

**EASTERN CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 27, 2015**

Attendees:

Hector Ramirez, *Panel Chair* (via telephone)
JoAnne Merriman
Edward Blatt
Angela Baris
Sharon Chesna (via telephone)

OCFS Staff (for portions of the meeting):

Lisa Gordon
Rene Hallock

WRI Staff:

Lee Lounsbury, *Executive Director*
William Dorr
Shawntell Mills-Sanchez, *Project Associate*

Handouts:

- Agenda
- Eastern Citizen Review Panel Meeting Minutes December 12, 2014
- Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Amendment of 1996 (Formation of CRP)
- GAO: Effectiveness of Citizen review Panels
- NYS Bill of Rights for Children and Youth in Foster care
- 1999 Administration of Citizen Review Panels Request for Proposals
- Chapter 136: Creation of Local or Regional Fatality Review Teams
- OCFS 2016 Executive Budget Summary
- The Governor's Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice
- 2015 NCRP Conference
- WRI Confidentiality Agreement
- Updated Contact Information Form
- NY Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents—*Osborne Association Special Project*
- Child Maltreatment 2013 Report: *New York Statistics*
- [Child Maltreatment 2013 Full Report](#)
- [New York State's FY 2010-2014 Final Report and FY 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan](#)
- [Healthy Families New York: A Home Visiting Program that Works! 2013 Triennial Report](#)

The meeting was called to order by Panel Chair Hector Ramirez.

Agenda Item: WRI and CRP Introductions and Moving Forward (Lee Lounsbury)

Lee Lounsbury explained that Welfare Research Inc. (WRI) was awarded the Citizen Review Panel (CRP) contract for the next five (5) years. WRI did not compete with the Schuyler Center for the contract; Schuyler chose to move forward in a direction that aligned more with its original mission and goal of advocacy. Mrs. Lounsbury explained to the panel members that she saw WRI as having five (5) main roles:

- *Logistics*

- *Communication flow among panels*
- *Bringing relevant information from the field (ex. Nassau Co. Blind Removals; NCRP Conference; Children of Incarcerated Parents meeting)*
- *Drafting annual reports*
- *Developing an Impact Assessment*

Panel members agreed with the list given but added that they also see WRI as a liaison between OCFS and the panels.

Agenda Item: Approach to Impact Assessment (Lee Lounsbury)

Ms. Lounsbury reminded the Panels explained that after the last Joint CRP meeting (October 2, 2014), there was widespread agreement to move forward with an impact assessment in 2015. There had been discussion about other approaches to assessing the extent to which the Panels' recommendations have been implemented in recent years. However, the decision was to organize a workgroup with membership from all three Panels to review recommendations made by the Panels over the past seven years, OCFS' written response to the recommendations, and the extent to which the recommendations have been implemented.

There was a discussion about the responsibilities of the Panels and CAPTA requirements. Some Panel members want a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Panel under the federal CAPTA guidelines. This understanding is important in framing an impact assessment that is purposeful and performance-driven. There was discussion of the article "GAO: Effectiveness of Citizen Review Panels" and whether the expectations of the Panels under CAPTA are consistent with how the Panels are working.

Panel members expressed a desire to better understand what is and isn't within the Panel's purview. Further, Panel members want to assess how effective have they been so far and whether there are additional people who should receive the Panels' annual report and recommendations. Panel members agreed to share contact information of stakeholders they feel should have a copy of the report and recommendations.

During the Joint CRP meeting, an Impact Assessment workgroup was created. Mary McCarthy and Ed Blatt agreed to represent the Eastern Panel on the workgroup. The joint panel agreed that there should be two members from each Panel on the workgroup and that the group should meet in early spring.

Agenda Item: Protocol for CRP Review of Cases (Angela Baris)

The Panel continued its discussion from last year about drafting a protocol for reviewing individual cases, should the need arise. The discussion in this meeting focused on the pros and cons of a case review protocol. After a discussion, the Panel agreed not to continue its work on a case review protocol at this time as it seems unlikely the Panel will be reviewing individual cases. If the need does arise, the Panel can develop a protocol if it is needed. It is possible the Panel may want to review cases when there is an emergency or when trends arise in the region.

OCFS Updates (Lisa Gordon and Renee Hallock)

2016 Executive Budget: There were no cuts in the budget for OCFS programs.

Child Welfare Practice Model: The model was introduced by OCFS in February 2015 with the goal of improving outcomes for children. OCFS is developing trauma-informed training that will be available to LDSS staff and foster/adoptive parents.

Medicaid Managed Care: Significant changes are underway as children in foster care are going to be moved to a Medicaid Managed Care system. While this will involve significant system changes, it is also an opportunity for more children to get additional services.

KEYS Training: Four new counties are coming online this year for this supervisory training and more will be added in the future.

New York State Bill of Rights for Children and Youth in Foster Care: OCFS worked with youth in foster care to develop the Bill of Rights. OCFS mandated that all older children in foster care are to be provided with a copy of the document and that this be documented in the case record. It should be discussed with younger children. This document can be shared with the Attorney for the Child. It was written at a fifth grade reading level. Currently it has only been translated into Spanish but can be translated into other languages if requested.

Children and Families Services Review Data Indicators (handout): The federal government looked at NYS' performance during October 1, 2011-September 31, 2012. New York's performance needs improvement in most areas. In particular is the low rating New York State gets for the length of time children remain in foster care. The reasons for this include parental drug and alcohol abuse, as well as mental health problems. These issues can require more time for services to be delivered, which leads to children remaining in foster care longer.

There are other areas on the CFSR where New York State appears to be doing poorly. There are issues with the data due to the way information is being captured (e.g., # number of children abused/maltreated while in foster care). OCFS is working with the federal government to identify and correct those problems. For the current federal year, OCFS is issuing targets to local districts regarding the number of adoptions and children discharged to KinGap.

Raise the Age Proposal: The Division of Criminal Justice Services, not OCFS, was part of the development of this proposal. This legislation has not yet passed and OCFS has no more information than what has been announced publicly.

Agenda Item: Future Agenda Items for 2015 Meetings

There was discussion about items for future meeting agendas. Suggestions include:

- Sharon Chesna and JoAnne Merriman will present information on fatality review teams and John Clinton will also be invited to share how OCFS uses the information gathered from fatality review teams to identify trends and make interventions.
- Family Assessment Response (FAR)/Differential Response Data: Which counties have implemented FAR? Which have discontinued FAR and why?

- What are the reasons why NYS continues to do poorly on CFSR reviews?
- The panel will further investigate the CAPTA mandate and performance benchmarks in order to create an effective impact assessment.

There was a brief discussion of the need for additional members for the Eastern Panel. There can be up to 13 members, including at least one member who is a past victim of child abuse or maltreatment.

Hector Ramirez, meeting Chair, adjourned the meeting.