

Report in Brief: FINAL

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Why OIG Did This Review

Congress has expressed concerns about the safety and well-being of children in foster care. These issues were highlighted in a media report that provided several examples of children who died while in foster care. To determine whether health and safety vulnerabilities exist, we are performing reviews of foster care group homes in several States, including Oklahoma. In Oklahoma, the Department of Human Services is responsible for administering the Title IV-E foster care program.

Our objective was to determine whether Oklahoma complied with State requirements for ensuring that children eligible for Title IV-E and residing in group homes received required health care services designed to protect their health and safety, as required by Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

How OIG Did This Review

We selected a random sample of 70 children in group homes during calendar year 2015 and reviewed the children's case files and the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) for records of visits to health care and dental providers.

Oklahoma Did Not Always Comply With Requirements for Providing Health Care Services to Children in Foster Care

What OIG Found

Oklahoma did not always ensure that there was documentation in the case files of Title IV-E eligible children supporting that they had received required health care services designed to protect their health and safety. We found that 17 of the 70 case files that we reviewed did not contain evidence to support that required health care services were provided. For 7 of the 17 children whose case files lacked documentation, there were Medicaid claims in the MMIS to support that all required health services had been provided. However, for 10 of these children, there was no Medicaid claim to support that dental care was provided during the year.

Oklahoma did not follow its policies and procedures to ensure there was evidence in Title IV-E case files to support that all required health care services were provided to Title IV-E children in foster care. Nor were there Medicaid claims in the State's MMIS to support that all of the children whose case files lacked documentation received the required services.

These documentation failures demonstrate that Title IV-E eligible children in foster care may not be receiving required health care services.

What OIG Recommends

We recommend that Oklahoma follow its policies and procedures to ensure that Title IV-E eligible children in foster care receive required health care services and that the visits are documented in the children's case files.

The State agency agreed with our recommendation and described actions it had taken to address the recommendation. For example, the State agency indicated it had worked to improve the quality of caseworker contacts with children and had updated the electronic system it used to monitor health care screening services.