§ 446. Statewide automated child welfare information system. (1) The department shall promulgate regulations required to implement federal requirements for the establishment and administration of a statewide automated child welfare information system as required by applicable federal statute and regulation. The regulations shall set forth standards for the timely submission of data elements relating to child welfare services, including foster care, adoption assistance, preventive services, child protective services and other family preservation and family support services.

(2) The statewide automated child welfare information system shall be designed to improve convenience to consumers of services and reduce the administrative burden of child welfare workers of social services districts and their contracted agencies which provide direct services. The statewide automated child welfare information system shall be designed to provide computers to the majority of individual child welfare workers of social services districts and their contracted agencies which provide direct child welfare services, allow such workers and agencies to communicate with and enter information directly into the statewide automated child welfare information system while preparing required documents and eliminate duplicate entry of information and preparation of documents, and allow for direct determination of claims and sanctions. The department shall immediately expand the existing advisory group of consumers, social services districts and their contracted agencies and other persons with expertise in child welfare. The statewide automated child welfare information system shall be designed to permit communication with the family courts and to protect the confidentiality of individuals as prescribed by this chapter.