

**Eastern Citizen Review Panel
Meeting Summary
December 8, 2017
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Attendees:

Panel Members: Mary McCarthy, Nadia Allen (by phone), Sharon Chesna (by phone), Maureen McLoughlin, Angela Baris, Kathy Halas (by phone)

Guests: Lisa Gordon, OCFS
Deb Czubak, OASAS
John Lockwood, OCFS Albany Regional Office
William Gettman, Northern Rivers

WRI Staff: Darlene Ward, Executive Director
Jennifer Goldman, CRP Coordinator and Program Specialist
Ellen Unruh, Associate Executive Director (by phone)

Handouts:

- Agenda
- Eastern CRP Minutes 9.22.17
- NYS CRP Operating Guidelines – with 11.28.17 revisions
- NYS CRP Proposed 2018 Meeting Dates
- Adoption Subsidy Bill article
- Early Childhood Home Visiting article
- ACE's Impact on Child Welfare article
- Foster Care Youth Leaving the System article
- Eastern Panel Survey Summary
- Voluntary Agency PowerPoint

Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions

Mary McCarthy, Panel Co-Chair

Panel Co-Chair Mary McCarthy convened meeting and asked panel members and guests to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item: Advocacy Planning

Mary McCarthy, Panel Co-Chair

Mary McCarthy summarized past CRP advocacy activities. Panel members discussed their advocacy plans for the upcoming budget and legislative season and approved of sending an expedited summary of the 2017 Annual Report to the Governor's office. Panel members also discussed linking advocacy efforts with the First 1000 Days on Medicaid initiative and identified legislators that would be most appropriate to meet with.

Agenda Item: Eastern CRP Operations

Darlene Ward, WRI Executive Director

Darlene Ward, WRI Executive Director, reviewed the results of the Eastern Panel meeting schedule survey. Most Eastern Panel members requested to move the meeting day from Fridays to another day. Panel members are also interested in at least one meeting via videoconference for a shorter period of time to better accommodate members that must travel greater distances to Albany. In the interest of more focused meetings, panel members agreed that it would be beneficial to create a short list of priorities for 2018. Jennifer Goldman, CRP Coordinator offered to create an online survey to help the Panel rank priorities.

Agenda Item: Updates from OCFS

Lisa Gordon, OCFS

Lisa Gordon joined the meeting to provide the following updates from OCFS.

Child and Family Service Review/ Program Improvement Plan (CFSR/PIP) Submission

OCFS received Technical Assistance from the Children's Bureau. The PIP has been updated accordingly and will be submitted by 12/31.

Family Assessment Response (FAR)

Accomplishments for 2017 include:

- FAR quality assurance assessment tool was incorporated into the ongoing case monitoring process
- The FAR track application was updated and re-launched
- The CPS Manual was updated to include FAR and is going through internal clearances
- The FAR Family Led Assessment Guide (FLAG) now needs to be submitted for the approval of a supervisor. This CONNECTIONS change was made at the request of counties using FAR.
- Regional offices participated in a two day FAR training for new staff and FAR refresher for seasoned staff.
- A computer based training provided to district staff prior to entering FAR Process and Practice training, was updated and is currently being produced.
- Oneida and Cortland are exploring the potential use of FAR.

Goals for 2018 include:

- Streamline an internal process for reviewing practice issues found during case reviews including sharing information with our training partners
- ACS is looking to greatly expand FAR in 2018. OCFS will be offering supports as needed through regular meetings with ACS
- Create webinars on the use of FAR when issues of domestic violence are identified in a case.

Home Visiting – Healthy Families New York (HFNY)

At the end of 2017 and beginning 2018, Healthy Families New York will expand to 4 additional programs bringing the total to 42 serving 46 communities. HFNY is currently going through the accreditation process as a state multi-system and completed gathering 15 year follow up information on its Randomized Control Trial study. OCFS anticipates hearing about findings in late 2018.

Workload Study

No updates since last meeting.

Raise the Age Bill

OCFS continues to work on the projected number of youth coming into the system as foster care placements and is developing a program and aftercare model. OCFS will be communicating with the field as soon as it is ready. OCFS is also developing DJJOY beds and working with the counties to create detention programs for the new population. OCFS continues to have ongoing discussions with Office of Court Administration, State Education Department, and Division of Criminal Justice Services leadership.

County Plans

Mary McCarthy asked Ms. Gordon about the timeline of county plans and when the Eastern Panel would be able to access plans for the Eastern Region counties. Ms. Gordon agreed to get the timeline for panel members.

Agenda Item: WRI Updates

Jennifer Goldman, WRI

CRP Coordinator, Jennifer Goldman, provided pertinent updates to the panel members on the status of the Annual Report revisions, proposed revisions to the CRP Operating Guidelines, and proposed 2018 CRP meeting schedule. Panel members provided Ms. Goldman with names of potential new panel members.

Agenda Item: Substance Use Initiatives in Child Welfare

*Deb Czubak, OASAS
John Lockwood, OCFS*

John Lockwood, OCFS Albany Regional Director, and Deb Czubak, OASAS Regional Coordinator Northeast Office, joined the meeting to discuss substance use initiatives related to child welfare in the Eastern region. Mr. Lockwood described a recently held regional forum for child welfare workers on the topic of substance use including completing risk and safety assessments when substance use issues are identified in a case.

Ms. Czubak shared that OASAS is approaching substance use as public health issue, interacting with many other sectors of human service. She also described OASAS' priority admission process for parents with children in danger of being removed or already in foster care.

Panel members and guests then jointly discussed concerns with substance use related issues in the child welfare system including:

- Services for children of parents with substance use disorders,
- Struggle between the timelines for permanency in child welfare vs. recovery timelines,
- Expansion in services (especially in rural communities) in response to the opioid crisis,
- Coordinating substance use related services with child welfare related services such as parenting and counseling,
- Influence of insurance industry on recovery services,
- Educating family court staff on the recovery process, and

- Inappropriate withholding of visitation with children in foster care as a punishment for relapse.

Panel Co-Chair Mary McCarthy thanked both guests for their time.

Agenda Item: Voluntary Agency Challenges/Initiatives *William Gettman, Northern Rivers*

William Gettman, CEO at Northern Rivers Family of Services, joined the meeting to discuss promising initiatives and challenges currently facing voluntary agencies. Mr. Gettman described the financial pressures currently facing voluntary agencies including those at the federal, local and school district level. In addition, voluntary agencies are operating as quasi-healthcare providers as they are often paid by Medicaid and insurance companies but must abide by government regulations. Despite these financial pressures, 1 in 6 individuals in NYS are employed by non-profits.

Mr. Gettman also identified positive initiatives in child welfare with impact on voluntary agencies including Raise the Age, Close to Home in NYC, expansion of services under Medicaid for children at home, continued support of preventive services, expansion of school based service delivery models, linking housing as a service, and other continued policy discussions.

Mr. Gettman identified several critical issues impacting the future success of voluntary agencies such as a workforce shortage and retention crisis, non-profit fiscal liability, demands for new services and evermore complex client needs, IT challenges and the lack of start-up and transition funds for new innovations in service or initiatives.

Panel members asked how the Citizen Review Panels could assist voluntary agencies as they tackle the daunting list of concerns and issues. Mr. Gettman replied that the Panels could ask for clarification on the details of the implementation of new initiatives and also be a champion for increasing supports for the child welfare workforce.

Ms. McCarthy thanked Mr. Gettman for his time.

Agenda Item: Closing Business *Mary McCarthy*

Ms. McCarthy adjourned the meeting. Next Eastern CRP meeting is Thursday, March 8, 2018.