permanency Timelines

- Northstar Care makes no changes in the permanency timelines.
- Most of the time, Northstar Care should assist counties and tribes by providing them with new tools for meeting the permanency timelines.
- However, there are some circumstances in which Northstar Care could create new challenges to meeting the permanency timelines.
- Specifically, a new challenge could be the Title IV-E requirement that the child must reside with the prospective relative custodian for at least six consecutive months as a licensed child foster parent.

# A. What Changes: Permanency Process

## Permanency Process for **Transfer of Legal Custody**



- The court and legal process for adoptions changes minimally.
- The steps for a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody change much more.
- Among these changes are the new pre-kinship placement and the associated ***Kinship Placement Agreement***.
- As with adoptions, the Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement must be signed by all parties ***prior to final court action*** on the transfer.

# A. What Changes: Permanency Process

Here is the usual order of the steps for a **Transfer**:

- 1) Reunification is no longer an option.
- 2) Agency rules out adoption as an appropriate permanency option.
- 3) The Foster Care Placement becomes a Pre-Kinship Placement via a Kinship Placement Agreement (a specialized form of foster care and foster care payments continue). **[New Step]**
- 4) Northstar Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination (or the prospective relative custodian may opt out of Northstar Care benefits at this point). **[New that DHS makes the Determination]**

Continued on next slides

# A. What Changes: Permanency Process

Here is the usual order of the steps for a **Transfer**:

- 5) Negotiate the Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement. [***New that this must be done before Court transfers custody***]
- 6) The prospective relative custodian(s), financially responsible agency representative, and commissioner's designee sign the Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement. [***New that this must be done before the Court transfers custody***]

Continued on next slide



# A. What Changes: Permanency Process

Here is the usual order of the steps for a **Transfer**:



- 7) The court orders the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody, making the Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement effective.
- 8) Northstar benefits become available, DHS initiates Northstar Kinship Assistance payments upon receipt of the court order, and the local agency stops making foster care payments.  
***[New that DHS makes the payments].***

# A. What Changes: Permanency Process

## Permanency Process for **Transfer of Legal Custody**

- The Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement ***must*** be signed prior to the final court order for a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.
- This is how it's always been for adoption assistance.
- If the Benefit Agreement is not signed before finalization, then the door to Northstar Care is forever closed.



## A. What Changes: Fiscal

### Northstar Care Finances More Permanency

- As a result of the unified benefits through Northstar Care, we expect to have more children in Kinship Assistance and Adoption Assistance and fewer in Foster Care than would have been the case with the legacy programs.
- Typically this will occur without the child moving homes – the same adults who have been foster parents (relatives or not) will be accepting transfer of custody or adopting.

## **A. What Changes: Fiscal**

### **Northstar Care Finances More Permanency**

- Most of these will be children who would otherwise have remained in long-term Foster Care at county or tribal expense.
- Therefore, Northstar Care involves realigning existing county, tribal, and state funding (more spent on Kinship Assistance and Adoption Assistance and less on Foster Care) as well as new state and federal funds.
- The Northstar Care Fiscal Reconciliation is what accomplishes that realignment.

# A. What Changes: Fiscal

## Fiscal Reconciliation Process Overview



- Northstar Care for Children involves the state, counties, and tribes sharing costs.
- The purpose of the Northstar Care Fiscal Reconciliation Process is to apply the State/Local Shares calculation and Proportionate Shares Calculations to actual expenditures in order to determine who owes what.

# A. What Changes: Fiscal

## Fiscal Reconciliation Process Overview

- The Northstar Care Fiscal Reconciliation Process brings together a wide set of Northstar Care and legacy Pre-Northstar Care expenditures and revenue.
- The goal of the process is for counties and tribes to pay about what they would have paid without Northstar Care, with the federal and state governments picking up the additional costs.



# A. What Changes: Fiscal

## Nonfederal Portion Shared

- Although all of the costs are included, it's the nonfederal portion that is pooled, after the federal Title IV-E portion is netted off.
- The remaining nonfederal portion for all three components is shared by the state and counties and child welfare initiative tribes.
- This is in contrast to the existing arrangement where counties and tribes pay for foster care while the state pays for Relative Custody Assistance (RCA) and Adoption Assistance (AA).

# A. What Changes: Fiscal

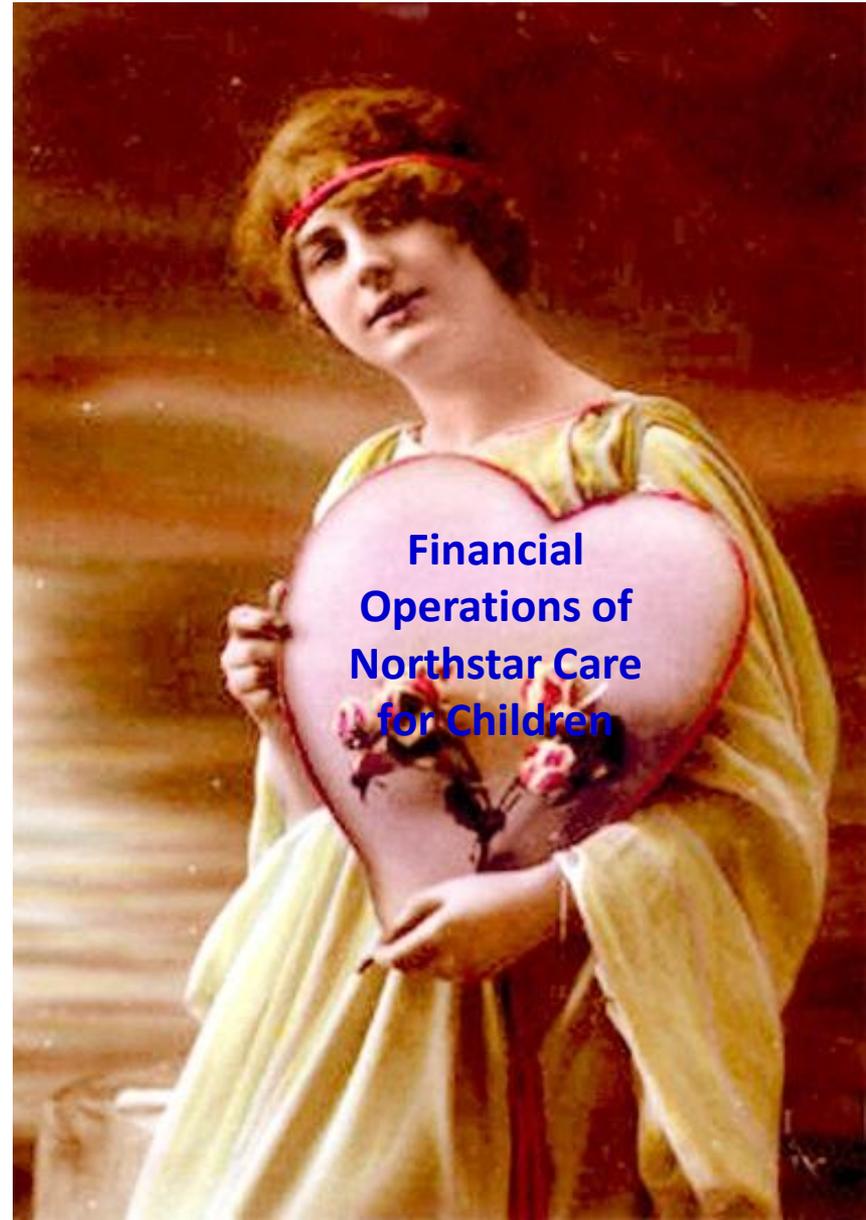
## Fiscal Reconciliation Wrap-up

- The net effect is that Northstar Care for Children is more expensive than the previous collection of programs, and yet counties and tribes pay about the same amount that they would have in the absence of Northstar Care.
- More young people get permanent families, but the state and federal government pick up the extra costs.
- Not bad!

# A. What Changes: Fiscal

## Data to Counties and Tribes

- Of course, we plan to provide counties and tribes with good reports from the Fiscal Reconciliation Process.
- It might not be available the first quarter, but it will get built into SSIS.
- It'll be fun!



# Northstar★ Care for Children



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**Part A – What Changes Overview**

**Part B – Organizing for Northstar**

**Part C – MAPCY Field Test Results**

**Part D – Highlighted Issues**

There are four parts to today's presentation...

# B. Organizing for Northstar: Training Plan

## Our Training Plan So Far



- Overview: Aug 13 - Oct 21
  - Supervisor: Sept 16 - Oct 21
  - Private Agency: Oct 6 - 17
  - Licensing: Oct 15 - Dec 12
  - Permanency: Nov 3 - Dec 12
  - MAPCY Assessment: Dec 1-2
- Plus many other venues

# B. Organizing for Northstar: Team

## Name a Coordinator, Establish a Team

- If you haven't already, please name an experienced leader as your Northstar Care Coordinator.
- The Field Test agency experience strongly supports this.
- Northstar Care crosses lines, and your coordinator will be more effective if you establish a team for them to lead.
- Exactly who should be on the team will vary by agency, depending on how you have your work divided up.



# B. Organizing for Northstar: Team

## Northstar Care is Integrated



- Despite the oddities of eligibility, Northstar Care all fits together.
- Many staff will understand only their portion.
- However, it is best understood as an entire set of processes that are or should be integrated.
- How the assessment is used ripples through other aspects; placement decisions impact licensing, which in turn affects benefits, permanency and fiscal.
- A team can come to understand how one part impacts the others.

## B. Organizing for Northstar: Team

### Who Should be on Your Northstar Care Team?

Include someone (may play multiple roles) involved with:

- Case management and placement
- Assessment (including the MAPCY approval process)
- Licensing
- Permanency (both adoption and transfers of custody)
- Who understands RCA (unless you have no remaining cases)
- Title IV-E expert
- Fiscal and/or analyst (treat as partly revenue optimization)
- Income Maintenance (Title IV-E, MAXIS and MA)
- Possibly county attorney's office (permanency court work)

## B. Organizing for Northstar: Team

### The Director's Attention makes a Difference



We suggest you establish a process for regularly finding out:

- How the coordinator and their team is doing,
- What needs to change,
- What obstacles or roadblocks are in their way, and
- What they need from you.

# B. Organizing for Northstar: How?

## Is Your Current Structure Best?

- Many agencies will find that the way they are currently organized should be modified to be **more effective** at implementing Northstar Care.
- Clearly, program and fiscal need to be able to routinely work with each other.
- Those doing permanency planning need to work closely with licensing – not always a top priority in the past.



## B. Organizing for Northstar: How?

### Organizing for the MAPCY Assessment?

- For example, there are many effective ways to organize conducting the MAPCY assessment.
- It can be done by a small group of assessors, one assessor per unit, or every case manager doing their own assessments.
- What **doesn't** work is having no over-all process overseen by your approver(s).
- You need to have some mechanism so that assessment practice moves toward agency-wide and statewide consistency.

## B. Organizing for Northstar: How?

### Organizing for Permanency?

- Similarly, the processes around permanency are complex (as they have always been).
- Many agencies have previously found it useful to have one or two staffers (or an entire unit in larger agencies) who specialize in learning the details of permanency, adoption and adoption assistance.
- We think this may be equally valuable for transfers of permanent legal and physical custody and Northstar Kinship Assistance.

# B. Organizing for Northstar: How?

## Is Formal Structure the Key?

- You may find it useful to make some formal changes in assignment and structure.
- However, the formal organizational structures may be less important than having a “can-do” coordinator and a cross-disciplinary team who is **actively backed** by their director.



# B. Organizing for Northstar: How?

## Local CJJ Team as a Resource?



- Your CJJ Team may be a resource for implementing Northstar Care.
- It brings together many of the key players who need to navigate this somewhat different landscape.
- Northstar Care is a priority with CJJ at the state level.
- Would Northstar Care be a logical focus to suggest locally?

# Northstar★ Care for Children



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**Part A – What Changes Overview**

**Part B – Organizing for Northstar**

**Part C – MAPCY Field Test Results**

**Part D – Highlighted Issues**

There are four parts to today's presentation...

# C. MAPCY Field Test Results

## Our Third Test was a Success



- The third test was a full field test.
- It began on November 4, 2013, started live cases on January 23, 2014, and wrapped up on July 25, 2014.
- The new assessment actually determined benefits for a test sample of children.
- ***The Field Test was very successful.***

## **c. MAPCY Field Test Results**

### **Seven Purposes Fulfilled**

1. The tool was validated.
2. Inter-rater reliability established (a few exceptions being attended to).
3. Detailed feedback from assessors incorporated.
4. SSIS programming tested and functioned well.
5. Training process revamped.
6. Other processes worked well, but were not employed as widely as needs to occur.
7. Distribution data used to improve scoring.

## C. MAPCY Field Test Results

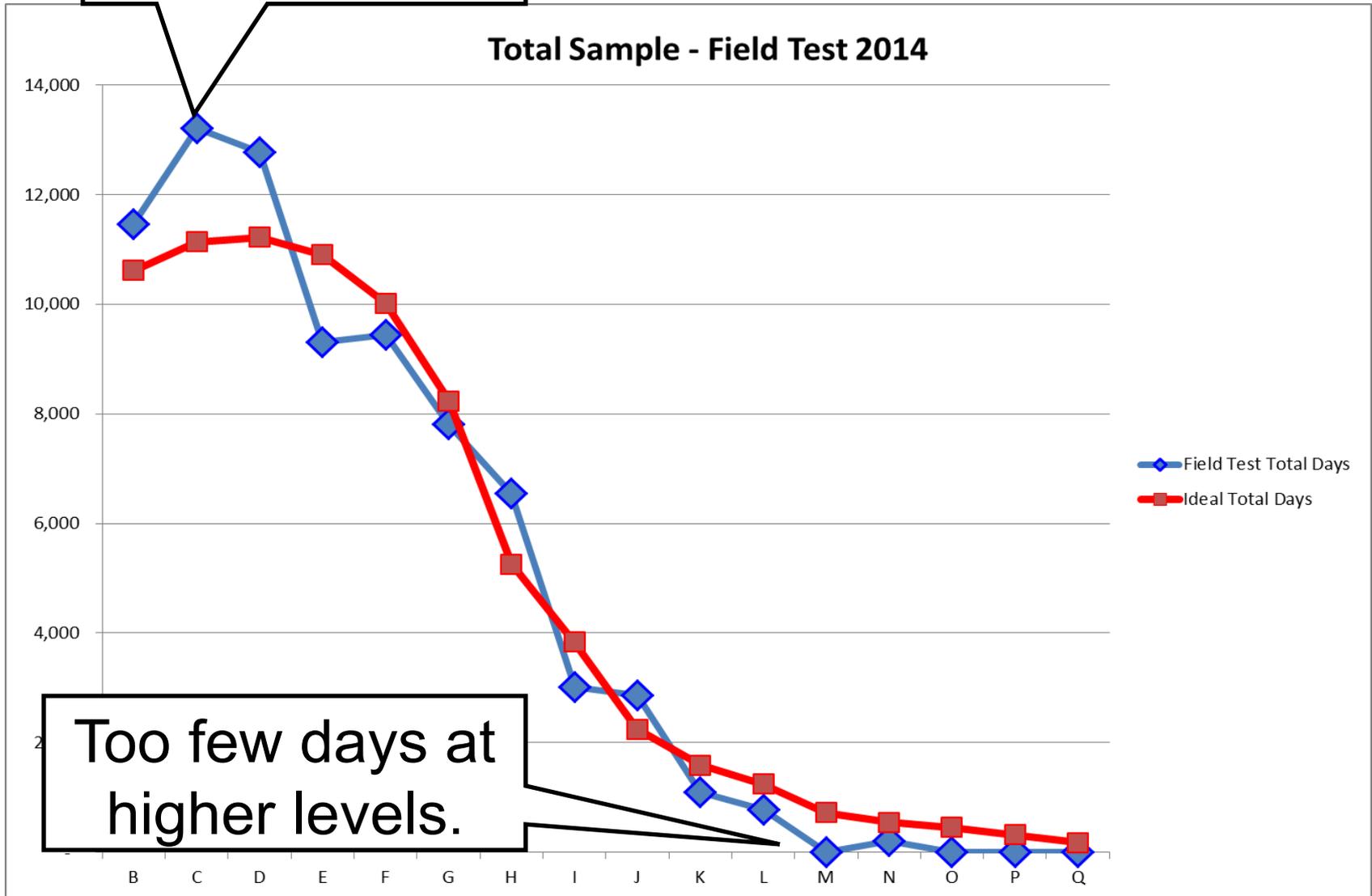
### Won't duplicate previous assessments

- The MAPCY assessment tool will **not** have the same results as the previous assessments.
- It's not meant to.
- It looks at different things than the old DOC assessment and supplemental assessments used by RCA and legacy Adoption Assistance.
- It is designed to have a somewhat different distribution (particularly for foster care).
- But we will continue to improve it so that it works according to its design.

# Field Test Results

Too many days of basic.

Total Sample - Field Test 2014

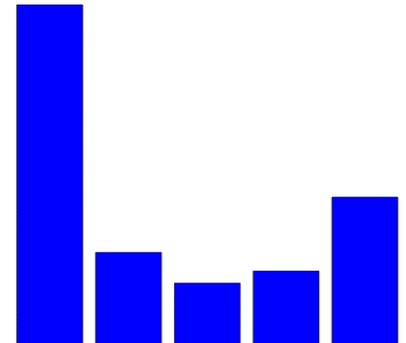
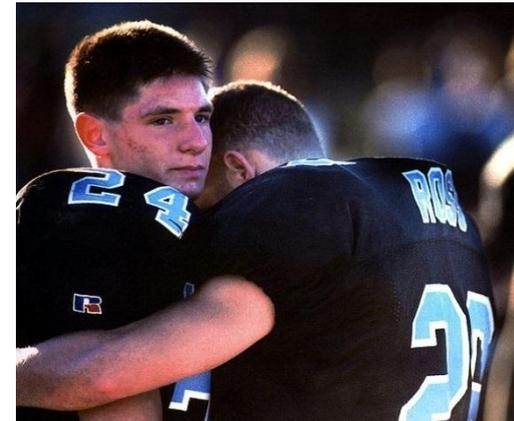


Too few days at higher levels.

# C. MAPCY Field Test Results

## Improved Assessment Scoring

- Effective with the December SSIS release 14.4, the MAPCY will score in an improved fashion based on the results of the Field Test.
- We've adjusted both the low and high end.
- We know we won't get it exactly right even this fourth time.
- We will continue to monitor and make fine-tuning adjustments.



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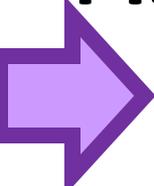
## D. Highlighted Issues: 4 to Examine

### 4 Issues being Highlighted Today

1. **6 months** residing with licensed foster parent for Northstar Kinship Assistance eligibility
2. **Historic Data** used in Northstar Care Fiscal Reconciliation Process
3. **SSIS**: Using, leveraging, and working around the computer system
4. **Agency Responsibilities** under Northstar Care for Children: financially and legally responsible agencies

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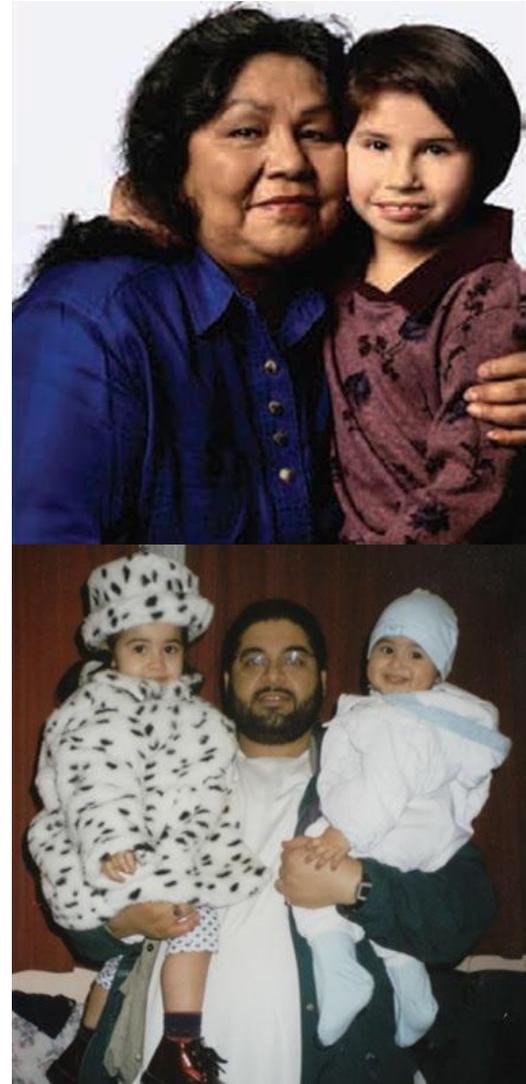
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  3. **SSIS**: Using, leveraging, and working around the computer system
  4. **Agency Responsibilities** under Northstar Care for Children: financially and legally responsible agencies

# D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

## Residing with Licensed Foster Parent for 6 Months

Foster children moving to a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody must either:

- a) Reside with the prospective relative custodian for at least six consecutive months while that prospective custodian was a licensed child foster parent, or
- b) Receive an exemption to the six-month requirement from DHS (which won't be routine).



# D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

## Points to Consider

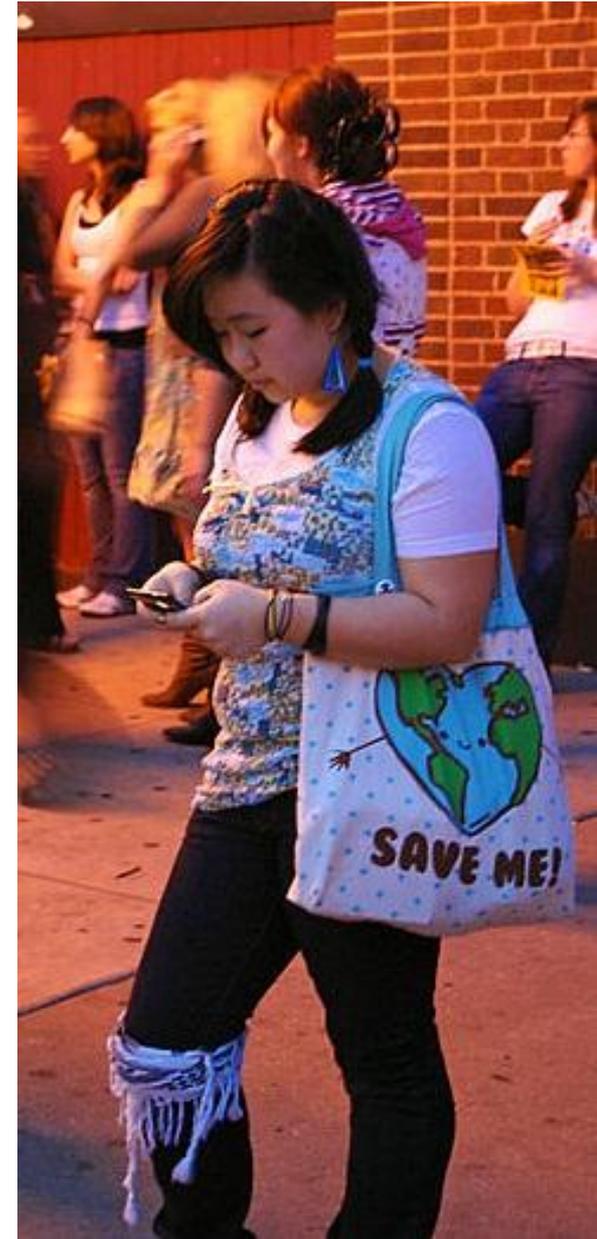
- That's six consecutive months.
- Licensure is a Title IV-E requirement to help ensure safety.
- Completed background studies are required, even with an exemption.



## D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

### A Cause of Concern

- Some have expressed concern – even alarm – at this requirement.
- It is a change from Relative Custody Assistance.
- It is a federal requirement as part of Title IV-E.
- Many other states have already gone down this path.
- It's not going to be so bad.



# D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

## Serious Challenges

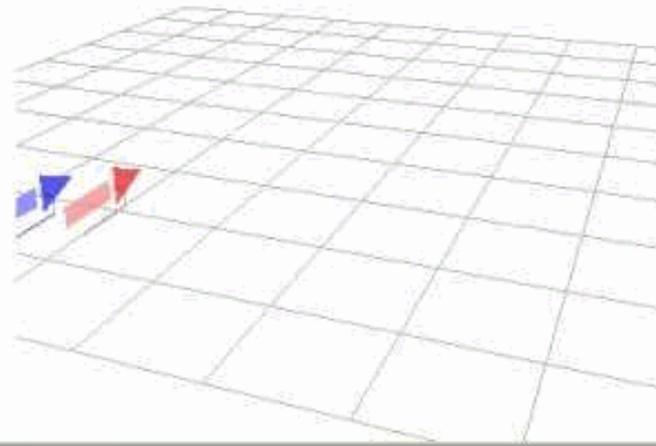
- We understand that there can be serious challenges in meeting this requirement.
- Particularly with:
  - ICPC work out-of-state
  - Complicated background studies to resolve, or
  - When another jurisdiction is responsible for the licensing.
- DHS is working to provide supports and expedited processes wherever we can.

# D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

## May Require Substantial Changes



- Ensuring that licensing of relatives is completed promptly may require substantial changes in practice and reallocation of managerial and staff resources.
- Actively assist relatives with background studies, variances, set-asides, and licensing.
- Consider developing several relative options at the same time.



# D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

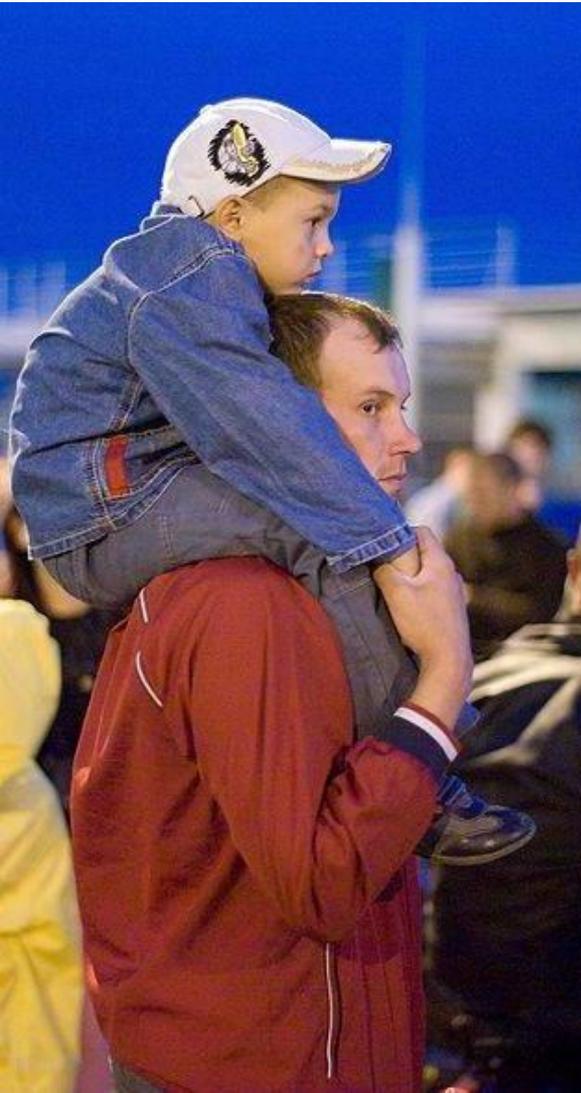
## It Can Be Done

- With a stepped-up relative search and licensing process, most relatives can be licensed within 3-6 months.
- This could still meet permanency timelines.
- Most cases aren't ready to go to permanency until close to the 11-month mark anyway.



## D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

**Each agency needs to develop new processes to:**



- Stay on top of every step in the licensing process,
- Tackle several steps simultaneously,
- Consider local agency variances, when alternative home safety measures are in place, and
- Aggressively pursue background study variances and set-asides whenever warranted.

# D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

## Exemption Process Available

- For the unusual case where quick permanency is genuinely in the child's best interest, there's the exemption process.
- There can be no exemption from a background study.



# D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

## Exemption Process Means No Title IV-E



- Please note that this is an exemption from a federal requirement.
- When DHS grants an exemption, it results in a non-Title IV-E benefit.
- The benefit is less flexible, even if the young person is otherwise eligible for Title IV-E.
- There is no Title IV-E revenue.

# D. Highlighted Issues: 6 Months to Kinship

## Adoption Might be Easier

- A final note: **reconsider adoption.**
- Adoption is preferred.
- Northstar Adoption Assistance has no six-month requirement.
- In state courts, the **legal burden of proof** is the same for termination of parental rights and a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.



## D. Highlighted Issues: 4 to Examine

### 4 Issues being Highlighted Today

1. **6 months** residing with licensed foster parent for Northstar Kinship Assistance eligibility
2. **Historic Data** used in Northstar Care Fiscal Reconciliation Process
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4. **Agency Responsibilities** under Northstar Care for Children: financially and legally responsible agencies

# D. Highlighted Issues: Historic Data

## Each County gets to Verify its Historic Data

- In the coming weeks, DHS will be sending to each county our best accounting of what you spent on qualifying foster care in 2011-2013 and the first half of 2014.
- Led by fiscal, your team should verify that the historic data makes sense.

FROM_CNTY_CD	SERVICE	YR_MONTH	SUM(BASIC_AMOUNT)	SUM(DOC_AMOUNT)	SUM(RATE_ONLY_AM)	SUM(EDU_TRAN_AM)	SUM(PAID)
01	180	2011-01	1,913.01	1,793.66	-	-	3,706.67
01	181	2011-01	18,793.75	12,362.68	-	-	31,156.43
01	180	2011-02	1,924.17	1,793.66	-	-	3,717.83
01	181	2011-02	18,393.07	12,406.68	-	-	30,799.75
01	180	2011-03	1,737.96	1,620.08	-	-	3,358.04
01	181	2011-03	11,717.92	8,573.84	-	-	20,291.76
01	180	2011-04	1,924.17	1,793.66	-	-	3,717.83
01	181	2011-04	15,191.94	9,713.44	-	-	24,905.38
01	180	2011-05	1,737.96	1,642.08	-	-	3,380.04
01	181	2011-05	11,619.37	8,765.46	-	-	20,384.83
01	180	2011-06	1,800.03	1,699.94	-	-	3,499.97
01	181	2011-06	11,810.86	7,656.66	-	-	19,467.52
01	180	2011-07	1,241.40	1,267.20	-	-	2,508.60
01	181	2011-07	8,276.09	5,891.16	-	-	14,167.25
01	180	2011-08	1,282.78	1,309.44	-	-	2,592.22
01	181	2011-08	10,588.21	7,471.20	-	-	18,059.41
01	180	2011-09	1,262.09	1,284.80	-	-	2,546.89
01	181	2011-09	6,603.16	4,931.08	-	-	11,534.24
01	180	2011-10	1,262.09	1,291.84	-	-	2,553.93
01	181	2011-10	11,106.85	5,294.52	-	-	16,401.37
01	188	2011-10	-	-	460.00	-	460.00
01	180	2011-11	1,282.78	1,309.44	-	-	2,592.22
01	181	2011-11	8,176.73	4,489.10	-	-	12,665.83
01	188	2011-11	-	-	230.00	-	230.00
01	180	2011-12	1,241.40	1,267.20	-	-	2,508.60
01	181	2011-12	8,148.01	5,796.12	-	-	13,944.13
01	188	2011-12	-	-	38.00	-	38.00
01	180	2012-01	1,282.78	1,309.44	-	-	2,592.22
01	181	2012-01	6,015.72	4,713.94	-	-	10,729.66
01	180	2012-02	1,305.72	1,317.36	-	-	2,623.08
01	181	2012-02	9,384.11	6,465.14	-	-	15,849.25
01	180	2012-03	1,221.48	1,282.38	-	-	2,503.86
01	181	2012-03	7,696.02	5,633.54	-	-	13,329.56
01	180	2012-04	1,305.72	1,370.82	-	-	2,676.54
01	181	2012-04	8,477.68	6,425.10	-	-	14,902.78
01	180	2012-05	1,179.36	1,245.20	-	-	2,424.56
01	181	2012-05	6,832.74	5,741.78	-	-	12,574.52
01	180	2012-06	1,305.72	1,411.74	-	-	2,717.46
01	181	2012-06	7,685.89	5,795.46	-	-	13,481.35
01	180	2012-07	1,263.60	1,349.04	-	-	2,612.64
01	181	2012-07	8,056.80	5,860.80	-	-	13,917.60
01	180	2012-08	1,305.72	1,391.28	-	-	2,697.00
01	181	2012-08	6,715.76	5,089.26	-	-	11,805.02
01	180	2012-09	1,402.68	1,497.76	-	-	2,900.44
01	181	2012-09	7,021.94	5,159.00	-	-	12,180.94
01	180	2012-10	1,990.80	2,145.00	-	-	4,135.80
01	181	2012-10	6,923.20	5,926.80	-	-	12,850.00
01	180	2012-11	2,057.16	2,216.50	-	-	4,273.66
01	181	2012-11	11,423.52	9,079.40	-	-	20,502.92
01	180	2012-12	1,990.80	2,145.00	-	-	4,135.80
01	181	2012-12	11,174.33	8,392.34	-	-	19,566.67
01	180	2013-01	2,057.16	2,216.50	-	-	4,273.66
01	181	2013-01	9,825.91	6,426.86	-	-	16,252.77
01	180	2013-02	2,118.85	2,216.50	-	-	4,335.35
01	181	2013-02	10,030.95	7,320.50	-	-	17,351.45
01	180	2013-03	1,913.80	2,002.00	-	-	3,915.80
01	181	2013-03	9,243.97	6,490.00	-	-	15,733.97

## D. Highlighted Issues: Historic Data

### Each County gets to Verify its Historic Data



- In particular, look for errors, oddities, anomalies, expenditures **not representative**.
- Also, if your county does not have a Title IV-E agreement with Corrections, but Corrections foster care is paid out of social services.

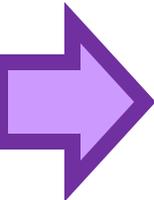
# D. Highlighted Issues: Historic Data

## Why Does it Matter?

- Expenditures from 2011-2014 is a key factor in figuring out how much your county will spend for Northstar Care in 2015-2016.
- Historic data is a key factor as we work out how you'll spend "about the same as you would have spent without Northstar Care."
- These figures get adjusted in the future, but this is where you start.
- **We are open to modifications if** you can put a good argument that our figures are wrong, include anomalies, or are otherwise **not representative**.

## D. Highlighted Issues: 4 to Examine

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# D. Highlighted Issues: SSIS

## Leveraging SSIS

- In building Northstar Care into SSIS, we are building capacities that SSIS has not really had previously.
- For example, the Eligibility Determination for **Northstar Kinship Assistance** features extensive capabilities to communicate back and forth from local to state and back.
- This will be a vast improvement over the error-prone and time-consuming Adoption Assistance process we've all struggled with.

# D. Highlighted Issues: SSIS

## Leveraging SSIS

- As another example, SSIS will track whether a foster child is legacy or Northstar Care.
- SSIS will automatically check foster homes against the **current** state licensure list.
- The MAPCY assessment automatically scores in SSIS, and when needed state approval is electronic.
- Expenditures that don't qualify for Northstar Care this quarter will automatically be checked next quarter and later quarters to see if they now qualify.
- And on and on.

## D. Highlighted Issues: SSIS



### Leveraging SSIS

- It will take time for your staff to learn all these new capabilities and the policies behind them.
- They will save time, but there is an initial investment.
- It will be worth the effort for your agency to master the new capabilities that will come on line in December and throughout 2015.

## D. Highlighted Issues: SSIS

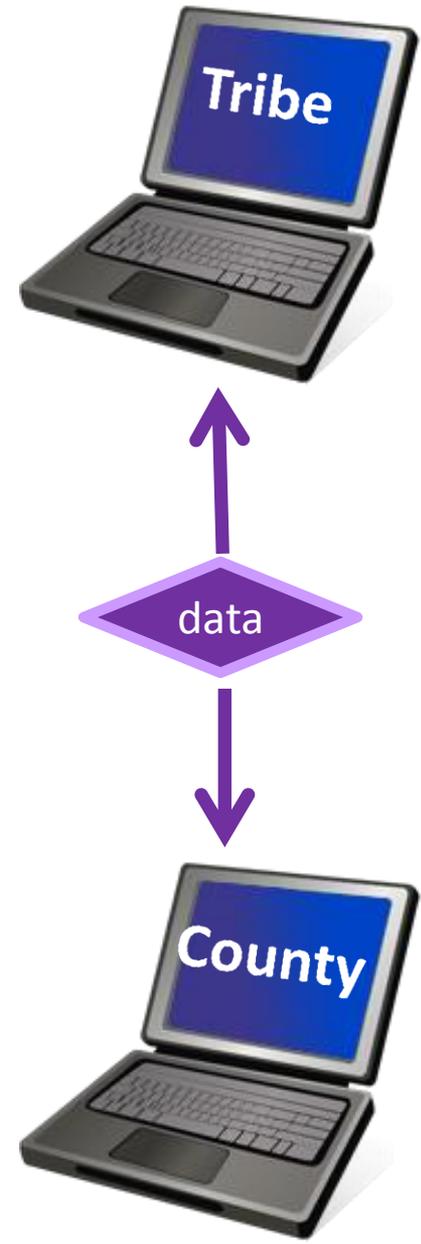
### Working Around SSIS

- SSIS will be under construction **throughout 2015**.
- Northstar **Kinship** Assistance will be ready in December.
- Northstar **Adoption** Assistance **won't** be ready until February.
- Instead, there will be a cumbersome paper workaround for Northstar Adoption Assistance.
- Of course, legacy Adoption Assistance has been a paper process for years, so it won't be as big a loss.
- But it will be **frustrating and slow**. For DHS, too!

## D. Highlighted Issues: SSIS

### Working Around SSIS

- As another example, SSIS has little capability **at present** to transmit data back and forth among counties or counties and tribes.
- Currently, there's plenty to transmit there, especially when a tribe is legally responsible and a county is financially responsible.
- SSIS does not **presently** help much.
- Northstar Care just accentuates this.
- We're studying what can be done.



## D. Highlighted Issues: 4 to Examine

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# D. Highlighted Issues: Responsibilities

## *Legally* Responsible Agency



- The legally responsible agency is responsible for the young person.
- It's the Minnesota social service agency that is assigned responsibility for *placement, care, and supervision* of the young person through a court order, voluntary placement agreement, or voluntary relinquishment.

# D. Highlighted Issues: Responsibilities

## *Financially* Responsible Agency

- The financially responsible agency is about money.
- It's the social service agency that pays the *local share* of Northstar Care Foster Care, Northstar Kinship Assistance, and Northstar Adoption Assistance.
- It could be a county agency or one of the two American Indian Child Welfare Initiative tribes – Leech Lake and White Earth.
- Under Northstar Care for Children, the agency that is financially responsible at the time of foster care placement continues to be responsible for the local share of any maintenance payments after permanency.

# D. Highlighted Issues: Responsibilities

## When Two Agencies are Involved

- Usually the legally responsible agency and the financially responsible agency are the same.
- But sometimes they aren't.
- Most commonly, this involves a tribe with legal responsibility and a county with financial responsibility.



# D. Highlighted Issues: Responsibilities

## When Two Agencies are Involved



- Whether two counties, or a tribe and a county, sometimes the legally and financially responsible agencies are different.
- When they are different, then they ***must work together on*** Northstar Care for Children.

# D. Highlighted Issues: Responsibilities

**Exactly how they work together varies by subject:**

1. The Two Agency Roles are Defined by Placement
2. Case of Record in SSIS
3. MAPCY Assessments and Reassessments in Northstar Foster Care
4. Notice of MAPCY to Caregivers in Foster Care
5. Payments for Northstar Foster Care
6. Case Planning, Permanency, and Court
7. Kinship or Adoption Placement Agreement
8. Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination
9. Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement
10. Payments for Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance
11. MAPCY Reassessments for Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance
12. Notice of MAPCY to Caregivers in NKA or NAA

**The Agency Responsibilities handout speaks to details on each topic.**

# Northstar★ Care for Children

## We Will Monitor What Happens

- We will be in contact with you and other stakeholders as this unfolds.
- We'll be on the look-out for things that aren't working.
- We'll keep improving the MAPCY, the other Northstar paperwork, how things work in SSIS, etc.
- Together we'll work to fix and improve as we go.



# Northstar★ Care for Children

## Northstar Care Provides Key Tools



- It eliminates the benefit discrepancy from foster care to permanency for children six and older.
- It costs counties and tribes about the same as they would have spent without it.
- It will take some time to master.
- It will be worth it.

# Northst★r Care for Children

- **Northstar Foster Care**
- **Northstar Kinship Assistance**
- **Northstar Adoption Assistance**

# Northst★r Care for Children

Images from Wikipedia, Wikimedia, and public sources

Is Northstar  
Care as good  
as ice cream?



Well,  
Northstar Care  
is very good,  
but probably  
not as good as  
ice cream.

**Northst★r Care  
for Children**

# Northst★r Care for Children

The

End

# Northst★r Care for Children

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