

NYS Citizen Review Panels (CRP) for Child Protective Services

Joint Meeting Summary

June 14, 2018 • 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Attendees

Panel Members: Eastern: Edward Blatt, Mary McCarthy, Nadia Allen (by phone), Kathy Halas (by phone),
Maureen McLoughlin
NYC: David Lansner, Stanley Capela, Marion White, Wayne Ho, Mathea Rubin (by phone)
Western: Ellen Kennedy, Linda Brown, Melissa Cavagnaro

OCFS: Sheila Poole, Acting Commissioner
Laura Velez, Deputy Commissioner
Lisa Gordon, Director, Bureau of Program and Community Development

WRI: Jennifer Goldman, William Dorr, Ellen Unruh (by phone), Lee Lounsbury (Consultant)

Handouts

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| Agenda | Summary of CRP Activities |
| Joint meeting minutes 10.30.17 | Family First Act Handout |
| Joint panel call minutes 1.22.18 | Predictive risk modeling article |

Welcome and Introductions

Eastern Panel Chair Edward Blatt welcomed and asked participants to introduce themselves.

Updates from Panels

Each panel chair summarized panel activities since the previous Joint Panel meeting in October 2017.

Western

In January, the Western panel attempted some advocacy efforts at the local level but was unable to connect with partners.

Since then, the Western panel has been focusing its efforts on understanding the impact of the opioid epidemic on child welfare caseloads and invited foster care and child protection staff from local districts to share their first-hand experiences.

NYC

The NYC Panel focused on learning NYC specific information from the NYC Administration for Children's Services such as a new program pairing retired law enforcement officers with CPS caseworkers and anti-trafficking efforts. The NYC panel has continued to have conversations with both ACS and OCFS regarding mandated reporters receiving case outcome results upon request.

The Eastern, Western and NYC panel members agreed to send a letter to OCFS requesting that CONNECTIONS be updated to include an automatically generated case outcome letter to be sent to mandated reporters upon request. WRI agreed to draft the letter on behalf of the Panels.

Eastern

The Eastern Panel has been focused on regional advocacy efforts and building relationships with legislators. Eastern panel members met with Assemblywoman Fahy, Assemblyman McDonald and Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh, finding success with focus on one issue and presenting data specific to counties in the Assemblymembers' districts. The message of more funding and support for home visiting programs was well received and Assemblywoman Fahy suggested connecting home visiting with the women's caucus focus on improving minority maternal health and preventing infant death. The Eastern Panel agreed to meet with Assemblywoman Fahy again in August. All Panels agreed that the CRPs should be meeting with legislators more frequently.

Future Plans for CRP Advocacy

Facilitated by Lee Lounsbury

Consultant Lee Lounsbury asked panel members to first think about successes and challenges from the past – what worked and what didn't work. After reviewing past challenges, panel members then jointly agreed to create a strategic advocacy plan for the next year, including earlier meetings with NYS Department of Budget (DOB) and legislators.

Ms. Lounsbury then asked if there is anything currently going on that may influence the work of the Panels. The Panel members responded that many legislators are up for re-election in the fall.

The Panel members jointly agreed on the following action steps:

1. Schedule meetings with the Division of Budget and specific legislators in August 2018
2. Develop a strategic advocacy plan – subcommittee of panel members agreed to work on this in July 2018.
3. Meet as a joint group via e-meeting or phone to review the strategic plan and determine next steps.

Agenda Item: OCFS Updates

Shelia Poole, Acting Commissioner

Laura Velez, Deputy Commissioner

Lisa Gordon, Bureau Director

Acting Commissioner Sheila Poole, Deputy Commissioner Laura Velez and Bureau Director Lisa Gordon joined the meeting to provide updates from OCFS.

CWIS

NY intends to incrementally move toward compliance. OCFS will explore using data and data entry in new ways to garner more information from the system and also relieve caseworkers of data entry as much as possible.

Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE)

OCFS is working on the issue of JCOPE requesting the filing of financial disclosure forms for those panel members appointment by the Governor. Other volunteer boards are having similar issues. OCFS has been in touch with the Governor's counsel and will advise as soon as they have a response.

Family First Act Implementation

OCFS is still waiting on guidance from the federal government. While waiting for guidance, OCFS is conducting an implementation analysis and setting up workgroups to determine how NYS can best implement the new federal legislation. The Panel members and OCFS then discussed pros and cons of the new legislation and implication for child welfare practice.

Home Visiting Expansion

OCFS continues to utilize adoption de-linking money and available TAN-F money to fund additional or expand existing Healthy Families NY (HFNY) sites. There are currently 44 HFNY programs serving 35 counties. In 2017, 5,882 families were served through HFNY programs. NYC is currently working on expansion so that all boroughs are covered. OCFS agreed to update HFNY maps so that Panel members could more easily identify coverage areas.

Caseworker Training

The CDHS contract to provide case worker training in NYS will expire December 31st, 2018. OCFS is actively working on a transition plan. The OCFS Bureau of Training is hiring additional training staff with the goal of adding as many additional training staff as possible by the fall. The new statewide training center will be up and running by January 2019. Acting Commissioner Poole offered to host the next Joint Panel meeting at the new facility.

FAR Implementation

OCFS is taking an in-depth look at FAR implementation as additional counties are showing interest. OCFS has re-assigned additional staff to focus on improving FAR implementation including more quality reviews, technical assistance, data reviews and practice improvement. OCFS offered to provide a more detailed report of FAR utilization at the next Joint Panel meeting.

Child and Family Service Review – Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

The NYS PIP has been approved by the federal Administration for Children and Families. OCFS continues to work on the implementation of the strategies in the PIP including ongoing reviews with county Departments of Social Services.

Mandated Reporter Notification

Panel members informed OCFS of the issue with mandated reporters not receiving requested notification of case outcomes. OCFS agreed to forward that concern to the IT department to determine what can be done.

Debrief/Next Steps

Panel members agreed to the next steps:

- A subcommittee will meet via conference call to draft an advocacy strategic plan
- Joint panel will meet again via conference call in late July to review the proposed strategic plan and determine course of action.
- WRI will follow up on the CRPs' letter regarding the formation of the Child Protective Services Taskforce as well as outstanding new member appointment letters

Panel members discussed the recruitment of new members.

Closing

Eastern Panel Chair, Edward Blatt, adjourned the meeting.

Next Joint Panel Meeting – October 11, 2018.