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**To:** Matthew Gunnip <electgunnip@gmail.com>, mforte@courts.ri.gov, "Novais, Ana (OHHS)" <Ana.P.Novais@ohhs.ri.gov>, "Afonso, Antonio (GOV)" <Antonio.Afonso@governor.ri.gov>, "Almond, Joseph (GOV)" <Joseph.Almond@governor.ri.gov>

**Subject: RE: DCYF Frontline Worker Severely Assaulted**

President Gunnip,

Thank you for your letter regarding this week's horrific assault on a DCYF case worker. The DCYF social case worker is currently at home recovering from multiple injuries she suffered during the assault. I spoke with the employee today and pledged the full commitment of the DCYF team in providing her with support during her recovery.

As you are aware, yesterday we convened an internal meeting to discuss the events that took place on Saturday afternoon. Members of the Union Executive Board took part in this meeting. The employee had accepted an overtime shift in a provider group home for purposes of meeting a mandate to provide one on one supervision for a child in DCYF care. As we discussed at yesterday's meeting, DCYF staff are not trained to provide direct care for children in provider agency facilities. During the incident two youth became physically assaultive to the case worker. Regrettably, the provider staff person did not intervene to assist our case worker. As a result, the case worker was assaulted and sustained multiple injuries, including a head injury.

During our internal meeting yesterday, it was agreed DCYF direct care staff **will not** be assigned to provide supervision to children or youth in a provider facility. In addition, members of the DCYF management team spoke to the contract provider (Family Services of Rhode island) to address the failure of the provider's staff person to intervene in this incident. We will be following up with the provider to ensure that issue gets addressed with their program staff.

As you know, the work of our front line staff at DCYF is challenging and presents with many risks. However, we agree that we can not and will not put our front line case work staff in this situation again. Based on the action steps we discussed yesterday, I am confident that this will prevent a repeat of this type of an event in provider group care facilities.

Sincerely,

Kevin Aucoin  
Acting Director - DCYF