

Eastern CRP
Minutes of the Meeting
February 28, 2014

Attendees:

Hector Ramirez

Mary McCarthy

Angela Baris

Ed Blatt

JoAnn Merriman

Lance Jackson

Guest: Fred Scaglione

OCFS Staff: Renee Hallock

Lisa Gordon

John Stupp

SCAA Staff: Diane Mastin

Handouts:

Agenda

Promoting the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families in Child Welfare

Access to Information (CPS)

2014 CRP Meeting Dates and Topics

NYS CRP Memo of Support: Funding Essential Child Welfare Services at 65% State Share

NYS CRP Testimony before the Joint Fiscal Committee, Human Services Budget Hearing,
2/14/14

Chahine, Z. and Sanders, D. (2014). The Road Ahead: Comprehensive and Innovative Approaches for Improving Safety and Preventing Child Maltreatment Fatalities. *Child Welfare* Vol 92, No. 2.

Special Foreword: Preventing Severe Maltreatment-Related Injuries and Fatalities: Applying a Public Health Framework and Innovative Approaches to Child Protection. *Child Welfare*. Vol. 92, No. 2.

Minutes of the Meeting, December 13, 2013

The meeting began with a welcome and introductions. Fred Scaglione described his publication, *New York Nonprofit Press*, to panel members and his reasons for launching it in 2002. It has become a go-to publication for those in the human services sector. The publication provides information to those on the front line as well as to those at the higher levels of administration in the human services industry.

He went on to discuss the role of the media in today's society and journalists lack of commitment to provide the necessary details for readers and listeners to gain understanding of the complexity of issues addressed in a particular story and build understanding that will result in positive solutions. He emphasized that publications are strapped for time and personnel and encouraged panel members to establish relationships with the media and provide information to them. The more you can make it the news vehicle's story, the more likely the media will use it. He explained that the local news opportunity is much smaller than it once was and it is difficult to maintain interest on any one topic for the long run. He encouraged panel members to contact editors whenever they disagree with news coverage and to submit opinion pieces and letters to the editor.

His publication repeatedly featured the need for a human services COLA. He feels strongly that the human service sector needs to position itself as a critical community service, much like police and fire, and make the case that the sector needs essential funding to continue.

John Stupp, OCFS Assistant Deputy Counsel, provided an overview of the confidentiality requirements found in 371-B of the state's social services law. The law provides citizen review panels with reasonable access to records in accordance with CAPTA. Panel members are forbidden to release any information to any entity and could incur criminal charges if client specific information is intentionally released. Panels have access to pending and indicated CPS reports minus any information which identifies the source of the report, unfounded reports, FAR cases records, and fatality reports within the panels' interest area. Panels do not have a legal right to preventive, foster care, or adoption case records. In response to a question, he clarified that unfounded cases are not expunged but are legally sealed. They can be unsealed if there is another report made. The records are expunged 10 years after a report is filed.

Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) cannot confirm or deny any investigation. Information is only released to police personnel and District of Attorneys. The subject of a report or the non-culpable parent can release information. Section 424 of the state's social services law provides four conditions when LDSS must take into consideration when making a decision about releasing information in a child fatality case. Disclosure is at the localities discretion and there are strict limitations written in statute as to what can be said. He referred panel members to the online CPS manual which contains a check list for OCFS and LDSS to use in such situations.

Records can be shared with service providers when there are indicated cases. In preventive services, a client can sign a release to share records. A recent amendment to FERPA allows some education records to be provided to CPS. A report back to a mandated reporter when CPS receives a request for feedback. There is no obligation that the district must report back to everyone. The SCR does ask a reporter if they want a summary. Due to HIPPA restrictions, medical personnel must get a release from the parent to provide any information to caseworkers due to HIPPA.

Renee Hallock, OCFS Associate Commissioner, provided an overview of a concept paper *Promoting the Well-being of Children, Youth and Families in Child Welfare* and a recent forum held by OCFS with stakeholders to discuss how to move trauma-informed practices forward in the state. OCFS is working with Brian Samuels and Claire Sanders from Chapin Hall on this work. OCFS will use a slightly revised version of the CANDS as an overall screening tool to help caseworkers make decisions about the child's needs and how to move a case forward. The information from the screening will be put into CONNECTIONS and used to monitor cases over time. The move towards trauma-informed practice will take several years and involve training of workers, changes to CONNECTIONS, and an evaluation of how this work translates to younger children. Workgroups were formed as an outcome of the forum. Those groups will continue to meet and address the various implementation issues.

Panel members discussed the agenda for their next meeting and offered several suggestions for possible recommendations for their annual report. They agreed to discuss developing a protocol for accessing case records at a future meeting.