

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 348(HES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/29/96

Referred: Judiciary, Finance

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES JAMES, Therriault, Kelly, Toohey

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act establishing the interagency work group on agency accountability and**
2 **child interview methods."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1.** AS 47.17 is amended by adding a new section to read:

5 Sec. 47.17.100. INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP AND MEMORANDUM OF
6 AGREEMENT ON AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY AND CHILD INTERVIEW
7 METHODS. (a) The interagency work group to increase agency accountability for and
8 to improve methods of interviewing minors who are alleged to have been abused or
9 neglected is established in the department. The work group consists of five
10 representatives, whose job description includes participation in the work group, from the
11 following departments:

12 (1) two persons from the department; one person shall be an employee
13 of the division dealing with family and youth services and the other person shall have
14 expertise in the area of children's mental health;

- 1 (2) one person from the Department of Public Safety;
- 2 (3) one person from the Department of Education; and
- 3 (4) one person from the Department of Law.

4 (b) The interagency work group shall prepare a memorandum of agreement that
5 will guide all participating agencies in their involvement with interviews of minors who
6 are alleged to have been abused or neglected. At a minimum, the memorandum of
7 agreement must

8 (1) identify the best and most effective methods to establish
9 accountability for those who interview minors who are alleged or suspected to have been
10 abused or neglected;

11 (2) identify the best and most effective methods for

12 (A) videotaping;

13 (B) audiotaping;

14 (C) team interviews;

15 (D) note taking;

16 (E) documentation; and

17 (F) enforcing file content standards;

18 (3) provide for interagency cooperation in

19 (A) initial and continuing training or education for interviewers,
20 including education regarding new and updated methods of interviewing minors
21 and regarding new equipment useful for interviewing minors;

22 (B) establishing respect for family members during the interview
23 process;

24 (C) maintaining family unity during the interview process unless
25 the nature of the investigation clearly indicates otherwise; and

26 (D) sensitivity to public response and public input;

27 (4) focus on increasing agency and interviewer accountability and
28 minimizing negative effects on families; and

29 (5) review the statutory definition of "abuse or neglect" to determine if
30 the definition leads to uniform and fair results.

31 (c) The interagency work group shall meet at the times the members of the work
32 group consider necessary. At a minimum, the memorandum of agreement must be

1 reviewed and updated in the year following each gubernatorial election year as
2 determined under AS 15.35.010, and must be completed in those years before the
3 beginning of the next regular session of the legislature the following year. Each revised
4 and updated memorandum of agreement shall be made available to the legislature and
5 the public for review. The work group shall notify the legislature that the memorandum
6 of agreement is available for review.

7 * **Sec. 2.** The initial memorandum of agreement required to be prepared under AS 47.17.100,
8 added by sec. 1 of this Act, shall be completed by January 1, 1997. Unless an earlier revision
9 and update to the memorandum of agreement is determined to be necessary by the interagency
10 work group created in sec. 1 of this Act, the first revision and update shall be conducted in 1999
11 and completed before the beginning of the regular legislative session in 2000.