

Eastern Citizen Review Panel
Meeting Summary
September 22, 2017
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Panel Members: Nadia Allen, Angela Baris, Edward Blatt, Kathy Halas, Sharon Chesna (by phone), Joann Merriman (by phone), Maureen McLoughlin (by phone), Carrie Jefferson-Smith (by phone)

Guests: Theresa Beaudoin, DSS Commissioner Rensselaer County
Tammy DeLorme, DSS Commissioner Washington County
Sharon Kollar, National Child Welfare Workforce Institute
Amy Papandrea, Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)
Christine Peters, OCFS
Kari Siddiqui, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA)
Bridget Walsh, SCAA

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

Handouts:

- ACE Response Team
- Bills to Watch in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice
- Caseload Veto Message
- Agenda
- Eastern CRP Minutes 5.5.17
- FAR Flow Chart
- Funding NY CHP
- Home Visiting White Paper
- Home Visiting Training Proposal
- Medicaid & CRP Covers Kids in Rural NY
- NCWWI Racial Equity Team Overview
- NCWWI Brochure
- OCFS CPS Workload Roundtable
- Promoting Racial Equity Through Workforce
- Protect Medicaid and CRP March 2017
- Update What's Next for MIECHV legislation

Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions

Edward Blatt, Panel Chair

Panel Chair Edward Blatt convened meeting and asked panel members and guests to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item: Meeting with OCFS Executive Staff

Edward Blatt

Panel Chair Edward Blatt provided a summary of the CRP Chairs’ meeting with OCFS Executive Staff. Topics of discussion included expanding funding for home visiting programs and updates on OCFS initiatives.

Agenda Item: County Challenges and Initiatives

Theresa Beaudoin, DSS Commissioner Rensselaer County

Tammy DeLorme, DSS Commissioner Washington County

Commissioner Theresa Beaudoin, Rensselaer County, and Commissioner Tammy DeLorme, Washington County, joined the meeting to discuss county challenges and initiatives related to child welfare. Common challenges included implementation of the new “Raise the Age” legislation, child welfare staff turnover, and the impact of the opioid epidemic on the child protective services caseload. The Commissioners then highlighted some of the issues particular to each of their counties. Rensselaer County is considering restructuring units to address turnover and workload flux. Washington County identifies homelessness and lack of foster care resources as major issues.

Panel members then asked the Commissioners about the use of Family Assessment Response (FAR) in their counties. Rensselaer County withdrew from using FAR due to the perceived friction that it caused between units. Washington County continues to utilize the FAR track, as it has been helpful for caseload management in Washington County. Commissioner DeLorme commented that it has been helpful that implementation rules have been relaxed, allowing for all workers to be cross-trained in CPS and FAR.

Panel members, Commissioner Beaudoin and Commissioner DeLorme then discussed methods for better informing the public of the work that DSS does, outside of highly publicized negative outcomes from cases.

Agenda Item: Race Equity Workforce Initiatives

Sharon Kollar, National Child Welfare Workforce Institute

Sharon Kollar from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) joined the meeting to inform the Panel of the workforce race equity work being done through NCWWI. Ms. Kollar shared that the project is funded through the federal Children’s Bureau and is comprised of a network of professionals at universities across the country. After initially focusing on leadership training, the team redirected efforts to exploring race equity related issues. Through thorough assessment and research, the Race Equity Team developed tools such as webinars and infographics to share with the child welfare community. Although this project is time limited, with funds ending at the end of 2018, they hope that the work will “plant seeds” to further improve racial equity in child welfare.

Agenda Item: OCFS Updates

Amy Papandrea

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

OCFS is working on revisions to the NYS Program Improvement Plan, based on feedback from the Administration for Children and Families.

Family Assessment Response (FAR)

No additional counties have agreed to implement FAR; however, no counties have discontinued the use of FAR. OCFS is in the process of transitioning contracted work on FAR implementation from the Butler Institute to the Center for Development of Human Services at SUNY Buffalo. OCFS is examining FAR data to identify FAR case outcomes and missed opportunities to track more cases to FAR.

Home Visiting

OCFS continues to use available funds to expand home visiting programs, especially in the NYC region.

Workload Study

Jennifer Goldman, WRI, provided a summary of the Statewide CPS Workload Roundtable.

Raise the Age Bill

OCFS did not have any updates on the implementation of the Raise the Age law.

Agenda Item: Updates on federal legislation

Bridget Walsh and Kari Siddiqui, SCAA

Bridget Walsh, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, provided an update on proposed federal legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. She described the components of the Graham-Cassidy Bill, including the negative impact on funding allotted for New York State through proposed redistribution of funds and the impact for New Yorkers, especially children, who receive medical care funding through Medicaid. Ms. Walsh then described the status of the Children's Health Insurance Program, set to expire at the end of September 2017. She shared that New York has enough funds to maintain the program without federal funding through March 2018, but will then need to cut coverage and services if federal funding is not restored.

Kari Siddiqui, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, provided an update on the status of the Maternal, Infant & Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV), the largest federal funding stream for home visiting programs. Funding for MIECHV, also up for re-authorization, is set to expire September 30, 2017. A proposed bill with bi-partisan support extends flat funding for an additional 5 years; however, it is still unclear exactly what will happen with MIECHV re-authorization. Ms. Siddiqui also provided a brief summary of the activities of the statewide Home Visiting Workgroup.

In addition to MIECHV, Ms. Siddiqui updated the Panel Members on the impact of potential federal legislation on the children of immigrants and shared that if the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA) is repealed, it could have an immense impact on the children of immigrants.

Agenda Item: WRI Updates

Jennifer Goldman

Jennifer Goldman reminded panel members to complete an updated confidentiality agreement form.

Agenda Item: Closing Business

Edward Blatt

Panel members discussed focus areas for the CRP joint meeting on October 30, 2017, new panel member recruitment, as well as additional topics for the next Eastern CRP meeting in December. Mr. Blatt then adjourned the meeting.