

**Child Welfare Advisory Committee  
December 8, 2022, 1:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Members Present**

Glenda Lashley (DCFS Staff Liaison)	Audrey Pennington
Beverly Jones – Co-Chair	Emily Rawsy
Christopher Cox – Co-Chair	LaTasha Roberson
Malia Arnett	Jackie Sharp
Monica Badiano	Evelyn Smith
Kim Cobb	Annetta Wilson
Ashley Deckert	Prestina Singleton
Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz	Rick Velasquez
Jason Keeler	Mary Savage
Viviane Ngwa	Phyllis Summers

**I. Welcome and Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Glenda Lashley, DCFS Staff Liaison at 1:10 PM and took roll call. It was determined the quorum was present.

**II. Review and Approval of Minutes**

Approval of August Minutes – Co-chair Chris motioned for approval of the minutes submitted. Malia Arnett motion to approve the minutes; second by Jackie Sharp; unanimously approved, no opposed and the motion to approve the minutes carried.

**III. Co-chair Report**

Working to develop next year’s meeting schedule. Based on bylaws there are terms that end December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. If members are interested in renewal, please fill out the membership application due December 20<sup>th</sup>. Want to make sure the committee has the right number of members, dispersed geographically on businesses and industries as well as diversity. Beverly encouraged people to apply; to bring in different ideas and opinions. Reminded all members to complete the yearly Ethics, Harassment and DEI Training. In this field things move, and individuals must make the shift and recognize where the needs are. The Governor’s Office and DCFS Director have infused resources into our private sector to build a system that meets their needs. The Background Check process was completed after private agencies and DCFS worked together.



The private agencies have been able to look at the educational requirements and broaden the requirements to recruit more staff. This year had the opportunity to be invited to engage and help create and/or design a new system (CCWIS). Beverly added it's about "us" job to better serve the children and families. Eight priorities for calendar year 2023 were as follows: CCWIS sharing data, Reduction of Administrative duplicate requirements, Salary Parody/Inflation Factors related to COLA, Revise CWAC Structure, Implement a Bias Free Removal Pilot Project, SAFE model Implementation, DEI, and Permanency. It is important to bring all the sister agencies into the conversation as new systems pathways to help provide the resources that for the children and families.

#### **IV. Director's Report**

The community as of child welfare system, must acknowledge the progress been done. DCFS and private sectors form one child welfare system. "We" are responsible for caring for abused and neglected children of the State of Illinois. Illinois has one of the highest levels of Relative Care Support. Residential Services and Support for DCFS children is at the low end of our partners across the country. Appreciate support and work from CWAC leadership as a team to grow the child welfare system. The IT system will have a strong impact on the way investigations are done. It is amazing the CIO is thinking about this work at the level of care for our kids and decision making around what is done. This is a development of our business having new and interesting people talk about how we serve the children and families of Illinois. The Director was part of a foster care meeting with 200 people from DCFS' Supervisors and private sector for about 4 hours regarding the quality of their intervention. This is a big system, it takes time, but consistently shows moving in the right direction through partnership. Commits the department's resources and support to make sure work is done properly and thoughtfully. Tim Snowden, DCFS thanked every CEO who responded to certify the Safety Wellbeing of the children. There was an audit that looked at those items not done, therefore the agency responded urgently. As a result, now there are youth with future dental and vision appointments. The data will be recorded as a completion of the task for each agency. During the statewide permanency supervisor program manager meeting the goal was to operationalize a strategy where every single level of the child welfare system is aware of the key metric areas that we're all working on. To understand the strategies and resources that are now available. A monthly Performance Report is collected, therefore can be distribute to agencies on monthly basis.

#### **V. Background Check Update by Shontee Blankenship, DCFS Deputy Director of Licensing**

Met with a few private sector partners to address some of the background check concerns resulting from the family first Mandate. On October 6<sup>th</sup> last meeting it was mentioned the DCFS check portal was very close to production. As of November 1<sup>st</sup>, the background check portal went live, and the official announcement was sent out on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The portal allows agencies, institutions, and daycare centers employees to:

- Conduct a fingerprint search and check the status of background check.
- Obtain background check forms and view latest news.
- Registration is required to use the portal, shared authorized designated administrators. The announcement has instructions with direct link. Currently, 683 license providers have access.
- James Mayer, DCFS Dolt conducted a summary presentation. The form is available on DCFS external websites. Data will be clear after 90 days because it's only to facilitate; can this person work and when? The person must go through Biometrics, CANTS, ISP/FBI, and the Clearance Letter. Note Fingerprint search was moved to this site as well. DCFS creates a certificate per se that authorize the vendor to fingerprint the person and get paid for the service. The data is updated every morning reflecting the prior day data.

**VI. FY'24 Budget by Kiersten Neswick, DCFS Chief Financial Officer**

Under the Dr. Smith leadership with the support of the governor and his administration additional salary investments were initiated in March of 2022 to help address the salary needs for childcare workers, case workers, and case worker's supervisors across all the major case. Also, additional financial support was provided to Foster Parents effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. To help address the recent national inflation the salary needs for services provided under grants are under review. It includes a budget-based agreement which has been divided into 5 rounds of review expected to be completed in January. Regarding the FY'24 the details remained embargoed until the governor's address as usual. Will have specific details by February.

**VII. Family First Update by Tracey King, DCFS Deputy Chief of Staff**

The Family First Summit was held November 1<sup>st</sup> of 2022 in Champagne, Illinois under DCFS in partnership with Casey Family Programs and University of Illinois. Had 100 virtual participants and over 200 in person. Norma Machay, DCFS started conversation of how DCFS strengthen Illinois through child and family well being which was the theme to create a platform for private partners, community stakeholders and sister agencies. Gave acknowledgement to Dr. Verletta Saxon new DCFS Director of Research and Child wellbeing and a host of other private agencies. Lyman Legster, Casey Family Program Strategic Consultant shared some forum's highlights. The emphasis and potential progress in Illinois were well strong. Heard from Key leaders, Director Smith, Governor's Office, Deputy Governor Sol Flores, group of leaders from provider communities, sister agencies, lived expertise and even Executive Vice President Dr. David Sanders shared areas of progress, growth which aligns with CWAC's conversation. Currently, in the mist of conversations of what a 21<sup>st</sup> century child and family wellbeing system ought to look like. The goal is to get to a life course perspective that gets to a multi domain perspective and ultimately centers racial justice as well. It is important to recognize that people with lived expertise do not typically speak in front of groups. Their story is incredibly powerful and their interest in using their stories and experience is to improve what happens going forward with children and families

**VIII. Worker Safety Initiatives by Jassen Strokosch, DCFS Chief of Staff**

There have been several meetings with university partners, law enforcement, and other agencies over the last year. There are opportunities in partnering up with the private sector (CWAC) for discussion about potential support. The main areas are as follows:

- Chief Security Office. It is a new position to take leadership role in ensuring safety of staff across the board. Primary lead with law enforcement, ISP, and CMS for reporting threats or security accidents.
- Field Office Security. Open to collaboration with private sector as well.
  - o Physical presence of security guards; extended hours, and professional training,
  - o Cameras in place covering everything; entries, parking lots, etc.
  - o Enhance lighting for some access points.
  - o Include safety that comes from Natural disasters.
- Field Workers Safety. Launch several key pilots last year and some state-wide initiatives FY'23.
  - o Panic Devices. For anyone who goes out into the field.
  - o Body Protective Gear. Rolling out 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot by 2023 to determine right gear.
  - o Paraprofessionals. To help investigators and permanency workers on some of their tasks.
  - o Safety Training. Partner with ISP for Self Defense and First Aid Training.
  - o OC Spray. Legislation authorized Child Welfare Workers to use under certain circumstances. Training will roll out around January and February.

Q: Is there funding to increase security at private sector offices? DCFS is open to discuss issue and find out the system's wide response.

Q: Can people be educated on using settings on social media and multiple platforms to private across the system? There is a Threat Assessment Team with Illinois State Police who trains law enforcement on this topic. Will open to the private sector as DCFS rolls out. Working with a Virtual Training Program to determine different safety assessment with hard data.

**IX. Beyond Medical Necessity by Jacquelyn Dortch, DCFS Deputy Director of Child Services**

In order to be placed in the hospital they must go through DCFS in collaboration with Screening Access Support Services (SASS) organization. The screening consists of patient possessing a threat to themselves and/or others. Once hospital releases the patients, they become BMN and need progressive medical or psychiatric care. The University of Illinois is DCFS child and adolescent treatment unit. Otherwise, DCFS sends out the youth out of state to long-term psychiatric residential treatment facilities. It was determined there were 3 primary goals that needed to be concerned.

- To understand Beyond Medical Necessity (BMN). It is a Medicaid distinction that says DCFS Youth have been in the hospital beyond medical necessity. A hospitalization that continues after a DCFS Youth in Care has been medically cleared for discharge.
  - o There are Mental Health Levels of Care; Hospital In-Patient, Out-Patient Treatment and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility
  - o Understand Hospital VS Insurance. There are occasions when the hospital disagrees with the insurance company. In this case, the doctor uses progress notes to document key information which is used to file an appeal. Every 7 days are assessed and can transition between being BMN, Clinically Acute and /or not being BMN.
  - o Who is in the hospital? Is composed of 6 categories and the services that are provided in the hospital. The Adolescent Psychiatric have individual treatment plan which includes Evidence-based Treatments, Specialty Treatments, and Other Supports.
- To reduce BMN by 50 percent (children in hospitals) by:
  - o Collaboration with DCFS staff and hospitals.
  - o Key Indicators – DATA of pre-hospitalization placement
  - o Weekly Meeting – DCFS staff and private agencies staff
  - o Matching and Placement –DCFS staff meeting on Friday's.
- Demonstrate efforts in BMN Court.
  - o BMN Court. A platform to show DCFS accepts responsibility for children and/or youth.
  - o To demonstrate all the conceptive effort that goes into creating a safe place for youth.
  - o DCFS created a best practice checklist to prepare for court.
  - o Before going to court there has been a placement. Currently testifying only 10% versus 75%.

Hope to take this information and work with Northwestern University to come with some predictive indicators. Also, work with all the children( DCFS and Private) in the hospital to prevent from going into BMN.

**X. Public Comment**

Will field workers received Threat Assessment training? It will be shared down the road of some of things been placed regarding Threat Assessment. The CWAC expressed Happy Holidays to everyone.

**XI. Next Meeting Date**

Tentatively February 28, 2023, 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM

**XII. Adjournment**

Co-chair Chris Cox adjourned the meeting at 3:17 PM