

COUNTIES REMAIN CONSISTENT IN THE APPROPRIATE SCREENING OF REFERRALS FOR INVESTIGATION

In order to better inform policy and practice related to screening of referrals and examine the accuracy of referral acceptance decision making, Colorado’s Administrative Review Division (ARD) created a process to evaluate the child protection screening decisions made by county departments of social or human services in Colorado. Since 2007, this annual “Screen-Out Review” has been held each September.

Each year a stratified random sample of screened-out referrals (based on county of decision) are reviewed by the ARD, CDHS staff and 40-50 staff from county departments of human/social services to determine if the decision to screen out was appropriate. Using the information documented in Trails regarding the referral of interest only, a paired review team completes the review instrument and determines if they agreed with the county’s decision to screen out the referral. The table below shows a summary related to the number of participants and number of reviews completed from 2010-2015.

Summary of the Number of Screen Out Participants and Reviews Completed

	Number of Screened Out Referrals Reviewed	Number of Counties in Attendance	Number of County Participants	Number of State Child Welfare and/or Trails Staff Participants	Number of ARD Reviewers	Total Review Participants
2010	1413	20	39	8	17	64
2011	1495	24	**	**	**	62
2012	1542	22	51	5	17	73
2013	1606	23	44	5	16	65
2014	1712	21	56	5	25	86
2015	1847	19	51	10	28	89

** Information not available

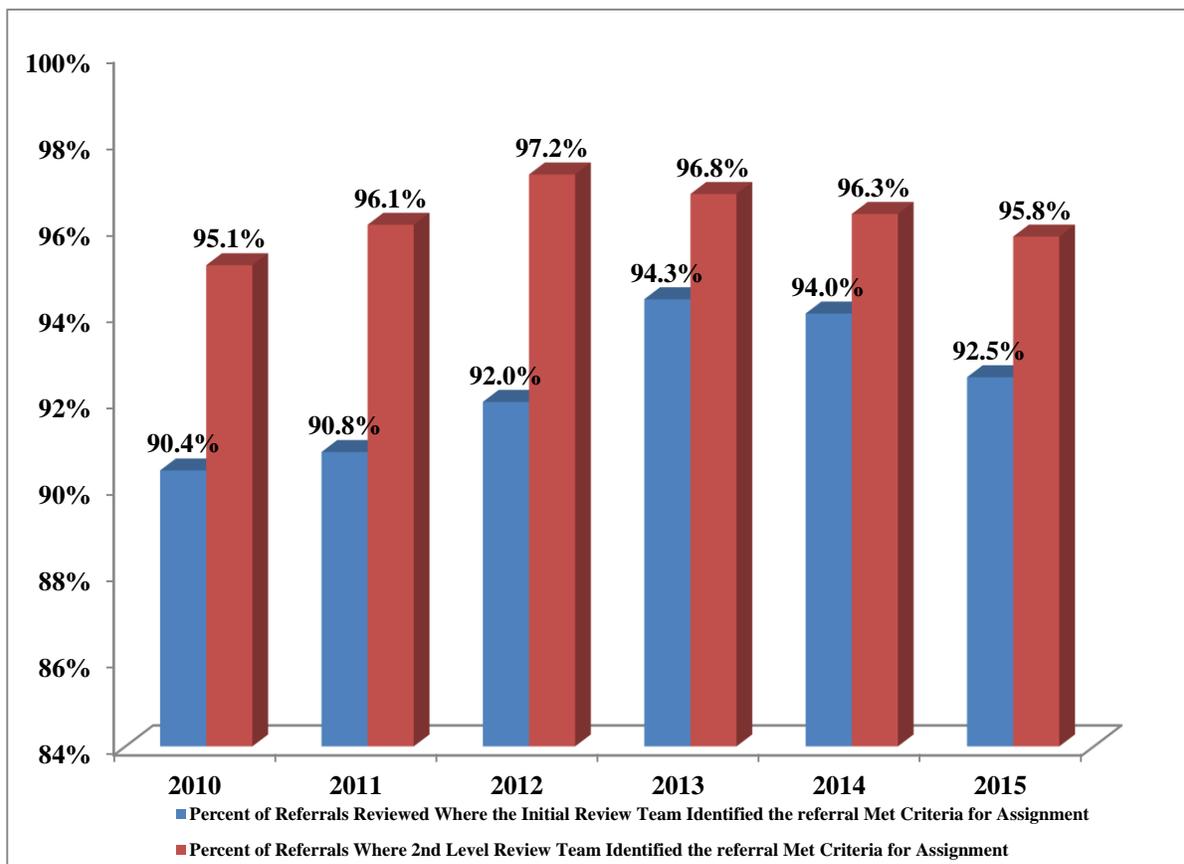
Beginning in 2008, those referrals determined to have met the criteria for assignment after a first-level review, are referred to a second independent team, referred to as the second-level review. This second-level team reviews the referral only for the purposes of answering whether or not they believed it should have been accepted for an assessment and whether or not there were/continue to be safety concerns.

Beginning with the 2013 review, the second-level review involved a full RED (Review, Evaluate, and Direct) Team review process on the referrals reviewed. If child welfare practice concerns and/or current or impending dangers are identified, this information is gathered and sent back to the county departments for information purposes and/or a request for follow-up when appropriate. Additionally, if Trails data issues were found, the information is also given to the counties with a request to clean up the information as necessary.

- Counties remain accurate in their screening of referrals for investigation.
- From 2010 to 2013, the percentage of screened-out referrals where the first-level review agreed with the county decision to screen out the referral improved from **90.4%** to **94.3%**. The 2014 and 2015 reviews showed a slight decrease in performance. In 2015, reviewers agreed with the county decision to screen out referrals **92.5%** of the time.
- Over the past several years, the percentage of screened-out referrals where the second-level review team agreed with the county’s decision reached a high in 2012 of **97.2%**. Results from the 2015 review show agreement at **95.8%**.
- Overall, the Screen Out review has improved county screening practices, and strengthened the partnership between county and state staff in Colorado.

The graph below shows trends related to the first and second level review teams agreement with county screen out practices. The percent of screened-out referrals in which the first-level review team agreed with the county's decision to screen out referrals improved from **90.4%** in 2010 to **94.3%** 2013. During the 2014 review, this trend decreased slightly to **94%** and decreased again in 2015 to **92.5%**. Based on the second level review, which was first used in 2008, the percentage of referrals that were appropriately screened-out increased from **95.1%** in 2010 to **96.8%** in 2013. During the 2014 and 2015 reviews, this trend decreased slightly with the 2015 results showing the second level review team agreed with the county's decision to screen out the referral **95.8%** of the time. Additionally, during the 2011-2013, the second level review team identified that nearly **99%** of referrals did not contain any safety issues. During the 2014 review, this trend decreased slightly, showing that **97%** of the referrals reviewed did not contain concern of current or impending dangers. During the 2015 review, the second level review team identified that nearly **99%** of referrals did not contain any safety concerns.

Percent of Referrals in 'Screen-out Review' in which Review Team Agreed with County's Decision



Source: Administrative Review Division Screen-Out Review Reports.

Notes: The ARD did not hold the Screen-Out review in September 2016.

More information about the Administrative Review Division and the Screen Out Reviews can be found on-line at: <https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdhs-ard/>