

Child Welfare Advisory Committee
August 13, 2020 1:00 PM-3:30 PM
MINUTES

Attendees

Members: Trish Fox, Zach Schrantz, Andi Durbin, Beverly Jones, Brian Finley, Christopher Cox, Dan Kotowski, Harriet Kersh, Jason Keeler, Kara Teeple, Kathy Grzelak, Melissa Ludington, Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz, Nancy Hughes, Raul Garza, Rich Bobby, Jere Murry for Ruth Jajko, Tiffany Jones, Toleda Hart, Viviane Ngwa

DCFS: Director Marc Smith, Dagenè Brown, Derek Hobson, Desi Silva, Jassen Strokosch, Ashley Deckert, Darryl Johnson, Deborah Kennedy, Elizabeth Richmond, Gaylon Alcaez, Hope Carbonaro, James Daugherty, Kevin Walsh, Kimberly Mann, Lori Gray, Michelle Jackson, Monito Whittington-Eskridge, Robert Blackwell, Royce Kirkpatrick, Sylvia Fonseca, Alicia Ozier, Amanda Wolfman, Angela Harris, Anika Todd, Daniel Fitzgerald, Douglas Washington, George Vennikandam, James Tooles, Jamie Dornfeld, Janet Ahern, Jeremy Harvey, Jill Tichenor, Julie Barbosa, Maria Miller, Marnita Martin-Harris, Michelle Grove, Tierney Stutz, Tracey King, Trish Cox, William McCaffrey, Yesenia Perez

Public: Elke Hansen, LaTasha Roberson, Margaret Vimont, Mitchell Sandy, Bridget Walls, Charles Montario, Hillery Morris, Kacy Anderson, Marci White, Michelle Churchey-Mims

Welcome and Introductions – 1:00-1:10

- Completed roll call for members and committee chairs.
- Trish Fox requested motion for approval of May 14th minutes. Chris Cox motioned, Melissa Ludington seconded, no objections. Motion passed.

Director's Report – 1:10-1:30

- Thanked DCFS and POS teams and partners, including those that take part in the CWAC subcommittees, for all efforts during crisis.
- Stressed importance of hiring staff to prepare for anticipated influx of cases. DCFS is taking aggressive hiring steps to maintain appropriate case load ratios and adequately serve clients.
- An AT was distributed to announce the return of in-person visitation. The expectation for the Department is to maintain the safety of children and families, which includes seeing and interviewing them in person.

Agenda Items – 1:30-2:30

- Update on DCFS organizational changes – Director Smith
 - Some leadership mentions: Derek Hobson as the Chief Deputy Director • Jassen Strokosch as the current Chief of Staff • Michelle Jackson has accepted the role of Chief Deputy Director of Clinical and Child Services • Ashley Deckert as the Deputy Director of Child Services • William “Bill” McCaffrey as

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the new Deputy Director of Communications • Julie Barbosa as the Chief Deputy Director of Strategy and Performance Execution • Marnita Martin-Harris as the new Acting Deputy Director of Child Protection.

- The goal of restructuring is to improve cooperation by ensuring operational teams are communicating properly. An updated org chart will be posted on the DCFS public website.
- Q. What changes to key interfaces should POS take note of? Much of the realignment that was done is related to operations. Some elaboration on duties: Ashley's residential monitoring responsibilities transitioned with her to Child Services, including high-end resource development • Deputy Director Alicia Ozier is over both clinical and matching teams, including psychologists, the medical director and nursing • APT, which is currently part of a team under Jassen, is being realigned under Operations.
- YouthCare/Manage Care Transition – Jamie Dornfeld
 - The transition is set to occur on September 1st, and a letter announcing this date has been mailed out. The continuity of care period has been extended to February 21, 2021.
 - YouthCare is still conducting screenings, which are currently being completed in batches by agency or case worker.
 - Reminder letters will be going out today. Their focus: 1) YouthCare will be mailing out enrollment packets and member IDs next week; 2) Provides instructions to youth and families on what to do if they haven't received the information by August 26th; 3) Provides additional information on the role of the Advocacy Office. Information can also be found on the DCFS public website.
 - YouthCare has also started texting members, along with sending letters, emails and faxes to provider offices as a reminder of their participation in the provider network. They're also offering trainings for agencies that begin today. Over 22 provider orientation webinars have been scheduled.
 - About 3,000 DCFS, POS and YouthCare staff have completed training that started in February. DCFS has also started offering refresher trainings via webinar a few weeks ago. They will continue through August and plan to set up more after the transition.
 - Contact the Advocacy Office with any issues or concerns re: providers and plan changes. Any concerns/complaints YouthCare receives are also shared with the Advocacy Office. A joint resolution team made up of DCFS, HFS and YouthCare members has been established to address issues.
 - Q. What are the expectations for financial responsibility in foster care re: behavioral health services? There aren't enough funds in traditional rates for double-dipping, and residential is already carved out. It's more of a spec foster care issue. There is a joint meeting between CWAC FAS and CWAC FC scheduled next week to further discuss and develop a guide.
 - Q. Does each person need to register to be able to bill within residential? Jamie will follow-up and confirm. The information will be provided to Ashley Deckert so she can share it with all providers.
 - Q. How is the transition going for former youth in care? It's going well after identifying and resolving some issues.
- PIP Update – Julie Barbosa
 - The first draft of the PIP plan was submitted July 13th to the CB.
 - Feedback has been already been received. The CB wants specific details about the plan, including information on unlicensed HMR supports to reduce frequency of maltreatment, more sources/feedback from birth parents on CQI process, implementation of core practice model.
 - Deadline to resubmit: August 24th. Will move toward implementation if/when approved.
- Youth Team Apps – James Daugherty

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- The app taps into several needs: 1) youth not being seen by mandated reporters; 2) provide youth in foster care with a better sense of belonging; 3) current youth in care are very comfortable using technology. It will be made available to youth and case workers via phone. Allows an exchange of text messages, as well as phone and video calls.
- The case worker can create a “team” by using email addresses to send an invite. Invites go to youth and supervisors, as well as other “Support Members”. These members must be able to support the youth in the form of mentoring, guidance, protection, growth, etc. Examples: siblings, counselors, foster parents. The youth can communicate with members 1:1 or in a group. “Associated Contacts” can also be added to the team, but the youth will not be able to contact them directly and vice versa.
- Meetings can be scheduled by the case worker via the app calendar, which is also available to the youth for viewing. Text messages can be changed and/or deleted from feeds after sending. However, all messages are recorded permanently for legal reasons. Deleted messages that are a cause for concern can be accessed, but the process is complicated.
- Currently developing a “panic button” for youth that will immediately contact the hotline.
- Q. Will there be a connection between this app and SACWIS? Yes, there’s a limited connection for the contacts list. Working with Operations re: how many details to include.
- Q. If POS agencies are already using Teams, can they use their current account; or do they have to go through DCFS? Right now, anticipate having to go through a DCFS account.
- Q. Can you clarify the confidentiality aspect re: deleting a message? There is a golden copy of everything that’s recorded and encrypted on a server in the background. These copies cannot be accessed by anyone without going through the proper steps and approvals.
- Q. What discussions have taken place re: expectations for staff to monitor the app? Current discussions include no monitoring required after 5pm. That’s why the panic button is being developed.
- Q. Will there be a training manual/guide for youth re: expectations? Yes, currently working on something for workers and youth.
- Additional questions can be emailed to Jim, James.Daugherty@illinois.gov.
- Upcoming School Year Expectations for K-12 Education – Janet Ahern
 - The IT re: education only applies to 7-17 y/o, school-age kids. It doesn’t address pre-school or additional child care. However, the department is working on additional policies and funding for foster parents who work and care for youth that don’t go to school.
 - Options: remote vs hybrid. Foster parents can make the decision in conjunction with case workers.
 - More home-schooling requests have been received this year. These will be vetted by the Office of Education based on criteria, and exceptions will only be made for the 2020-21 school year due to COVID-19. A few have already been approved.
 - Kevin Walsh is currently the interim Deputy Director for the Office of Education. This office is also handing Chromebook requests.
 - Changes to the NIU contract to help support the field are also underway.
 - Q. Are birth parents involved in the child’s return options? The decision is up to the case worker and foster parent, but the Guardians Office continually supports their involvement.
- The Child Welfare System through a Racial Equity Lens – Zack Schrantz
 - **Asking all CWAC subcommittees** to add this topic to the agenda for your upcoming meeting and make recommendations: Look at the committee’s work through a racial equity lens. What’s the impact to policy, practice and resources? ICOY has also been compiling recommendations to help improve the system. Be ready for discussion at next full CWAC meeting in November.

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- Q. Will this also help inform re: diversity of the greater CWAC membership to reflect the clients we serve? This is a good point. Currently working to be more intentional in making diverse recommendations.
- Finance Update – Royce Kirkpatrick, Doug Washington, Jeremy Harvey
 - Budget – Appropriations are in good shape, but there’s concern re: cash position for children services fund. The fundamentals behind IV-E claims aren’t healthy. Funds need to be in a strong position moving into calendar year 2021. Focused on three pieces for federal claims: 1) foster care eligibility; 2) IV-E foster care candidacy; 3) POS HMR licensure. Currently having issues getting the income form in, which is the resolution to eligibility determination issues. A six-page PDF was distributed to provide resources for teams. **Next steps:** each agency will get a variance report starting next week re: specific case information that’s still missing; each agency needs to identify a point of contact for follow-up. If an agency needs to schedule a training, especially for supervisors, email DCFS.FAMILYCOMPOSITION-INITIALFAMILYFINDING-HOUSEHOLDINCOME@Illinois.gov.
 - **Recommendation:** Send correspondence to agency president to give it the proper attention and priority status.
 - Contract Related Updates – For FY21, 310 of 357 total contracts re: youth in care and substitute care have been sent out to providers. 293 of 310 have been returned to central office in Springfield, with 256 in payable status by the comptroller’s office. 43 of 357 are IFS, with 42 returned to central office. 10 group home contracts were sent out, with 9 returned to central office, and 7 in payable status. The number doesn’t include out-of-state institutions and Medicaid carveouts for residential.
 - Program Plans FY22 – Discussions re: FY22 revisions should be taking place. All changes need to be submitted to central office by the end of December 2020. Target dates for contract planning will be provided to leadership within the next 30 days.
 - **Recommendation:** The co-chairs to the CWAC subcommittees that review programs plans should add this topic to the agenda for their upcoming meeting.
 - Daycare Eligibility – DCFS looking to collaborate with POS to plan for upcoming Fall school term. DCFS will be keeping eligibility at current criteria and no major changes expected. Re-determination should be simple if there are no changes in status.
 - Q. Is the department looking to expand eligibility? The department is still working to address possible issues and ensure funding is in place. Need to work in conjunction with the several different return-to-school plans across the state.
 - Capital Improvement Grant – The grant went live last Friday afternoon. It’s a competitive grant with a 45-day window opportunity. Anticipate awarding \$800K total in round one, with an individual award ceiling of \$200K. A technical assistance session for potential applicants is scheduled for August 14th. WebEx information will be emailed, but it can also be found in the NOFO. A public forum will be available on the DCFS public website throughout the entire 45-day window. Additional questions can be emailed to Jeremy, Jeremy.Harvey@illinois.gov.

Committee reports – 2:30-3:30

- COVID-19 Ad-Hoc (Zack Schrantz, Trish Fox)
 - Meet every two weeks to brainstorm and problem-solve issues related to COVID-19. Decided to add all DCFS and POS CWAC subcommittee co-chairs to the group. Can bring any concerns arising in respective subcommittees to the table for discussion.
 - Next meeting: August 21st.
- Residential/Transitional and Independence (Chris Cox, Ashley Deckert)

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- Last met on July 30th. Discussed shared vision and group's purpose. Working on a vision statement to present at meeting in August. Will focus on family findings and building capacity across the state, as well as diversity, equity and inclusion. If anyone wants to join the discussion, contact Chris Cox or Ashley Deckert.
- Will meet monthly.
- Foster Care (Rich Bobby, Lori Gray)
 - Met with Elke and Robert to discuss racial equity. Ideas and feedback will be incorporated in the subcommittee and workgroups. Will task each workgroup to look at discussion through racial equity lens.
 - Continuing to review and address the 14-point recommendations.
 - Discussing programs plans for FY22. Goal: have recommendations by October 1st. If anyone is interested in joining the HMR program plan discussion group, contact Lori Gray.
 - Also discussing overarching goal for systemic change. Includes tasking workgroups to address those problems.
- Workforce (Beverly Jones, Monico Whittington)
 - Last met on July 24th. Eight new members have joined. Had open discussions re: focus for the fiscal year. Top two issues identified are related to recruitment and retention, specifically paperwork redundancies, compensation, COA degree requirements, on-going training and support.
 - A pilot has been approved for a Title IV-E Stipend program. Working with five universities. Looking to attract POS candidates. Reimbursement would be one year of payment with 18 months of service at a POS agency, and limited to tuition, books and fees.
 - Plan to meet monthly, especially to discuss expanding the COA degree requirements.
- Racial Equity Practice (Elke Hansen, Bob Blackwell)
 - Salute efforts of CWAC leadership and subcommittees re: racial equity decisions.
 - Approval has been received re: the equity practice pilot and will be moving forward with Jane Addams. A plan will be submitted to Director Smith by September 7th.
 - Facilitating racial equity dialogues statewide. Scheduled joint meeting between CWAC Racial Equity Practice subcommittee and the Illinois Family Equity Practice workgroup on August 18th to bring more people together.
 - Q. Has there been an assessment on the private sector re: work being done? Not aware of an official SCAN, but there are several POS that have intentionally taken up this issue.
- System of Care (Pat Ege, Michelle Jackson)
 - Will have a more detailed report after meeting on August 25th.

Next meeting: November 12, 2020 1:00 PM-3:30 PM. Location TBD.

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