

**Meeting of the  
Illinois Adoption Advisory Council  
Chicago Marriott Suites Downers Grove  
1500 Opus Place, Downers Grove, Illinois  
February 7, 2020  
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
MINUTES**

<b>AAC Members Present</b>	<b>AAC Members Absent</b>	<b>Guests</b>	<b>DCFS Staff</b>
Kathleen Bush	Crystal Rekart	Julee Borland	Barbara Crandall
Keely Giles	Danny Tolliver, Jr.	Junie Dornfell	Jason Cummins
Beth Hunter	Karen Wardlaw	Katie Friend	Gwenn Eyer
Laurel Meade	Jeremy Wheeler	Kristen Hernandez	Jen Florent
Natalie Miller		Tracy Johnson	Sylvia Fonseca
Maripat Oliver		Linda Kelly	Michelle Grove
Elizabeth Richmond		Jeanette Orlove	Kelly King
Danielle Sanders		Marty Orlove	Norma Machay
Cara Siebert		Gary Pate	Anika Todd
Brittney Sprouse		Lauren Paluto	
Karen Taylor		Samantha Santo	
Amy Trotter		Lakisha Watts	
Mark Werner			
Linda White			
Julie Yelverton			

**Welcome and Introductions –**

IAAC Chairperson Elizabeth Richmond welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:05 a.m. and council members and guests introduced themselves.

**Approval of November 8, 2019 IAAC Meeting Minutes - Council**

*Amy Trotter made the motion to approve the minutes from the November 8, 2019 IAAC meeting. Beth Hunter seconded, and the motion carried.*

**Newsletter**

**Council**

The council discussed submitting a recommendation to the Director to reinstate the *Illinois Families Now & Forever* newsletter. In the past, the newsletter was used as the primary channel to disseminate information to foster and adoptive families. It is a vital way to communicate with caregivers statewide. The recommendation will explain the importance of the newsletter and ask for someone to be appointed to that position. **Maripat Oliver made the motion to send the recommendation to reinstate the newsletter to the Director. Kathleen Bush seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**Access to Past Minutes**

**Michelle Grove**

Gwenn Eyer reported that past agendas, minutes, and other support documents are regularly posted on the DCFS external website at [www2.illinois.gov/dcfs](http://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs). Jen Florent, Communications,

suggested that the easiest way to get to the information is to go to the DCFS website, click on About Us, then Boards and Advisory Groups. That page lists all groups the department is involved in. From there you can click on the IAAC link to be directed to the council pages with the minutes, agendas, etc.

### **Adoption Celebration Planning**

### **Council**

The discussion was tabled until the March meeting so that the committee chair may participate.

### **Accessing DHS DDD Services for Adopted Youth**

### **Linda Kelly, Julee Borland**

Guardianship is needed when a person is unable to make and communicate responsible decisions regarding his or her personal care of finances due to a mental, physical or developmental disability. The extent to which a guardian may make decisions for a ward is determined by the court, based on a thorough clinical evaluation and report. The Illinois Probate Act gives the court the flexibility to tailor guardianship to meet the needs and capabilities of disabled persons.

Julee reported that The Interagency Agreement between DCFS, DHS and the Office of the State Guardian gives kids in care the opportunity of beginning the eligibility process at age 17-1/2, with the possibility of getting adult Division of Developmental Disability services as early as age 18. It also provides guaranteed funding after locating an adult provider. She talked about who is likely to be eligible for DDD services, i.e., consistent intellectual disability diagnosis and related deficits in functioning, and services available to someone who might not qualify, i.e., services through DHS Division of Mental Health, Office of Rehab Services.

Youth who have been adopted or have subsidized guardianship are not eligible for that coverage. Julee noted that at one point, many years ago, youth who were adopted or had sub-guardianship could be added to the Transition List and get the same advantages that kids in care get but that stopped when the DDD ruled that they are no longer eligible.

A handout was distributed to show the difference between accessing services through the Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities and the legal process of getting an Adult Guardian through probate court. The tip sheet is posted online at [www2.illinois.gov/sites/gac/OSG/Pages/Guardianship-Fact-sheet.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/sites/gac/OSG/Pages/Guardianship-Fact-sheet.aspx).

Basic steps include the following:

- Meet with an Independent Service Coordination Agency (ISC) if you are interested in community-based services. They can link directly to Intermediate Care Facilities for People with Developmental disabilities and enroll you in the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) database, the waiting list, to learn more about possible services.
- Search the DHS office locator for the ISC agency closest to you.
- Click on providers by service type to view a list of currently enrolled DD provides and their contact information.
- Search the Capacity Management Application to find provider vacancies based on your location.
- Utilize the Resource Library for Customers which offers helpful information to help you in day-to-day situations.

*Keeley made the motion to send a recommendation to DHS to have youth that have been adopted or in sub-guardianship be added to the Transition List and be allowed the same advantages that kids in care receive. Natalie seconded and the motion carried.*

### **Managed Care Services for Adopted Children**

**Tracy Johnson, Rachel Hoyt,  
Kristine Herman**

Tracy reported that it had been a very busy week with the managed care roll-out for former youth in care. She noted that there has been a change in management and YouthCare will no longer be associated with IlliniCare, because of a change in their corporate structure. She stated that all the original coverage and supports are still available, but agreements will move away from IlliniCare. Tracy said that DCFS, HFS and YouthCare have been working long hours and weekends to address issues as they arise. One problem is that some systems showed that coverage had dropped for a short period of time. They are still working to add and update agreements with providers. Tracy encouraged council members to continue to follow up.

Discussion:

- Pharmacy refills are an issue.
- Membership cards have not been received.
- The IL Medicaid number should pull up the provisions.
- YouthCare is behind in gathering the initial screening information.
- DCFS retains consent for psychotropic medications.
- Communication is via robocall in some instances, which puts people off.
- One person reported that after gathering information for several minutes, the call needed to be postponed and the YouthCare caller said that there was no way to save the previously gathered information.
- Incentives, including school uniforms and after school care, are available when completing health risk screenings and the annual well-child visit.
- My Health Pays cards reward healthy behavior.
- There were some concerns with some who thought they had opted out of coverage through YouthCare.
- You may change PCP at any time.
- Private pay insurance comes in first.
- Some doctors will not see youth without membership cards in hand.
- One council member noted that when Anika at DCFS was contacted the issue was resolved in a timely manner.
- A council member asked about the provision
- Call 844-289-2264 with questions and concerns.

### **Legislation Update**

There was no legislative report since they are currently in session.

### **Statewide Adoption Update - Sylvia Fonseca and Kelly King**

Sylvia distributed the post-adoption magnets and reported on meetings being held throughout the state. Kelly reported that she is in the process of updating the post adoption book. She also said that some Adoption Support and Preservation therapists and therapist supervisors will be going

to the Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training in April, so following the training someone at each agency will be trained in TBRI.

### **Recruitment**

### **Katie Friend**

Katie indicated that recruitment is key issue. She noted that they are always in need of resource families, and youth in the 8-17 age group are typically the hardest to place. They are still managing the 800 number for families and adults interested in adoption and foster care. She acknowledged that there must be some improvement in customer service, specifically the initial phone call/contact. Customer service surveys are actively used to identify areas for improvement. Staff must be cognizant about explaining the fostering and licensing process. They must stress that an individual must be a licensed foster parent before adoption and that an individual is not licensed for a specific child. If an individual contacts the office and expresses interest in a specific child, they are not necessarily referred to the agency that is servicing the child. Confidentiality plays a major role in this process. Recently, there was a meeting with ACR staff in Cook County regarding placing more children on the Adoption List. There was discussion about specifically licensing individuals to be an adoption-specific family.

***Motion: Natalie Miller made a motion for DCFS to contract with an agency to provide home assessment and licensing services to families interested in waiting children or the adoption of children and youth likely to be in the need of an adoptive resource. This agency should also be contracted to help families obtain the skills and training required to parent typically waiting children. The motion was seconded by Beth Hunter and the motion carried unanimously.***

### **Midwest Adoption Center**

### **LaKisha Watts**

LaKisha reported that the Midwest Adoption Center is contracted through DCFS to provide foster and post adoptive services locating birth families of adoptive and former youth in care. No identifying information is provided to the birth family without consent. Midwest Adoption Center also provides these services to birth relatives and birth relatives professional representatives. Individuals may receive closed file and search services information in certain circumstances. Adult adoptees, birth parents, birth relatives, caseworkers all can access and request services from Midwest Adoption Center. Information that can be disclosed includes a description of why DCFS became involved and basic ID information. Former youth-in-care receive redacted file information. Current DCFS clients must complete a formal request for services. Forms are available and can be completed online. There is no longer a fee for services. Services are totally funded through DCFS. Midwest Adoption Center is located at 2860 South River Road in Des Plaines, Illinois, 60118. Phone numbers: 847-298-9096.

### **Office of Caregiver and Parent Support Update Michelle Grove**

Michelle reported that correspondence should now go through the official IAAC mailbox. She indicated that several staff have access to the mailbox for follow up. She also discussed the CWAC LGBTQI Diversity and Inclusion subcommittee established to identify, assess and design sustainable implementation strategies for policy, practice and systemic changes which are affirming and inclusive for LGBTQI youth, their parents/guardians, substitute caregivers, and staff engaged in the Illinois child welfare system. There still may be openings for foster parents on this committee and phone participation is an option.

### **Adoption Tax Credit**

### **Elizabeth Richmond**

Elizabeth distributed information regarding the 2019 Adoption Tax Credit resource from the North American Council on Adoptable Children.

### **Bylaws**

**Mark Werner**

Mark presented the bylaws revisions for the second reading.

***Motion: Natalie Miller made the motion to approve the bylaws as revised. Seconded by Julie Yelerton and the motion carried.***

### **Nominating Committee**

**Mark Werner**

Mark reported that there are three openings in Cook. There are also two at large adoptive parent openings. Kathleen Bush is the only person going off the council after a 6-year tenure. Mark indicated that Amy Trotter's position has been switched from adoption professional to adoptive. A question was posed about how the IAAC actively recruits. It was determined that the IACC benefited in the past from the use of the newsletter regarding information of council vacancies and recruitment efforts. Additionally, the SWFCAC and their active subcommittees have been as source of recruitment. Contact through and with the Regional Administrators is also a key component and Michelle Grove indicated her Office of Parent and Caregiver Support receives applications from individuals and from the Regional Administrators.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **Stakeholder Comment**

None

### **Plan for Next Meeting:**

### **Adjourn**

***Motion: Danielle Sanders made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cara Siebert seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.***

**Next Meeting:** March 6, 2020 Joint meeting with SWFCAC  
Doubletree Hotel, 10 Brickyard Drive, Bloomington, Illinois

### **Agenda Items:**

QIC

Adoption Celebration

New licensing standards

Youth Care and DHS presentation

Tuning into Teens

NTDC

Update from the Guardian

Update from the Legislative Office.