

**Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Minutes
Friday, October 4, 2019
Crowne Plaza Lombard Downers Grove, 1250 Roosevelt Rd. Glen Ellyn, IL
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Absent	Guests	DCFS Staff
Natalie Miller	Kathleen Bush	Terry McGlothlin	Therese Burton
Elizabeth Richmond	Alice Couch		Barb Crandall
Cara Siebert	Keely Giles		Gwenn Eyer
Brittney Sprouse	Beth Hunter		Jen Florent
Amy Trotter	Maripat Oliver		Sylvia Fonseca
Mark Werner	Crystal Rekart		Darryl Johnson
Jeremy Wheeler	Keisha Robinson		Kelly King
Julie Yelverton	Danielle Sanders		Donna Lindemulder
	Karen Taylor		Karen Moredock
	Danny Tolliver, Jr.		Stefanie Polacheck
	Karen Wardlaw		Anika Todd
	Linda White		

Welcome and Introductions –Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:03 a.m. The council did some preliminary work on the Adoption Celebration workshop that was scheduled later in the agenda.

Approval of September 6, 2019 IAAC Meeting Minutes - Council

The approval of the September 6, 2019 minutes was tabled due to the number of council members in attendance.

Statewide Adoption Update - Sylvia Fonseca and Kelly King

Sylvia reported that the Department recently received an adoption award that they would like to present to the Director at the joint council meeting in November. She noted that the award reflects Illinois’ stakeholder investment in the QIC-AG grant, including the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council. They are working on coordinating the presentation with the Director’s office. They continue to work on the stickers and magnets and hope to have materials for distribution at the November meeting. Sylvia noted that many regions are hosting adoption events, including information fairs, both during Adoption Month and in other months. They will do an adoption support presentation at the upcoming Hispanic Family Institute Day.

The council decided to present their annual adoption award to Christine Feldman at the November meeting.

Sylvia stated that if council members find that people are getting their nursing services cut, they must appeal within 60 days. They must follow the instructions in the letter since this is not handled by DCFS. The letter includes the Healthcare and Family Services Fair Hearing and

numbers are provided for legal options. She noted that reductions are occurring incrementally, so families need to follow up right away if they do not agree with the reductions. Reviews are based on HFS reviews of the child's medical reports. Karen Moredock added that Medicaid will not overturn denials based on behavioral issues. She suggested accessing additional resources, i.e. Easter Seals, as needed. Karen reported that a provider notice from Medicaid stated that children excluded from Medicaid standards, medically fragile, with and without the waiver, will not transition to IlliniCare. The notice also referenced "special needs children," but it is not a clear statement and Karen is seeking clarification. Youth in care who are turning 21 and aging out of nursing have options for services.

Kelly King reported that there are some issues with Adoption Support and Preservation services. She stated that Danielle Sanders is no longer with the Center for Law and Social Work. Linda Fiore is currently the program manager and most other positions are filled. Babyfold is on hold right now due to staffing issues and they are in the process of hiring. FamilyCore has a contract and they are also in the process of hiring. Melinda Squires is doing many presentations. The adoption team is also doing presentations. Post adoption flyers and cards are being distributed. They are currently working on translating the cards into Spanish. Business cards will need to be ordered through Kelly. Packets are available in Central Stores.

Discussion:

- It is appropriate to contact Kelly when parents in crisis face significant delays in post-adopt services.
- It is important to note that although families may have previously utilized a different program, other programs may be a better fit. Kelly has information that can help direct them to appropriate services.
- The social work world includes both experienced and newly trained workers, and Kelly strives to continue to improve the quality and array of services offered. Coordination of services is important.
- Concern was expressed about the loss of experienced therapists. Cara stated that there is a shortage overall. They are looking at incentives to pay to recruit and retain providers, i.e. more training, etc.
- There was a recent adolescent adoption training held in New Jersey. If local providers attend additional training, they should report at an upcoming IAAC meeting. Adoption staff are currently training in Canada.
- NACAC offers training that staff will follow up on in Illinois. Kelly referenced a free parent training that will be offered in Kenosha, Wisconsin on October 10-11. She will send out the flyer. Council members asked whom to contact to try to gain more money for ASAP therapists, recognizing that strong supports maintain the stability of adoptive families. It was suggested that they go to the deputy with program oversight. The council will send a recommendation to the deputy. There is a clerical staff shortage that also needs to be addressed. Adoption support falls under Family First and this might be a good time to request additional funds.

Legislative Update - Stefanie Polacheck

Stefanie clarified that Public Act 101-0529 uses criminal sexual abuse charges as grounds for terminating parental rights. This law adds criminal sexual abuse to the list of grounds for

termination. It is not retroactive. It is possible that a juvenile conviction could be considered, so it is imperative that our youth have adequate representation in court. Concern was expressed about juvenile offenders experiencing sexual abuse and acting out then being required to register as sex offenders.

Stefanie reported that Public Act 101-0461 allows for some presumptive eligibility to the Family Support Program, allows for some services prior to a mental health diagnosis, allows supportive housing for young adults with mental health concerns, requires insurance coverage, opens up lines of communication to raise awareness about supports. It goes into effect in January 2020. DCFS is working on ways to monitor the implementation of the provisions of this act.

101-0268 There is another law about strengthening the workforce, the Child Welfare Workforce Task Force. They ran a bill through to improve recruitment and retention of child welfare workers. DCFS is leading a task force and they are looking at broadening all the reasons for solutions to the problems, including problems with residential staff. They are appointing people to the Task Force. Another task force addresses things through DHS.

Newsletter - Gwenn Eyer

Gwenn reported that the Office of Caregiver & Parent Support is working to produce another newsletter this fall and requested article submissions from the council. She also suggested that a newsletter would be a good way to share managed care updates. Elizabeth said that she had already sent an Email asking for an edition dedicated specifically to Managed Care.

Healthworks - Donna Lindemuldar

The rollout date has moved to February 1, 2020. A letter is being drafted to caregivers. They are looking at behavioral health issues. There are a lot of people collaborating on the HealthWorks. Lead Agency provider contracts will stay in place through June 30, 2020. There are a lot of financial questions, and other concerns that they are all working on. IlliniCare and HFS should be posting a Q&A section to address the transition. The slide presentations may also be posted. They are troubleshooting because they have knowledge of how things work with DCFS.

Adoption Celebration - Jen Florent

Kelly King said that they are moving the Heart Gallery website from DCFS to the Center for Law and Social Work website. Jen reported that it will be a simple re-direct that will be seamless for the viewer. Jen showed the bracelets, window clings, and explained the method of distributing the adoption bracelet chain to the public. They have 10,000 bracelets available. Jen explained the paper chain pieces and templates that will be used to broaden the effort. There are hashtags to use to promote it on social media, #findyourconnection and #adoptionmonth. November 1 is the kickoff date. They are also working on a Facebook photo frame for use with profile pictures. The Communications Deputy plans to host an Adoption Month press conference with the Governor in attendance, if possible.

Managed Care Organization - Anika Todd and Therese Burton

The roll-out date has been pushed back to February 1, 2020. Their charge is to ensure that everything works as it is supposed to. They are working with HFS and IlliniCare to share the

nuances of our child welfare system, i.e. mandated reporting, etc. They have a section on the DCFS website with a draft plan, Town Hall meeting notices and minutes posted.

They are planning a soft launch in November to allow some practical application prior to the actual implementation date. They have not determined which population they will address first. IlliniCare has eight staff designated for DCFS offices. They will offer the YouthCare program for youth currently in care. They are still looking at contracts and soliciting new provider agreements. The medical consent process will not change and psychotropic medications will still go through the Department. IlliniCare has a rapid response team to troubleshoot issues in the call center.

Healthcare and Family Services has sent out letters. If caregivers do nothing, IlliniCare will be the provider. However, adoptive families have the option of choosing another managed care provider from the list.

Discussion/Questions for follow up:

Q: What happens when a child is on private insurance? A: Primary will be billed first, then IlliniCare will be secondary. Anika will follow up.

Q: If a youth transitions to IlliniCare while in foster care and is later adopted, can the adoptive parent then select a different provider?

Q: If families choose a provider will they be allowed to make a change prior to February 1st?

Q: Is there an option to keep Medicaid? A: Only those in the “exception” categories may keep Medicaid, i.e., medically fragile.

Q: Can providers selectively choose which families they will serve? A: Providers may choose to serve the whole Medicaid population, only youth in care or only specific youth in care. Claims will be paid up to six months even if there is no contract.

Q: Providers report that they are trying to convert to IlliniCare, but there are barriers in the process. A: Email contact information to Anika and she will follow up.

Q: Will DCFS hold IlliniCare accountable re: training and follow up? A: IlliniCare has specific mail boxes to address managed care for youth in care issues.

Suggestions:

- Send out a clarifying letter with the latest information.
- Provide a chart comparing the various plans for adoptive parents to choose from.
- Send out a newsletter with details about the program.

They understand that Adoption Support and Preservation providers have concerns, too. The problem with sending people to the IlliniCare website is that they have different contracts with different supports and DCFS needs a dedicated page so that caregivers may be directed to appropriate and accurate information. IlliniCare 844-289-2264, HFS.mco.net@illinois.gov, Anika.Todd@illinois.gov

Family First - Darryl Johnson

Darrel distributed the Family First newsletter. Family First utilizes federal dollars. Programs and services must be evidenced-based to receive funding. The focus is to keep families together by focusing on in-home parenting services, substance abuse prevention and treatment and mental

health treatment. Family First includes prevention services for the child, parents, and kinship care providers. To claim federal dollars, background checks must be filed before families are licensed and for congregate care facilities prior to utilization. SAMSA lists evidence-based programs. There are limited dollars for Qualified Residential Treatment Programs. QRTP's are qualified treatment facilities. They must be licensed and accredited. They are going around the state to meet with foster parents, adoptive parents, and Foster Parent Support Specialists. They would like to step kids down to foster care. They will train staff on the waiver process. Waivers are mostly non-safety issues, i.e. keeping siblings together, etc. Rule 402 revisions have gone out for comment. The newsletter provides some detail on funds available for the added supports.

Discussion:

- What happens when an adoptive placement is unsafe, but the family is committed to staying together. The Department works hard to provide appropriate services and supports and oversight will be closely monitored. Sylvia reported that she and Kelly have been brought in to make suggestions about how to make family preservation plans for adoptive families. Intact, teen and post-adoption are three subgroups they are working with. They will work with HFS to determine how much money may be claimed for supportive services in the step-down process.
- Mark noted that getting high-end services, i.e., TARGET, is difficult when dealing with Medicaid based services. Youth have traditional counseling services, evidence-based services then it goes to residential. Darrel noted that more money will go into the evidence-based services. Clinical is very involved in Family First and the committee is reviewing existing programs to fill in the gaps. Elizabeth said that residential needs to be more planful and outcome based.
- They are starting to track the disruption rate.
- The Adoption Unit has requested that ASAP providers receive consistent training.
- They have discussed the starting early, starting often messaging for adoption services and supports.

Stakeholder Comments

Mark Werner reminded the council that it's very important to attend meetings. We host seven meetings a year. Gwenn noted that it is very important to RSVP to meetings in a timely manner, and stated that the next meeting will require lodgers to call in with a credit card to confirm their reservation. Room +tax will move to the direct bill upon check in.

Elizabeth reported that the location for adoptions during the adoption celebration has been moved back to a more appropriate setting in the court house.

Public Comment

None

NEXT MEETING: Friday, November 8, 2019, Wyndham, Springfield, Illinois.

Potential Agenda Items:

Managed Care

Org Chart update

Christine Feldman – NTDC grant
Recruitment Project – Therese Burton
Jay Crome – update re: licensing standards

February Agenda: Melissa Squires, out-of-state conference for staff working with adolescents.
New Jersey Teen program
Families interested in adopting youth who will be in SSI eligible group homes and adult living centers. It's priority for SSI kids in foster care, but once adopted they are in the general population. Unnecessary barrier through DHS. Juliana Harms