

Eastern Citizens Review Panel
Meeting Summary
December 11, 2015
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Panel Members

Mary McCarthy, Director, Social Work Education Consortium, School of Social Welfare, UAlbany
Edward Blatt, Ph.D., Market Segment Manager, IBM Software Group
Lance R. Jackson, Retired Executive Director, Northeast Parent and Child Society

By Phone:

Carrie Jefferson Smith, Director, School of Social Work, Syracuse University
JoAnn Merriman, MS.,PA, Physician Assistant, Capital Care Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics
Sharon M. Chesna, Executive Director, Mothers and Babies Perinatal Network of South Central NY, Inc.
Maureen McLoughlin, Attorney; Adjunct Professor, Hofstra University

WRI Staff

Lee Lounsbury, Executive Director
Judy Stanger, Guest

Handouts

- Meeting Agenda
- Proposed Panel Meeting Dates for 2016
- CPS Differential Response System: Impact on Child Welfare Outcomes, Powerpoint Presentation
- Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA): Child Welfare Policy Priorities 2016-17
- SCAA Handout: *Home Visiting Builds Strong Families, Helps Kids Learn and Saves Money*

Mary McCarthy called the meeting to order in Hector's absence. Introductions took place. Mary expressed condolences for one of the Panel members who had a loss in her family.

Agenda Item: Additional Panel Business

The meeting dates for 2016 were agreed upon. The meeting dates are:

- March 18, 2016
- May 6, 2016
- June 9, 2016 (Joint Panel Meeting)
- September 16
- October 18 (Joint Panel Meeting)
- December 9

There was discussion about possible topics for 2016 meeting agendas, with a reminder that the Panel brainstormed many possible agenda items at the previous Panel meeting. Asked if there were additional topics for consideration in 2016, Panel members raised the issue of the federal government moving from SACWIS (State Automated Child Welfare Information System) to a new Child Welfare

Information System (CWIS) was raised. The Panel would like more information about this change, and what it means for child welfare and the workforce. There is also interest in hearing from OCFS about what NYS' continuous quality improvement system is for child welfare. The Panel is also interested in hearing more about Family Assessment Response (FAR) data and the joint initiative between OCFS and the Court Improvement Project, as well as any relevant federal legislation.

Agenda Item: Recently Released FAR Data, Presentation by Yufan Huang, OCFS (handout provided)

Mr. Huang presented in person about OCFS' recently released data about Family Assessment Response (FAR) in New York State. Some of the key points included:

- The Family Led Assessment Guide (FLAG) used with FAR cases is now incorporated into CONNECTIONS.
- County CPS units are now allowed to do both traditional CPS investigations and FAR, and individual units can be divided as well.
- Several counties are now training all of their CPS caseworkers on the FAR principles.
- Some counties doing FAR are experiencing reduced rates of re-reporting, as well as reduced rates of first time reports.
- Nine counties have discontinued FAR, but some are considering re-starting it.
- New York City has committed to expanding FAR.

For all types of CPS reports/investigations, the data show:

- One-third of all families reported to the SCR are reported again in 12 months, and half are re-reported within two years. (This is all types of cases, not just FAR)
- 87% of CPS investigations find no imminent danger at 7 days, and 90% find no danger at 60 days.
- 70% of all investigations, statewide, are unfounded.

Regarding FAR cases:

- Almost half of FAR families have 2 or more needs for service.
- Three-quarters of CPS reports would be eligible for FAR.
- FAR families were less likely to have a subsequent report within 12 months.
- Families served by FAR report more positive feelings about their interaction with FAR than do families who receive a traditional CPS investigation.

Agenda Item: Debrief FAR Presentation

The Panel discussed the FAR data presented, as well as the reasons 9 counties have discontinued FAR, including the counties the Panel heard from during the previous meeting. There was discussion of a new OCFS policy that requires counties participating in FAR to assign at least 30% of their cases to the FAR track, and whether this will be a possible disincentive to counties re-starting/starting FAR.

Agenda Item: SCAA's Child Welfare Advocacy Agenda **Presenter, Kari Squidiri**

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA) held a child welfare convening in September to hear from child welfare leaders who are not in government about their views of child welfare priorities. These findings will be incorporated into a "white paper" SCAA will release early in 2016, when the Legislature is back in Albany. The paper will include SCAA's child welfare legislative agenda, including a call to restore the state's share of preventive services from 62% to 65%, with the requirement that

localities use the additional funding from the 3% increase for early, primary prevention. There was discussion about how well aligned SCAA's priority in this, and several other areas, are with the Panels' priorities, although the Panels are asking for restoration to 75% state share.

Ms. Squiddiri briefly discussed SCAA's other child welfare policy priorities for 2016-17, including:

- Better and more transparent data
- Strengthening the housing subsidy program
- Investment in Kin Care Services and KinGAP
- Expanding FAR
- Reducing disproportionality in the child welfare system
- A strong and supported workforce
- Expanding access to maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting programs.

There was discussion that the NYS Education Department and OCFS just signed a Memorandum of Understanding to share data and track educational outcomes for children in the child welfare system. The Panel would like to learn more about that at a future meeting. There was also discussion about OCFS' Practice Model, and that it will narrow the funnel of what OCFS will fund/support. Discussion ensued about workforce issues, and the possibility of partnerships with Unions to strengthen the workforce and reduce workload.

There was also discussion about the use of mobile technology by the child welfare workforce. The Panel asked WRI to invite OCFS to discuss this topic at the upcoming meeting, including the use of ipads, mobile phones, etc. It was noted that Facetime is being used in court.

Agenda Item: OCFS Updates

Presenters, Lisa Gordon and Laura Turner

Safe Sleep Initiative:

OCFS staff presented about a Safe Sleep campaign that OCFS is launching, which includes educational materials about the ABC's of safe sleep (Alone, On their back's, and in a Crib), distribution of sleep sacks, books and DVD, given to new parents upon discharge from the hospital. There will be a follow-up survey one year later. OCFS wants to find a way to communicate with extended family as well about safe sleep. OCFS is piloting this in three counties – Oneida, Niagara and Monroe.

The 18 Child Fatality Review Teams (CFRTs) across the state also do some type of safe sleep education. Half of child abuse/neglect fatalities are very young children, and half of those are due to some type of unsafe sleeping. Contributing factors include fatigue, drug and alcohol use, bedding/bumpers/stuffed animals in infants' cribs, and sleep on a surface that is not firm, such as a sofa.

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

The third round of CFSR reviews are currently being conducted by the federal Children's Bureau in states. The federal on-site review in New York will take place the week of June 13, 2016. Prior to the on-site review, OCFS must submit an extensive written Statewide Assessment document. Panel members asked if they could be part of the review team for the Statewide Assessment. Ms. Gordon said she would take that back to the OCFS team for consideration.

The importance of the use of mobile technology for caseworkers was noted to OCFS. It was also pointed out that there is a list of child welfare “apps” for mobile technology on the website of the National Child Welfare Workforce Initiative (NCWWI), under “Products.”

Agenda Item: Wrap Up

There was a brief discussion about staying in touch with SCAA during the year and finding joint opportunities for advocacy. It was mentioned that SCAA should be invited to attend the joint Panels’ meeting in June to provide an update on their child welfare advocacy work. There was also mention of the national Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse/Neglect Fatalities, and its report that should be issued in 2016.

The meeting was adjourned by Mary McCarthy.