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Governor

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*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

LINDA S. SPEARS
Commissioner

April 4, 2020

Dear Valued Provider:

After several weeks with noses to the grindstone and making needed adjustments to the programs you operate, I am mindful of just how much has changed.

In addition to mobilizing our teams to telework, to practice health and safety precautions, and to adapt in ever changing circumstances, the current environment is also deepening our gratitude. We are listening to the ways that you and your employees are innovating. We are hearing the stories of dedicated employees whose passion for their work fuels them through each day. And, we are hearing – and experiencing for ourselves - how incredibly difficult it can be to practice child welfare, a profession built on human connections, during a time when social interactions look, feel, and sound so different than they did only a few weeks ago.

Although our interactions, and the interactions with the children and families that we jointly serve have changed, our appreciation for you and the services you provide remains steadfast. Through our partnerships with you, more families are in touch with helpers, more children are kept safe, and more healing happens.

I know your staff is adjusting to the same health and safety precautions as mine, a daily reminder of how much this virus has changed our work. In accordance with federal guidelines, social workers conduct visits with foster parents, children, and parents using video conferencing whenever possible. When a child must be seen in-person for safety reasons, staff are equipped with masks and gloves received through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). At the same time, most parent-child visits are by video conference or phone for health reasons with in-person visits determined on a case-by-case basis.

We relied on your critical services before hearing the term, "COVID-19." We are relying on you now as we craft new ways to work and connect in the midst of COVID-19. And, we will be relying on you after the curve flattens, when we will forge our post-COVID-19 future together. The most vulnerable children and families in the Commonwealth rely on our partnerships; so, please know that we are here for you.

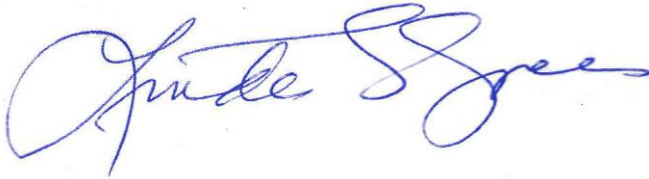
No one has all of the answers, but we are here to problem solve with you. The Department's contract managers are familiar with resources issued by the Department of Public Health and can connect you with helpful information.

Contract managers are also available to problem solve with you directly or escalate an issue up the management chain to create a larger network for addressing issues.

As circumstances evolve and new solutions are needed, stay in touch. The contact information on the following page provides direct ways to communicate with the DCF staff members best prepared to collaborate with you.

Stay well in body and in spirit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Linda S. Spears". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Linda" being the most prominent.

Linda S. Spears
Commissioner, Department of Children and Families

Adoptions Providers

Contract Manager:

Director, Sharon Silvia, sharon.c.silvia@massmail.state.ma.us

Comprehensive Foster Care Providers

Contract Manager:

Director, Susan Tucke, susan.tucke@massmail.state.ma.us

Support & Stabilization Providers

Contract Manager, Tara Diorio-Thomas, tara.diorio-thomas@massmail.state.ma.us

Director, Andrea Cosgrove, andrea.cosgrove@massmail.state.ma.us

Assistant Commissioner, Services Network, Katherine Canada, katherine.canada@massmail.state.ma.us

Congregate Care Providers

Contract Managers:

Northern Region: Brian Cheslofska, brian.cheslofska@massmail.state.ma.us

Boston Region: Janon Rollins, janon.rollins@massmail.state.ma.us

Southern Region: Eneida Anjos, eneida.anjos@massmail.state.ma.us

Central Region: Tania Hurley, tania.hurley@massmail.state.ma.us

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