



## INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

2007-04-0080

April 21, 2008

### DCS EMPLOYEE PERJURY

*Inspector General David O. Thomas, after an investigation by Special Agent Michael Mischler, reports as follows:*

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in April of 2007 received a complaint regarding Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Family Case Manager Supervisor Terrie Messina (“FCM”). The complaint alleged that FCM committed perjury during a DCS court hearing regarding a juvenile’s (“Juvenile”) CHINS (Child In Need of Services) case in Monroe County, Indiana. FCM’s duty in her official capacity was to monitor whether Juvenile was receiving the proper services offered by DCS and to report Juvenile’s progress to the Court.

This case originated when members of the Monroe County DCS reported that there was concern regarding Juvenile’s case being handled by FCM. The initial allegations were that FCM had not initiated a safety plan for Juvenile, and had not made a timely face-to-face contact in the home as required by DCS policy.

In addition to these general concerns, DCS officials requested an

investigation on the specific issue of whether FCM had truly made contact with Juvenile on February 1, 2007. These reporting parties alleged that FCM had falsely made this allegation. FCM had documented this February 1, 2007 contact with Juvenile in two ways.

First, FCM had made an entry in the computer case file for February 1, 2007, stating that FCM had made a face-to-face at-home visit with Juvenile on that date. The computer entry stated:

“FCM went to the home and saw [Juvenile]. Mom was at work. He stated that they were talking about moving to Indy. He stated that he did not want to make an issue of it. FCM asked him to have his mom call so that she could meet with her about court. [Juvenile] said that he would have her call. The home looked fine, no issues at this time.”

Secondly, FCM alleged this same February 1 contact with Juvenile in her testimony at a February 26, 2007 court proceeding where FCM was under oath. According to the certified transcript of the hearing held in Monroe County Circuit Court VII, FCM testified regarding the CHINS case of Juvenile as follows:

“I have not seen [Juvenile] since February 1<sup>st</sup>, and have gotten word from the service provider on Friday that they are in the process of moving to Marion County.”

Another DCS employee was present in the courtroom on that day and knew that this statement was untrue in that FCM had not seen the juvenile on February 1, 2007, and in fact, that the location of the juvenile was unknown to DCS.

On March 13, 2007, FCM was confronted by DCS supervisors about the false testimony and FCM's handling of the case. During this meeting, FCM admitted to falsely alleging this February 1, 2007 contact and resigned the

following day.

These facts were presented to the Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney and a criminal charge of Perjury was filed on March 26, 2008.

Dated this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David O. Thomas".

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David O. Thomas, Inspector General