

Child Welfare Advisory Committee
June 3, 2021 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM
DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees

Members: Beverly Jones, Zach Schrantz, Andi Durbin, Annetta Wilson, Anthony Riordan, Audrey Anewshki Pennington, Charles Montoria-Archer, Dan Kotowski, Elena Thompson, Harriet Kersh, Jackie Sharp, Jason Keeler, Kara Teeple, Kathy Grzelak, LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro, Malia Arnett, Mary Savage, Monica Badiano, Patricia Ege, Phyllis Summers, Prestina Singleton, Rich Bobby, Rick Velasquez, Tanya Gassenheimer, Toleda Hart, Viviane Ngwa

DCFS: Director Marc Smith, Dagenè Brown, Derek Hobson, Jassen Strokosch, Angela Hassell, Darryl Johnson, Fayette Coleman-Gill, Kevin Walsh, Kimberly Mann, Lori Welcher-Evans, Marla Courts, Monico Whittington-Eskridge, Pedro Mendoza, Royce Kirkpatrick, Sylvia Fonseca, Timothy Snowden, Tracey King, Yolanda Jordan, Alicia Ozier, Amanda Wolfman, Chevelle Bailey, Douglas Washington, Elizabeth Richmond, James Tooles, Janet Ahern, Jason House, Jennifer Marett, Julie Barbosa, Kim Bates, Lynda Petrick, Maria Miller, Michelle Grove, Norma Machay, Ron Krueger, Ronica Patel, Tierney Stutz, Veronica Lewis

Public: Carly Jones, Elke Hansen, Margaret Vimont, Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz, Troy Reeves, Aisha Davis, Amanda Buchanan, Ashley Deckert, Brian Finley, Debra Lewis, Desi Silva, Devin Dittrich, Dora Maya, Emily LeFew, Evelyn Smith, Gina Huff, Heather Goff, Heidi Dalenberg, Jason Jones, John Shadowens, Marci White, Marissa Allen, Michelle Churchey-Mims, Molly Dull, Raul Garza, Ray Rezek, Tiffany Jonson, WICS News Channel 20

Co-Chair Welcome and Report (Zach Schrantz, Beverly Jones)

- Member Roll Call – Completed.
- Approval of February Minutes and FY22 CWAC Meeting Schedule (VOTE) – Beverly Jones motioned for approval of the items as submitted, Viviane Ngwa seconded, no objections. Motion passed.
- Co-chair report – Zach’s term ends 12/31/2021. Solicitations for recommendations are welcome. Hope to make a recommendation to Director Smith by end of 9/2021 to allow time for a smooth transition.

Director’s Report

- The Department put out budget information yesterday. Expectation: allow for provider and community growth. Several committee proposals have also been reviewed and are moving in the right direction.

“Key Issues” Agenda Items

- CWAC Recommendations Process and Mutual Accountability
 - Recommended Framework (LaTasha Roberson) (VOTE) – See the Recommendations Procedure provided via email. Goal: ensure there are clear and actionable recommendations sent to the

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Department, as well as measurable and accountable responses in return. LaTasha walked through the recommended process. Effective date if approved and accepted: 7/1.

- Highlights: Subcommittee chairs to send drafted recommendations to CWAC Co-chairs; CWAC Co-chairs to send drafts to the Director and S.P.I.C.E. within 14 days; S.P.I.C.E. to review and track for input and feedback; the Director to respond to all parties within 90 days; S.P.I.C.E. to update tracking system with decision/rationale; Subcommittee chairs to share responses with committees; Director to update CWAC on accepted recommendations every 180 days, at minimum, until fully implemented.
- Q. Is there a step included for general CWAC members to contribute to the process before recommendations go to the Department? There's an opportunity for any stakeholder to participate in the process through the subcommittees. Any and all CWAC members can attend meetings and it's encouraged. Meeting information gets posted on the DCFS public website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/policy/Pages/default.aspx>.
- Dan Kotowski motioned for approval of the procedure as submitted by LaTasha, Andi Durbin seconded, no objections. Motion passed. Will work to incorporate in CWAC rules and procedure.
- 3/5/21 Prior Recommendations – See the Compiled Recommendations provided via email. They will be the first to be processed by this new procedure. Subcommittee chairs should expect requests for updates/clarification since some are quite old.
- DCFS Budget and Finance
 - FY22 Budget Update (Royce Kirkpatrick) – Appreciate work done at GO and everyone who has helped move this forward. Disclaimers: 1) budget passed but not signed; 2) will go through highlights but details will be reviewed with CWAC FAS; 3) COLA and target investments information is based on long term work done over past two years; 4) COLA mentioned will be based on traditional 3%.
 - Highlights: Performance FC has 3% COLA, includes licensed and unlicensed FPs, as well as targeted investments for supervisor salaries in FY22. Specialized FC and ILO has similar structure. Family Preservation also has 3% COLA and supervisory salary increase. Re: prevention dollars, will have same COLA and supervisory investments as well as paraprofessional dollars. On Residential side, there are three parts: 1) investments to child care workers will be implemented 7/1; 2) 3% COLA; 3) adjustments to caps for supportive occupancy, depending on location.
 - Many members thanked the Department for implementing the much-needed increases.
 - Q. Are any COLAs built into grant-based contracts? No, with exceptions for those working with substance-abuse families.
 - Q. Is there a reason why grant-based contracts are excluded from the process? There was something provided in FY21, but prioritized case management contracts for FY22 due to limited funds.
 - Q. How can members/stakeholders engage in process/development of budget in future? Per the Director, should continue to voice ideas in subcommittees. Can then discuss in CWAC. However, it's beneficial to have separation in requests to legislature and GO. May not always agree on outcome but members/stakeholders should voice any and all recommendations.
 - Q. How does this supervisory rate compare to the supervisory rate that's offered by the Department? Is that a suggested minimum or the total that can be provided? There's an expectation to move the dollars through but it's not a cap; agencies can do whatever they need to. The rate structure and modeling will be further discussed in the workgroup.

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- Q. Re: the supervisory rate, is that just for case worker supervisors or are licensing supervisors also included? Specific to case load ratios so targets case worker supervisors.
 - Q. When will the Department address allowance and clothing allowance for YIC? The COLAs apply toward those costs and have for the last three years.
 - Q. Re: occupancy, will there be a summary? Will discuss at CWAC FAS but will also see in contracts that they vary by location.
 - FY22 Contracts (Doug Washington) – Pending items: 1) budget approval; 2) rate review with Contract Administration; 3) updates/revisions to several program plans plus introduction to new programs. Working to get contracts out this month, hopefully within two weeks. Note that contracts with current funding are prioritized. Should also pay attention to the cover letter, which will have information re: the LGBTQIA+ community. Due to the ongoing pandemic, will go out and should come back via email. Thanked all providers for their commitment and efforts. Contact Doug with any questions, Douglas.Washington@illinois.gov.
 - Rate Methodology (Jassen Strokosch) – The Department recognizes that a formal process for predictability is needed. There's a commitment from the GO and GOMB to review how rates are set and develop a new methodology. Will work over next few months to pull a group together. **Ask to CWAC:** provide recommendations on how CWAC and the private sector can be represented in the process.
 - Suggestions: move to value-based contracting to align with positive outcomes for youth and families; establish a baseline that significantly higher.
 - To start, CWAC will review recommendations made 6-7 years ago in relation to this.
- Workforce Crisis (Monico Whittington-Eskridge, LaTasha Roberson)
 - Waiver and Credential Recommendations
 - Reviewed several procedures. Policy guides were drafted and distributed to community providers on 5/28. Comments were requested by 6/4. Accepted recommendations to become effective 7/1.
 - Highlights: Majority agreed to lower the requirement of bachelor's degree and number of years that would be acceptable. Looking to add the most waived areas to the Procedures 401 Appendix G list.
 - Ad Hoc Workforce Crisis Recommendations (forthcoming)
 - Purpose of ad hoc: develop actionable and measurable recommendations around workforce stability, equitable compensation, hiring and retention methodologies, ways to strengthen the public/private CW partnership.
 - Made 18 recommendations. Highlights: address turnover and competition reduction among public and private partners; pay disparities; sustainable and responsive rate setting methodology; credentialing and qualification advancements; past criminal history waivers.
 - Next steps: Subcommittee co-chairs to meet by 6/18 to expedite.

Racial Equity

- Progress and Ad Hoc Workgroup (Andi Durbin, Tanya Gassenheimer)
 - Progress made re: diversity in CWAC membership. However, more work is needed. Charles Montoria-Archer and Toleda Hart were asked to chair an ad hoc group to compile and update previous ideas and recommendations. Beverly Jones will assist.
 - Legislation: HB3100 and HB2914. HB3100 will require implicit bias be incorporated in the training curriculum for mandated reporters. Noted that only 11% of calls made by educators ended up

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founded. HB2914 will ask DCFS to produce an annual report on racial disparities throughout the CW system. Requirement: a state university research center must set up. Will negotiate how to collect data and metrics details.

- HB3821 will create a Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare Statewide Task Force. To convene for one year to provide policy recommendations. Goal: investigate what brings families into the system; what's keeping them there; why there's racial disproportionality, especially in black communities, at every phase of system involvement. Stakeholders will include state agencies, the Department, parents and youth impacted by the system. Anticipate ICOY and Trevor to co-chair.
- Note: Dagenè Brown is new DCFS co-chair for CWAC Racial Equity subcommittee.
- The Department is preparing to roll out Implicit Bias Training through the Kirwan Institute by next week. An announcement will be made once ready. Although HB3100 is specific to case workers, it's been prepared and will roll out for all.
 - Suggestions: include information on risks of harm when making a hotline call, in addition to harms of the process and removal; survey after taking the training: what would you do differently, how will you utilize this.
- Discussion and Prioritization of Prior Recommendations (Beverly Jones) – See the Racial Equity Call to Action provided via email.
 - Six total recommendations. **Ask to CWAC:** review and provide feedback on prioritization.
 - Q. Re: #7, what's the intention? The goal is to investigate impact and how to change it.
 - Q. Re: #6, is something missing at the end? Yes, there's a formatting error; #7 and #8 are continuations.
 - Q. Re: #8, is it broad enough to incorporate a guide or similar process to help people be attune to their biases during decision making? Yes, and want to look at all policies, practices and processes.
 - Suggestions: look at racial bias and impact on youth in hospital settings in addition to the legal system; review available data, which Julie Barbosa can assist with.
 - Racial equity should involve all subcommittees and not be tackled by the CWAC Racial Equity subcommittee alone. It should also be a standing item on the full CWAC agenda.

Committee reports [1.54.22]

- COVID-19 Next Steps (Derek Hobson)
 - Next meeting: tomorrow, 6/4. Agenda: visitation practice and polies since they're due to expire; GO HR contact will expand on phase 5; efforts to get to back "business as usual" in the office.
 - Guidance has been disseminated on vaccinating youth over 5yo. Will also be looking at barriers to vaccinations, including timely consents. Also looking to do group-vaccination events in partnership with various agencies; information is forthcoming if not already disseminated. For requests to vaccinate in groups at individual sites, email DCFS.CLINICALCOVID19@illinois.gov.
 - Working with OITS to upload YIC vaccination records. Everything should be tracked and monitored for our youth. All are encouraged to stay informed on COVID-19 data. Should also contact the DCFS Guardian and Medical Director re: dynamics of vaccinating YIC.
 - **Ask to Department:** share any and all information that can be distributed to help alleviate fears re: the vaccine.
 - Q. Is there an expectation to do full visits now? If not, will this be modified when the state fully opens on 6/11? The Department is moving in that direction but currently still in hybrid mode. Re: state reopening, will be discussed at tomorrow's meeting. There are nuances to consider before going back to full visitation.

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- Q. Will there be information/guidance re: returning to the office fulltime? Or will that be the agency's decision? CMS and GO currently negotiating return-to-office with AFSCME. Until the formal MOU has been negotiated, the Department can't mandate nor discuss returning to the office fulltime for any agency.
- Intact Family (Kathy Grzelak) – No updates to report since there's been no formal meeting for last 4-5 months. Have been working to onboard Lori.
- Permanency (Tim Snowden, Dagenè Brown) – Report on facilitated discussions re: lessons learned from the pandemic.
 - Met twice and planning to meet again. Developed recommendations on datasets to review. Datasets are separate pre- vs during pandemic. Includes: client contact; in-person vs video contact comparison; re-entry after six-month period; worker changes; maltreatment. Tim will share with this group.
 - Would like to recognize work being done by CWAC Reunification. **Their ask:** need someone from DCP. Per Tim, currently underway to identify.

Public Comments

- Insurance is becoming an issue. Many don't want to work with agencies. Note that high caseload ratios contribute to risk.
- Re: pay rates, it's hard for residential centers to compete with even fast food chains/restaurants.

Closing Remarks from Director Smith – Everyone's hard work is appreciated. The Department acknowledges the frustrations on pay rates and other issues mentioned and is committed to identify and implement solutions. Also working to better serve the LGBTQIA+ YIC and community.

Next meeting: August 19, 2021 1:00 PM-3:30 PM. Location TBD.

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