

# SDM<sup>TM</sup> NEWS

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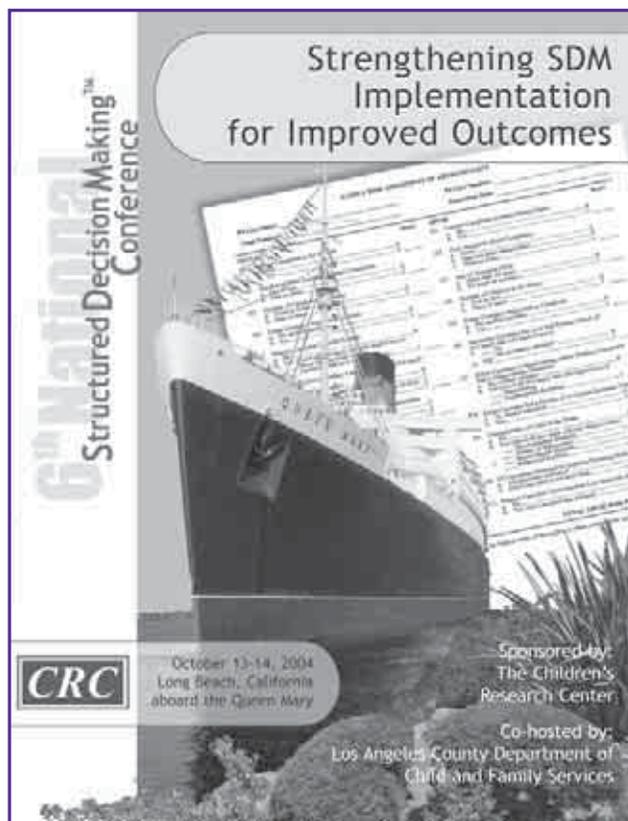
## National Conference: Strengthening SDM Implementation for Improved Outcomes

Directors, administrators, managers, and supervisors from jurisdictions using SDM™ will gather October 13 & 14, 2004, in Long Beach, CA for the 6<sup>th</sup> national SDM conference. This year's theme is "improving outcomes through quality SDM implementation." Workshops are designed to move beyond the question of *whether* to use SDM, and toward deeper issues of assuring quality implementation and integrating SDM into agency practices, policies, and programs. Speakers include practitioners and administrators from coast to coast who will share their experience, innovation, struggles, and solutions as SDM evolves from a set of forms to an integral component of successful practice.

Setting the tone for the conference will be welcoming remarks by Los Angeles County Supervisor, Don Knabe, and Director of Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, David Sanders. The keynote address will be delivered by Dr. Mary-Dale Bolson, Secretary of the New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department. The conference becomes international with the addition of a luncheon address by Tim Hetherington of the Department of Child Safety in Queensland, Australia. A new feature this year will be a round-

table plenary designed for broad sharing of struggles and successes in jurisdictions using SDM.

The five workshop sessions will each offer two options: one geared for directors, administrators, and upper managers, and a second geared for supervisors and managers whose responsibilities are focused on line practice. For a complete list of workshop topics and for registration information, see the conference web page at [www.nccd-crc.org/crc/sdmconf.html](http://www.nccd-crc.org/crc/sdmconf.html).



*You won't want to miss this great conference, aboard the Queen Mary in Long Beach, CA.*

## Behind the Scenes at CRC

Jerald Wonders-Tamez has been the MIS Manager and Network

Administrator at CRC for three years. Our technology demands have increased greatly during that time, in part due to several new web-based applications and a new Automated Response System. Jerry has helped to set up the new systems to support those increased capabilities. He has also implemented increased security measures for our systems and the data they hold.

It seems that Jerry can't get enough of computers and networks at work, and has set up three fully functional servers at home! A native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he is also a Green Bay Packers fan and an audiophile. Jerry and his wife, Theresa, have recently purchased a new home, and share it with a chihuahua named Cookie and three cats.

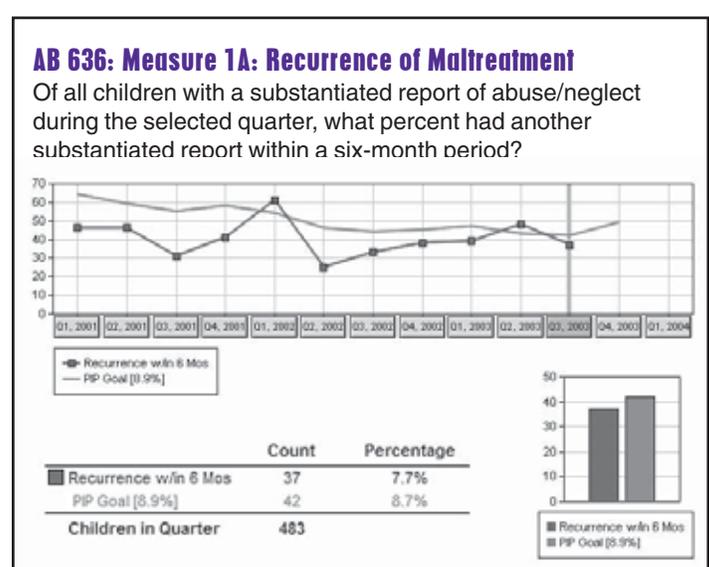


Photo by Kristine Fisher

Jerald Wonders-Tamez, June 2004

## New Jersey Launches Web-Based SDM™ and SafeMeasures®

To assist the New Jersey Department of Youth and Family Service's (DYFS) in achieving goals outlined in the state's Transformation Plan, CRC launched statewide SDM training in April 2004. By June 2004, CRC will have trained almost all of the child protective service workers and supervisors in the implementation of SDM. This is a cooperative effort between CRC staff and consultants, along with selected New Jersey DYFS' Casework Practice Specialist staff. Additionally, CRC and staff from the New Jersey DYFS Training Unit will be conducting computer training on the web-based SDM application to all staff as they complete their classroom training. Statewide



A sample of the information provided by SafeMeasures

roll-out and training of SafeMeasures is tentatively scheduled for July 2004.

Beginning in May 2004, CRC staff conducted two supervisory training for trainers sessions, entitled, "How to Supervise in an SDM Environment," to address key challenges and opportunities in the implementation of SDM. With implementation well on its

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## Studying Evidence-Based Caseload Standards in Virginia

Research in Michigan and Wisconsin has demonstrated that SDM effectively reduces subsequent maltreatment in families referred to child protective services. However, those studies have focused on proving that SDM reduces subsequent maltreatment, not *how* it works to reduce maltreatment. If the specific elements that make SDM

as well as assessing the types of referrals DSS workers make. The research proposes a model in which the amounts and types of services provided mediate between the level of risk a child has of being maltreated again and later abuse and neglect.

The central research hypothesis is that there are minimum levels and types of services necessary to reduce subsequent child maltreatment at each level of risk, and that there are maximum levels and types of services beyond which significant reductions in subsequent maltreatment are no longer realized. It is

Two groups will be compared, one composed of families coming into contact with the Richmond DSS system through a child abuse/neglect referral during the first year of the study, and one composed of families entering during the second year. Two cohorts are needed because results from the initial group need to be replicated on the second to ensure that they are valid, and because the second cohort's outcomes may be better than the first's because of the greater facility and comfort of Richmond DSS social workers with SDM after a year of using the system. Data on the amounts and types of services families receive and the outcomes that result will be collected for each group for 18 months. The project will be completed in June 2008.

*Submitted by Brian L. Meyer, Ph.D., Executive Director, Virginia Treatment Center for Children, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center*

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*If the assumptions behind SDM about improved decision making and caseload weighting prove to be accurate, this research will result in the first evidence-based caseload standards in child protective services and foster care.*

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effective can be identified, and the needed amounts of those elements, child welfare departments using SDM will be able to target resources more accurately, and perhaps to decrease subsequent maltreatment beyond the levels they have already achieved.

A new SDM research project is about to begin in Richmond, Virginia, that will examine the amounts and types of services necessary to reduce maltreatment for children at different risk levels. It will measure the amounts of direct services provided by Richmond Department of Social Services (DSS) caseworkers and services provided by external providers,

also hypothesized that an increase in the level of risk is associated with an increase in the level of service necessary to reduce subsequent maltreatment. The results of the research will provide DSS with the information it needs to help determine how much and which type of services are necessary to reduce child abuse and neglect at specific levels of risk in the referred population. If the assumptions behind SDM about improved decision making and caseload weighting prove to be accurate, this research will result in the first evidence-based caseload standards in child protective services and foster care.

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### New Jersey Launch

*Continued from page 2*

way, CRC staff will continue to work with the SDM Expert Group to identify and resolve implementation problems. Plans have also been initiated to begin the next phase of CRC's work with New Jersey DYFS in preparing for the design of the workload study.

## NCCD/CRC Adopt Trademarks for Structured Decision Making™ and SafeMeasures®

NCCD's work in the area of actuarial risk assessment and Structured Decision Making™ has been longstanding and widespread over many jurisdictions. This increased use of SDM™ raises the possibility of inconsistent or inaccurate application of the system. Because it is important to

appropriate marks in material that you publish or promulgate that describe or use NCCD's model of Structured Decision Making™, SDM™, and/or SafeMeasures®. It is important to include the proper capitalization and the appropriate symbol after each iteration of the mark, as well as a

We thank you in advance for helping us to maintain the high quality of SDM™ and SafeMeasures®. If you have any questions as to the proper use of our marks, please do not hesitate to contact us at the number or address listed in this newsletter.

*NCCD/CRC are committed to maintaining the valuable reputation and goodwill represented by its goods and services*

maintain the consistency and validity of the use of SDM™, NCCD has formally trademarked its goods and services.

NCCD's trademarks to date include SDM™, Structured Decision Making™, and SafeMeasures®. You will notice an increase in the use of the trademark symbols ™ and ® on all materials produced by NCCD recently and in the future.

We are asking you to help us in this endeavor by using the

statement that it is used with the permission of NCCD. For example, after discussing its use with your contact person at NCCD/CRC, use Structured Decision Making™ at the first appearance of the mark in an article, a manual, a title of a page, or section in a manual. Where the ™ becomes burdensome and/or awkward, especially where the mark is used many times on a page, it should at least be capitalized. For example, Structured Decision Making should never appear as "structured decision making." This newsletter will contain a notice when the registration process is complete and the marks SDM™ and Structured Decision Making™ change to ®.

### Share your SDM™ Stories

If you have a story you would like to have published in SDM News, please submit a draft article to: Julie Peterson, Publications Manager, via mail, fax, or email (jptrsn@mw.nccd-crc.org). Please include your name, title, agency, and how long you have been using SDM (to be included in the article). Include your address, phone, and email so that we can contact you regarding your submission. All submissions will be acknowledged; however, we cannot guarantee publication of every article submitted. Please submit articles by October 15, 2004, to be considered for the next issue.



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