

Illinois Children and Family Services Advisory Council

July 8, 2021 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM

Via WebEx / Conference line only

MINUTES

Attendance

Members: Anita Weinberg, Brittani Kindle, Jennifer Hansen, Marge Berglind, Sherrie Crabb

DCFS: Jill Tichenor, Kara Hamilton, Matt Jedlowski, Najma Adam, Yesenia Perez

Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Members: Crystal Rekart, Gabriel Foley

Public: Unknown Caller

Agenda

I. Welcome and Introductions

Marge called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. The approval of the minutes was postponed until a quorum was reached.

Some additional staff/guests joined for today's discussion topics.

- Jill, Najma – DCFS SBP staff
- Matt – Project Coordinator for the Service Provider Identification & Exploration Resource (SPIDER)

II. Approval of Minutes from May 13, 2021

On a motion by Brittani and seconded by Gabriel, the minutes from the May 13th council meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

III. Discussion Item: Follow Up on New Member Approvals

Kara has not heard back from the GO but will continue to follow-up. Marge will invite the candidates as guests for the next meeting if they haven't been approved by then.

Crystal may have a potential candidate in September. Will reach out to Marge with any questions.

Marge will reach out to the Nominating Committee if a meeting needs to be scheduled before September.

IV. Discussion Item: Strategic Directions

a. Next Steps for ICFSAC re: Juvenile Sex Offender Registry Requirements

The council made previous recommendations to the Department, but nothing was advanced. At this time, Marge recommends that the council focus on the impact of this effort to kids coming into and/or are at risk of coming into care and the families served. As well as help IJJC clarify the impact on young people and the potential damage along with balancing that against the perceived public safety. Will also be keeping Jill and Najma in the loop on efforts as much as possible.

Jill and Najma presented on requested information. The Department meets every two weeks with YouthCare (YC), the MCO that manages the behavioral health needs of YIC, to work on various tasks.

Includes: ensure contracted providers get enrolled with YC; recruitment efforts to fill provider/service gaps downstate and Cook. There are “mom and pop” providers with YC but they fill up quickly. Re: residential programs that target aggressors, the Department is working to ensure they have qualified staff and/or appropriate sub-contracts for services. There are several male units but only one female SBP unit. Also have very limited resources for transgender youth presenting with SBP. Acutely aware of lack of resources/providers but actively working to improve. Re: request for data: 242 total youth on SBP log; 33 are required to register. Re: service gaps for SBP youth, there’s a statewide shortage. There are very few providers with SBP programs, which is also leading to transportation issues. There are also long wait lists for assessments at the few programs available. Would also like to emphasize that training is needed for youth on social media and usage. Re: coming into care due to having no treatment options, there are about 30 youth total statewide per year (*about six youth per region*). The youth coming into care for the sole purpose of SBP treatment are from an FSP grant. Should note that these youth have various complexities and are not just SBP.

Questions/comments/concerns from the council:

- Anita noted IJJC doesn’t separate YIC but focuses on young people in general. Marge clarified that will be the council’s role: to track impact on youth and families served by the Department.
- The council should also assist IJJC in advocating for the amount and location of services.
- Q. Which residential treatment centers (RTCs) have SBP programs? Per Jill: TCI in southern; IOA in northern/central; LH for young children; Onarga and Riveredge in central. For victims, all RTCs are now QRTPs and must have a trauma-informed model.
- Q. How many youth at RTCs are not from DCFS? Is there enough capacity to ensure the needs of DCFS youth are met? Per Jill, don’t have numbers readily available but can get from Monitoring. However, no, there is no unused capacity. Wait lists are long, especially for females and DD youth. Should also note that many RTCs don’t have the capacity to meet needs; i.e. have vacancies but don’t have capacity for the number of referrals submitted.
- The Department should also focus on building community resources and family-based treatment vs focusing on just residential. Per Jill, agreed and that’s what Family First will be addressing.
- Q. What age are youth with SBP and/or are required to register? Have any petitions been filed for removal from the registry? Is there a backlog on this effort? Is there an effort to help kids that have aged out petition for removal from the registry? Per Jill, can provide information but not today. Will also follow-up with Janet Ahern re: registry data. Per Najma re: effort to help aged-out kids, do actively address and connect with legal support.
- Q. What percent of youth come into care already on the registry? How many end up on the registry after coming into care? Per Najma, not sure about the numbers but they usually come into care with charges pending. Although, they’re usually dropped. The Department then focuses on service needs.

b. Presentation by DCFS Clinical Staff: DCFS SPIDER System

During discussions between Marge and Michelle Jackson, Michelle recommended the council be introduced to SPIDER as an aid when advising the Department. Matt did a real-time walk-through of the database using the following URL: <https://spider.dcf.illinois.gov/>. Some highlights:

- It’s a free, public access database to locate and gather information on social service agencies, programs and services statewide. The pro vs similar products: it’s statewide vs by area/region.
- The database currently has 1,750+ agencies, 4,500+ programs, 23,000+ services. Users can tailor searches by different parameters: distance, programs, services, payment type, language, target population (*including sex offenders, for both victims and perpetrators*), age, in-home services, and/or accept YIC. Tip: don’t over-tailor since that may bring back too few or no results. Can also search by agency name or keyword. Note that search results can be exported to a spreadsheet.
- Results return agency name, address, phone number and programs offered. Clicking on a certain agency program brings back a multitude of information, including referral information and documents required, geo restrictions, eligibility requirements, accreditations, services offered, etc.

- Re: sex offender target population, Matt hopes for ongoing collaboration with this council since the database currently lacks information on programs/services in this area.

For additional information on SPIDER or to collaborate, email Matt: Matthew.Jedlowski@illinois.gov.

Questions/comments/concerns from the council:

- Q. Noticed a lack of services downstate, especially in central and southern Illinois. What is being done to increase availability? Per Matt, the SPIDER team is currently tasked with updating/mining resource information in those areas. Collaboration with this council and partners in those communities is welcome and appreciated.
- Sherrie, on behalf of SASS-So, noticed missing site information and will be emailing Matt to add. Also mentioned that DCFS field sites should have knowledge of local programs and services, so isn't sure why/where there's a disconnect. Suggestion: need to do better re: advertising. To assist, Sherrie will reach out to provider network and request the SPIDER URL be added to their websites. Sherrie and Matt will connect offline to continue collaboration.
- Q. Re: sex offender treatment programs, do you want to know what those are? Per Matt, yes. Working to standardize the process, but currently get program/service information through resource lists and outreach.
- Q. Does SPIDER collaborate with the alliance working on gathering information on services for current and aged-out YIC? Per Crystal, the alliance is called "Day to Day" (?). Per Matt, not much knowledge about it but will do more research on this resource for potential collaboration.
- Jill received an updated list from YouthCare on services for the sex offender target population. It was shared with Matt for database entry. Note that it included several downstate providers, including some in central.

V. Discussion Item: Plan Agenda for September Meeting

a. Follow up on Juvenile Registry

The council voiced no objections to work in tandem with IJJC on this. Marge will email Rick and Lisa on decision, focus and next steps. Anita will also assist with any communication gaps.

Some members don't know the requirements of the registry. Anita will discuss at the next meeting.

Marge and Kara will also follow-up with Jill and Najma on additional information requests.

b. Follow up on Strategic Directions (SPIDER and Subsidized Guardianship)

It's been difficult to get direction on areas of focus from DCFS, but Marge will continue to work with Kara on following up with Clinical. Marge posed the following question to the members: What do you think would be a good focus for this council to work on and advise the Department on, regardless of their input?

- Sherrie – Always interested on hearing what youth need and how/whether the council can assist or provide connections.
- Gabe – There's a lack of consideration and communication by the Department for youth aging out of care. Opportunities are offered but sometimes it's difficult to pursue them or youth hear about them too late. Anita commented that the Foster Care Alums may be a good resource to start up a conversation. Layda Garcia is current president. Gabe will follow-up.
 - Anita – There are federal pandemic relief dollars for former YIC. Use following link to find additional information: <https://www.checkforus.org/>.
- Anita – Service providers are in the dark and concerned about the Department's plan re: Family First. Maybe the council can assist with information gathering and dissemination.
- Marge – Continuing on the topic of Family First, find out what the Department is doing to prepare for family-based services. Also concerned about evictions, which can impact FPs and HMR. Need clarification on federal child care assistance payments: whether that covers foster kids and who can claim it.

c. Update from DCFS on COVID – How are youth and families in DCFS faring now? Council to identify questions/ data information

Need to find out the impact of the pandemic on families and the Department, and how the Department is responding. This includes reviewing data/numbers, especially in permanency; number of youth in care; is there an increase in number of reports as youth return to classrooms, and impact.

d. Presentation on new DCFS Task Force Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare (see attached article)

Should find out if an advisory council to the Director is appropriate to make recommendations on potential radical changes in child welfare. Brief discussion re: perhaps abolishing the current system.

Marge will follow-up with the co-chairs on attending the next meeting.

VI. Member Discussion / New Items

- Member recommendations are still welcome for consideration. Send to Marge, MargaretBerglind@att.net.

Meeting Adjourned: No formal motion to adjourn. Call ended at 4:52 pm.

Next Meeting: September 9th, 2021 at 3pm.