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## PRESS RELEASE

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# Public Radio report illustrates state foster care system improvements

## *Documentary tells only part of success story, DHS director says*

**Lansing, Mich.** Oct. 31, 2014 – Recent improvements in Michigan’s foster care system are highlighted in a 50-minute Michigan Public Radio documentary that aired Thursday.

While the documentary shows some of the significant progress the state has made, it doesn’t tell the entire story of the impact of reform over the last four years, said Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Maura Corrigan.

“This documentary rightfully notes that Michigan is doing better by our most vulnerable children – and that we still have work to do,” Corrigan said. “But it understates just how far we’ve come and how close we are to meeting all the federal goals for Michigan’s foster care system and the rest of our child welfare system.”

For example, the Michigan Public Radio story notes the state isn’t meeting a federal requirement that in 94.6 percent of cases there be no repeat abuse and neglect of children within six months of Children’s Protective Services substantiating maltreatment. It doesn’t note that Michigan has nearly reached that goal with 93.3 percent of cases not having repeat maltreatment.

The requirements are part of a modified settlement agreement between the state and the federal government that is the result of a 2006 lawsuit regarding the child welfare system filed by the advocacy group Children’s Rights. Corrigan negotiated the modified settlement agreement shortly after becoming DHS director in 2011.

In a U.S. District Court appearance in September, DHS attorney John Bursch noted that Michigan had met or was 95 percent of the way toward meeting more than three-quarters of

requirements in the agreement – setting aside requirements that will be measured by a new child welfare computer system but can't be measured currently. This was for the federal reporting period that ended in December 2013. It does not reflect the most recent improvements to Michigan's child welfare system. Areas in which Michigan had made significant progress included rate and timeliness of adoptions, decreased caseloads and improved staff qualifications and training. Through its juvenile guardianship assistance program, Michigan has also exceeded expectations every reporting period in assisting youth in gaining permanent homes.

The Michigan Public Radio documentary noted that court monitors give a lot of credit to Corrigan for "cleaning things up" in the child welfare system. "The system is providing good – in some cases lifesaving – care for kids, and many say Corrigan has been instrumental in making things better for kids in care," says the Michigan Public Radio report, which also includes an interview with Corrigan describing some of the improvements.

Michigan is looking for loving foster homes. For more information, call 1-855-MICKIDS or go to the [Foster Care Navigators website](#).

[The "Finding a Home" documentary can be found on the Michigan Public Radio website.](#)

**For more information on DHS, please visit [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs).**

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