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Informational Letter

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To:	Commissioners of Social Services Executive Directors of Voluntary Authorized Agencies
Issuing Division/Office:	Child Welfare and Community Services
Date:	September 22, 2008
Subject:	Adoption Information Registry - DOH
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Contact Person(s):	Adoption Information Registry
Attachments:	No
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Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
01-OCFS-INF-6			PHL 4138-c and 4138-d Chapter 469 of Laws of 2007		

I. Purpose

The purpose of this release is to inform social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies of statutory changes to the provisions related to the Adoption Information Registry administered by the New York State Department of Health (DOH).

II. Background

New York State Public Health Law (PHL) mandates DOH to establish and maintain the Adoption Information Registry. Through the Adoption Information Registry, a person age 18 and over born and adopted in New York State, a birth parent(s), and the adult biological sibling(s) of an adult adoptee can register to receive non-identifying

information or, with corresponding registration and mutual consents from the parties, can exchange identifying information. The PHL also permits a voluntary authorized agency to maintain a Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry.

Prior to recent amendments to the PHL, only a birth parent whose consent to the adoption or whose signature was required on an instrument of surrender could register with the Adoption Information Registry. Such birth parents could provide medical or psychological information anytime after the adoption of the child was final or, with corresponding registration of the adult adoptee, birth parents could exchange identifying information. Prior to the enactment of Chapter 469 of the Laws of 2007, birth parents whose parental rights were involuntarily terminated could not register or submit information to the Adoption and Medical Information Registry.

III. Program Implications

Chapter 469 of the Laws of 2007, which was effective on November 29, 2007, amended sections 4138-c and 4138-d of the PHL to permit birth parents whose parental rights were involuntarily terminated to register, provide medical and/or identifying information and consent to the release of identifying information to an adult adoptee born and adopted in New York State. These changes pertain to both the Adoption Information Registry maintained by DOH and a Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry maintained by a voluntary authorized agency.

Persons interested in registering with the DOH Adoption Information Registry should use the website www.health.state.ny.us/vital_records/adoption.htm to download an application, or write to:

Adoption Information Registry
New York State Department of Health
PO Box 2602
Albany, New York 12220-2602

There are no fees to register with the DOH Adoption Information Registry. However, the law allows voluntary agencies that maintain a Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry to charge up to \$20 for a registration fee or up to \$50 to provide non-identifying information. The individual receiving the information is responsible for paying the fees. Agencies that maintain a Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry are responsible for providing information regarding the services they provide and any fees associated with those services.

/s/ Laura Velez

Issued By: Laura Velez
Title: Acting Deputy Commissioner
Division: Child Welfare and Community Services