

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
DENNIS DAUGAARD, GOVERNOR

July 17, 2013

Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

Providing effective child welfare and foster care services to children who have been abused or neglected, and to their families, is paramount to their health, safety and well-being. I am sure you agree the protection of children from child abuse or neglect is a critical function of government.

The state of South Dakota provides effective child welfare services, including foster care, to citizens across our state. This is evidenced in the results of the Child and Family Services Reviews conducted by your agency. We also have a long history of partnering with tribal governments to provide child welfare services to their tribal members.

Since 1978, the state of South Dakota has had formal agreements with tribes who choose to provide child welfare services directly to their members. More recently, we supported the efforts of the Oglala Sioux Tribe as that tribe developed a chartered agency to operate its child welfare program and provide the full array of child welfare services.

Currently, we have agreements with four of the nine tribes in our state to provide child welfare services or foster care services. We also contract with one additional tribe to complete home studies for families on their reservation. We have recently partnered with interested tribes on other aspects of child welfare, including building tribal capacity for culturally responsive foster parent training and parenting curriculums. For the past two years, we supported the grant application by Sicangu Child and Family Services, the child welfare agency for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, seeking Title IV-E Direct Funding Planning support.

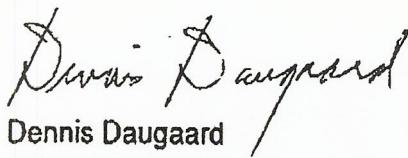
In recent years, the state Department of Social Services (DSS) has made several efforts to inform tribal leaders about their opportunity to administer child welfare programs and to educate them about that possibility. Just last month, tribal leaders were sent copies

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of the "Pathways to Tribal Title IV-E" guide to consider. This guide was developed at the request of DSS through technical assistance by the Children's Bureau, National Resource Center for Tribes. It contains important information for tribes considering requests for direct Title IV-E funding from your agency or for a state-tribal IV-E agreement with the state of South Dakota. (A copy of the guide is enclosed.)

Recently, several tribes have expressed interest in providing child welfare services, including foster care, to their members. They have indicated they may be contacting you to pursue this possibility. I want you to know I am fully in support of these efforts, and I ask you to favorably consider the requests of any South Dakota tribe to directly administer child welfare or foster care services to their members. Staff in our Department of Social Services stand ready to provide any information to help as you consider this request.

Sincerely,

  
Dennis Daugaard

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Enclosure