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**Hamilton County Converts to New Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System**

**Cincinnati (May 5, 2008)** Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services has launched Ohio's State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), a comprehensive, state-of-the-art system designed to improve management of child welfare cases.

The conversion began April 28. Hamilton County joins 78 other counties that have switched, or are switching, to the new system, which will allow counties throughout the state to share information on child welfare cases.

"We're excited to be one of the first major counties to convert to the new system," said Moira Weir, director of the agency, which oversees child welfare, child support collection and public assistance programs in Hamilton County. "We believe once this system is fully implemented, it will greatly enhance our ability to protect and service Hamilton County's children."

Ohio joins most other states and the District of Columbia that are at some stage of adopting SACWIS.

Among the benefits of SACWIS:

- SACWIS provides statewide access to data, facilitating critical communication between and among counties and ODJFS. It is Web-based, so it can be accessed from any Internet connection.
- SACWIS offers an integrated case management tool that supports child welfare practice. Online tools will replace hard copy forms and will track timeframes to help ensure appropriate task management and timely case management.
- Information entered in SACWIS populates to all corresponding fields as each new document is created, limiting the need to enter information. This includes forms/notices as well as documentation that will be maintained within the application.
- Key case information is maintained in one location. Workers will not need to search through case records to find items related to the case.
- E-mail notification for each key event is displayed in advance to aid in planning for home visits, assessment/investigation mandates, case plan due dates, case reviews, etc.

Weir asked for patience from those who deal with the child welfare system as the county works through the conversion. As with any transition to a new information system, there may be some glitches, she added. In fact, all counties have experienced glitches during conversion.

Hamilton County's SACWIS team has worked closely with representatives from the state for two years to ensure as seamless a transition as possible.

"Metropolitan counties have massive amounts of data to handle and training to do," she said.

"We've worked with the state to test, evaluate and re-test SACWIS to ensure optimal performance and avoid problems. While we don't anticipate major problems, we're prepared to deal with any that arise. And we'll notify those who may be affected as quickly as possible."

### **About Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services**

The Department of Job and Family Services administers federal, state and local programs for those in need. The Department helps with local child protection, adult protection, child care, tuberculosis control, child support enforcement, workforce development, cash assistance, food stamp disbursement and Medicaid disbursement. Servicing Hamilton County since 1947, the Department helps hundreds of thousands of residents each year. The Department of Job and Family Services is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.