

# Family Assessment Response (FAR) in New York State

May 6, 2010

# What is FAR?

- An alternative to traditional child protection investigation response
- Applied to reports that don't allege serious or imminent harm
- Sets aside fault finding and substantiation (indicated or unfounded) decision
- Focuses less on investigative fact finding and more on assessment of needs
- Seeks child safety through family engagement and collaborative partnerships

# Enabling Legislation

## Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007

- Authorized OCFS to establish differential response pilots in NYS. Specifically excludes any social service district with a population of more than 2 million from participating (NYC).
- The Law specifically excludes certain types of CPS reports from being tracked in the alternative approach, i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, failure to thrive, abandonment.

# Enabling Pilot Legislation

## Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007

- Law allows for local social service district discretion beyond the legislative exclusions in selecting the types of reports that would be screened for inclusion in FAR
- Law requires that OCFS conduct an evaluation of FAR. Report due to the Governor no later than January 2011.
- No funds were appropriated in the enabling legislation
- Legislation will sunset in June, 2011

# Getting Started.....

- Summer of 2007 OCFS convened an internal FAR Implementation team to guide the implementation of the model in NYS.
- OCFS convened a statewide call with local social service districts in the Fall. A group of six social service districts expressed initial interest in the model.
- OCFS began convening bi-weekly planning calls with the following counties: Erie, Onondaga, Westchester, Orange, Chautauqua and Tompkins

# Preparation to Support Implementation

- As required by law, each of the districts submitted an application to OCFS. Application outlined span of reports to be screened for FAR, staffing and supervision, assessment protocol, service provision and linkages to community stakeholders.
- OCFS established training contract with American Humane Association (AHA)
- OCFS collaborated with the districts to create a standardized family led assessment tool

# Preparation to Support Implementation

- OCFS modified CONNECTIONS to allow a report to be tracked as FAR
- Commissioner Carrión designates Quality Enhancement Funds (QEF) to support a pool of “flexible funds” for participating districts
- Casey Family Program awards additional funds to support wraparound funds and Quality Assurance Review
- In the Fall of 2008, Onondaga County began tracking reports to FAR and within a number of months, the remaining five districts implemented the model

# Growing Interest in FAR 2009

- In 2009, a number of the initial FAR districts requested training support to allow for expansion of the model
- OCFS initiated a second round of applications and approved those from the following districts: Suffolk, Monroe, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Rensselaer, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Columbia, Livingston, Yates, Putnam, Washington, Essex and Allegany.
- Several other counties expressed interest in implementing but have been deferred due to lack of additional training resources at present

# FAR in NYS

## Phase 1

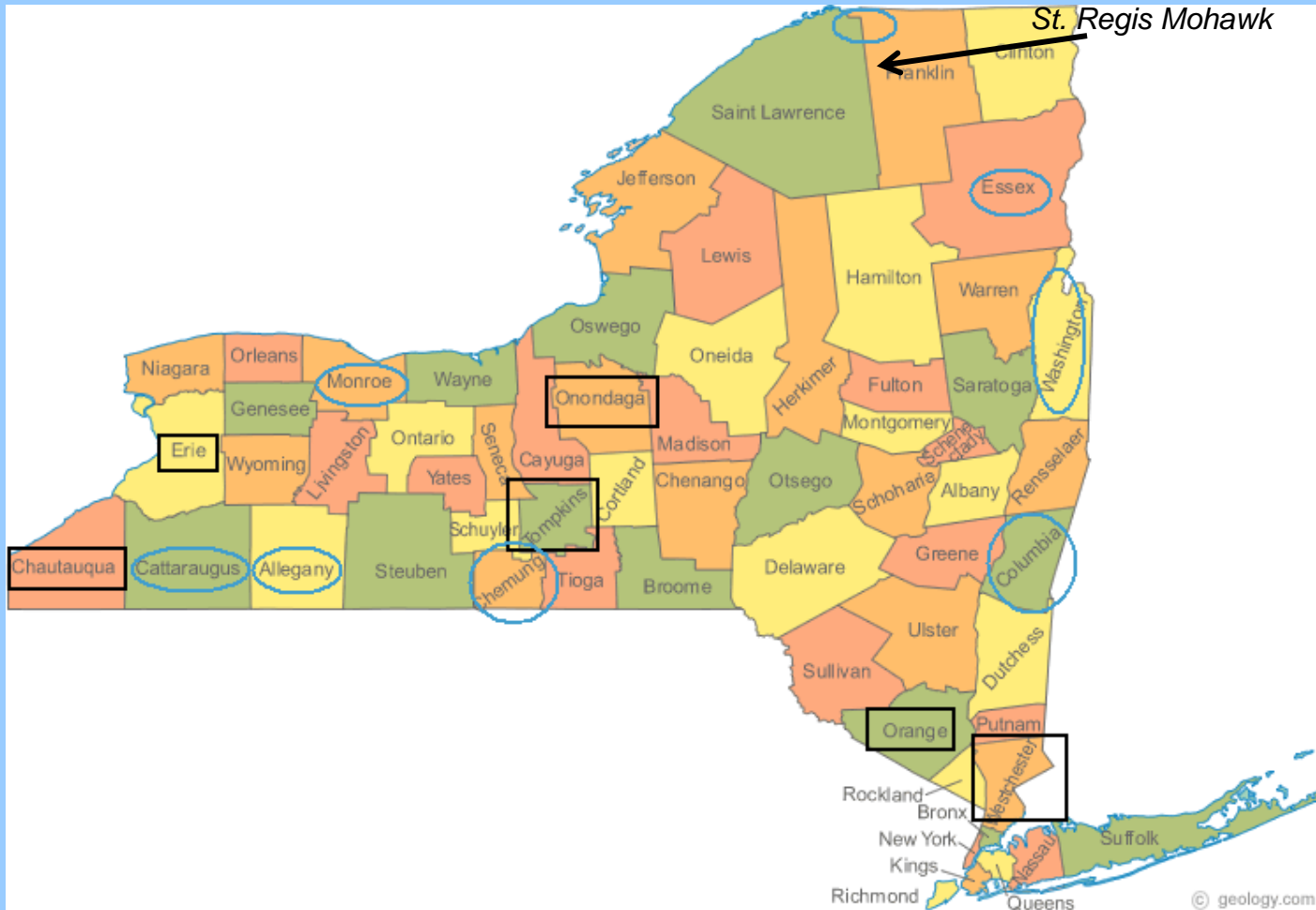
Chautauqua  
Erie  
Onondaga  
Orange  
Tompkins  
Westchester

## Phase 2

Allegany  
Cattaraugus  
Chemung  
Columbia  
Essex  
Monroe  
St. Regis Mohawk  
Washington

## Phase 3

Livingston  
Putnam  
Rensselaer  
Suffolk  
Yates



# FAR Metrics

- To date, over 5000 reports have been tracked to the alternative response
- There is wide variability in the percentage of reports that have been tracked to the alternative response within the participating districts. This variability is expected given each district's initial approach to FAR

# Percentage of CPS reports tracked to FAR

## Round 1 counties 1/09 to 3/2010

<b>Chautauqua County</b>	1st Q, 2009	2nd Q, 2009	3rd Q, 2009	4th Q, 2009	1st Q, 2010	Total
• Total SCR Reports	558	562	518	498	555	2,691
• Number tracked to FAR	18	42	27	26	12	125
• % of FAR Reports to Total	3.2%	7.5%	5.2%	5.2%	2.2%	4.6%
<b>Erie County</b>	1st Q, 2009	2nd Q, 2009	3rd Q, 2009	4th Q, 2009	1st Q, 2010	Total
• Total SCR Reports	2,311	2,394	1,988	2,140	2,530	11,363
• Number tracked to FAR	0	17	25	37	51	130
• % of FAR Reports to Total	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%	1.7%	2.0%	1.1%
<b>Onondaga County</b>	1st Q, 2009	2nd Q, 2009	3rd Q, 2009	4th Q, 2009	1st Q, 2010	Total
• Total SCR Reports	1,337	1,413	1,165	1,266	1,416	6,597
• Number tracked to FAR	166	349	403	466	328	1,712
• % of FAR Reports to Total	12.4%	24.7%	34.6%	36.8%	23.2%	26.0%
<b>Orange County</b>	1st Q, 2009	2nd Q, 2009	3rd Q, 2009	4th Q, 2009	1st Q, 2010	Total
• Total SCR Reports	761	848	643	750	809	3,811
• Number tracked to FAR	326	355	228	281	242	1,432
• % of FAR Reports to Total	42.8%	41.9%	35.5%	37.5%	29.9%	37.6%
<b>Tompkins County</b>	1st Q, 2009	2nd Q, 2009	3rd Q, 2009	4th Q, 2009	1st Q, 2010	Total
• Total SCR Reports	220	241	210	222	226	1,119
• Number tracked to FAR	131	159	127	167	150	734
• % of FAR Reports to Total	59.5%	66.0%	60.5%	75.2%	66.4%	65.6%
<b>Westchester County</b>	1st Q, 2009	2nd Q, 2009	3rd Q, 2009	4th Q, 2009	1st Q, 2010	Total
• Total SCR Reports	1,666	1,688	1,169	1,500	1,718	7,741
• Number tracked to FAR	83	84	18	33	96	314
• % of FAR Reports to Total	5.0%	5.0%	1.5%	2.2%	5.6%	4.1%

# What have we learned so FAR?

- There is widespread interest in this model among local social service districts in NYS
- Doing it well takes time and requires a solid commitment to shifting practice, training and on site coaching
- FAR is not faster...nor a strategy to reduce workload.
- Districts report that FAR workers generally feel very positively about engaging families in the new model
- Families are expressing that they feel respected, listened to and have a voice. The vast majority of families accept the FAR option when it is offered.
- Families appreciate that in most instances they are called first....no surprise knock on the front door

# Taking FAR Statewide

- Make FAR Legislation permanent in 2011
- Regulatory change to allow 65/35 preventive funding to be utilized in FAR
- Align Common Core and other training with FAR practice, build in state capacity for training, technical assistance and coaching
- Full CONNECTIONS support