

# Child abuse expert hired for Philadelphia's DHS

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Mayor Nutter announced Thursday that he had hired a child-abuse expert who has intimate knowledge of Philadelphia's child-welfare system as the city's first medical director of the Department of Human Services.

Cindy W. Christian is director of Safe Place, the Center for Child Protection and Health, at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and is an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

In 2007, Christian was named Pennsylvania Pediatrician of the Year by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Christian was also one of nine members of the DHS Community Oversight Board, created by Mayor John F. Street to monitor DHS after revelations by The Inquirer about children in the agency's care who had died. Among the oversight board's recommendations was the creation of a medical director position.

Christian will help develop policies and health-care systems for children in the child-welfare system.

"Today, DHS is a more accountable place than it has ever been . . . and more focused on child safety," Nutter said at a news conference. He also said more work was needed.

Christian - who said her approach differs from others' in that she has no legal or child-welfare background, just medical experience - will join the administration part-time, remaining on staff at Children's, where she has worked for 25 years. She will be paid \$100,000 annually, half of which will be funded by the state, Nutter said.

"The notion of family is taken for granted," Christian said. But for many children, "it is not nurturing, it is not a place of refuge."

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