

# NEWS NEWS



## Department of Human Services

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July 1, 2010

### **Cindy Christian, M.D. appointed Medical Director Philadelphia Department of Human Services**

Philadelphia--Mayor Michael A. Nutter announced the appointment of Cindy W. Christian M.D. as Medical Director of the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS). In this new position, Dr. Christian will help ensure the physical well being of children and families served by the Department.

“Dr. Christian is uniquely qualified to fill this critical role,” said Nutter. “She is an esteemed member of the medical community who has devoted her clinical and academic career to the care of abused children. She is also an original member of the DHS Community Oversight Board who has an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by the Department as well as the steps it needs to take in order to better ensure the health and safety of the children it serves.”

Dr. Christian holds The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Chair in the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. She is Director of Safe Place: The Center for Child Protection and Health at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

Deputy Mayor Don Schwarz said “Dr. Christian is a natural fit for DHS. She has been a passionate advocate for abused children for years. She has the knowledge and credibility to continue to move DHS in the right direction”.

As Medical Director of DHS, Dr. Christian’s responsibilities will include the development of policy and systems related to primary health care as well as developmental and mental health care and evaluation.

“Dr. Christian’s appointment represents an important step by the Department in addressing the DHS Child Welfare Review Panel’s recommendation that the agency improve integration with physicians, nurses, and behavioral health specialists to ensure that each child’s medical and behavioral health is appropriately assessed,” said DHS Commissioner, Anne Marie Ambrose.

According to Ambrose, the Department has already made significant progress in complying with the recommendation by establishing a Health Management Unit (HMU) staffed by four nurses, which ensures the needs of medically fragile children are addressed and helps social workers better understand medical issues related to children in their case loads.

Additionally, DHS has implemented a thorough and comprehensive fatality review process in compliance with Pennsylvania’s Act 33. The new process aims to produce recommendations for reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to child abuse and neglect; enhancing monitoring and oversight; and strengthening collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse and neglect. Dr. Christian is a member of the Act 33 team led by Philadelphia’s Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Sam Gulino.

In her new role, Dr. Christian will work closely with DHS staff, providers, the medical community and policy makers not only to enhance existing practice, but to develop a comprehensive system of health care for all children and youth in the child welfare system.

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*The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is the City agency charged with protecting children from abuse, neglect, and delinquency; ensuring their safety and permanency in nurturing home environments; and strengthening and preserving families by enhancing community-based prevention services. In partnership with community organizations, DHS provides services to strengthen the overall well being of Philadelphia children, youth, and families using a customer focused approach that is responsive to evolving community needs.*