

**NYC Citizen Review Panel
Meeting Summary
December 6, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Attendees:

Panel Members: Dr. Jocelyn Brown, Wayne Ho, David Lansner, Esq., Mathea Rubin
Marion White, Stanley Capela

Guests: Stephanie Gendell, Esq., Associate Executive Director for Policy and
Government Relations, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Dr. Stuart Gitlow, Impact of Opioid Epidemic on Child Welfare in NYC
Lisa Gordon, OCFS (by phone)

WRI Staff: Lee Lounsbury, Executive Director, WRI (by phone)
Judy Stanger, Program Specialist and CRP Coordinator
Cindy Alois, Administrative Support Specialist (by phone)

Handouts:

- Meeting Agenda
- Outline of Recommendations for the Citizen Review Panels' 2016 Annual Report
- Summary of Citizen Review Panel Chairs' Meeting with The Governor's Office and the NYS Division of the Budget on November 2, 2016
- NYC Council Expected to Pass Bill Package to Improve Foster Care System
- Youth Deserve So Much More- Coalition Rallies for a Better Foster Care System
- 10/18/16 Joint CRP Meeting Minutes
- 9/20/16 NYC CRP Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions

Panel Chair, Wayne Ho, opened the meeting and introductions took place.

Agenda Item: Recent City Council Action

*Stephanie Gendell, Esq.,
Associate Executive Director for Policy and Government Relations
, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York*

Ms. Gendell described several bills recently passed by the New York City Council related to foster care. Council Member Steven Levin is especially interested in child welfare issues. The City Council recently held a "shadow day" for youth in foster care so they could shadow a Council member. As a result, Council Members felt they learned a lot about foster care. Through recent meetings between the Citizens' Committee for Children and Councilman Levin, several bills were developed related to foster care as well as a new homeless housing bill. Ms.

Gendell noted that on December 14, 2016, the City Council will hold a hearing regarding preventive services.

Ms. Gendell also provided an overview of the Committee's budgetary and legislative priorities for the upcoming state budget session (for the 2017-18 state budget). These priorities include creating a funding stream for KinGAP subsidies outside of the foster care block grant, increasing the state reimbursement rate for preventive services from the current 62% back up to 65% and using the 3% difference for primary prevention services (formerly known as Community Optional Preventive Services, or COPS). It was noted that those priorities are aligned with the recommendations to be included in the joint Citizen Review Panels' 2016 Annual Report.

Agenda Item: Impact of Opioid Epidemic in Child Welfare in NYC

Dr. Stuart Gitlow

Dr. Gitlow began his presentation with an overview of addiction and the causes of addictive disease, including: genetics; children who learn to over time to take drugs to feel better and more comfortable with their feelings; and drug availability. He noted that our society promotes the use of drugs to make people feel better.

Dr. Gitlow discussed the reasons for the escalation in opiate addiction. The opioid epidemic began when doctors were told they were under treating patients' pain and they needed to prescribe more medications. Further, doctors were being graded on patient satisfaction and were told they needed to encourage satisfaction with all patients. Dr. Gitlow also noted that a contributing factor is the broad acceptance of marijuana. The U.S. has become a net exporter of marijuana and is selling it to countries such as Mexico that used to send their marijuana to us. Due to the increase in marijuana use, it is now seen as a gateway drug for 20% of the addiction population.

State governments now are telling doctors that they are required to restrict prescription medications, resulting in an overall increase in heroin use. Dr. Gitlow noted that there is treatment available for opiate addiction in the form of naltrexone, however, doctors are limited to the quantity that can be prescribed.

A Panel member asked for suggestions about articles Dr. Gitlow wrote, or can recommend, on the topic. Dr. Gitlow responded that he has written several books on the topic and will send a copy to the Panel.

Agenda Item: OCFS Updates

Lisa Gordon, OCFS

Ms. Gordon provided updates on work OCFS is doing related to the Panels' recommendations.

- Children of Incarcerated Parents: OCFS has a meeting scheduled with the Osborne Association in December to discuss this issue and ways in which OCFS can support the mission.
- Child and Family Services Review (CFSR): OCFS has still not received the final report from the federal Children's Bureau from the on-site review held in June. However, OCFS

continues to analyze data, and specifically permanency data, to develop strategies for improvement.

- Opioid Epidemic and the Impact on Child Welfare: OCFS is working with the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and is holding joint regional forums on the topic. At these forums, the film “Hungry Heart” is shown to stakeholders, after which work is done on action plans. The film is about the opioid crisis in Vermont, through the eyes of a pediatrician. Ms. Gordon will provide a copy of the film to WRI for the Panels.
- Webinar: OCFS recently conducted a webinar presentation detailing what OCFS is currently working on in child welfare. An archived copy of the webinar will soon be available on the OCFS website.
- County Plan Process: Counties are required to submit a plan to OCFS every five years about their plans for services to children and families. The five-year cycle is ending soon, however OCFS is going to work with counties for a year, providing data and a template for planning, after which time the next five-year plan will be due.
- Child Fatality Reports: OCFS is required to oversee fatality investigations by counties and issue a written report for each fatality. OCFS has moved the function of report writing from regional offices to the home office to bring consistency to the process.

A Panel member asked about the availability of OCFS’ annual summary fatality report; Ms. Gordon responded that the latest report is currently on the OCFS website and prior reports are available from OCFS if the Panel wants them.

- Safe Sleep: OCFS continues their work with three participating hospitals in the western part of the state to educate new parents about safe sleep practices with infants. Work will soon begin with an additional hospital in Westchester County. Ms. Gordon reported that there is tremendous demand for the Safe Sleep kits and videos that OCFS developed.

A Panel member asked whether there exists any structure for implementation or funding for the Sexual Abuse Prevention Act. Ms. Gordon responded that she will look into this matter. There was a discussion about the ability for Panel members to access individual OCFS’ reports about individual child fatalities. WRI reminded Panel members that the OCFS New York City Regional Office provides WRI with a copy of each report based on an agreement that predates WRI’s involvement with the Panels. Several Panel members noted that they would like to have access to NYC Fatality Reports. WRI will email interested members a link giving access to reports, which Panel members can legally have access to but cannot redisclose.

Agenda Item: Debrief Joint Meeting DOB/Governor’s office

Wayne Ho

Mr. Ho stated that Panel members previously met with the NYS Division of the Budget (DOB) in October and then with staff from the Governor’s Office in November. DOB staff were again present at the November meeting through an invitation from the Governor’s office staff. During both meetings there was a review of the Panels’ priorities for the upcoming state budget,

including home visiting and preventive services. There was a cordial discussion, with staff from the Governor's office and DOB stating that the budget situation is tight because of the state's property tax cap.

Agenda Item: WRI Updates/Next steps for Annual Report

Lee Lounsbury

Ms. Lounsbury stated that the joint Panels' 2016 Annual Report is due to OCFS by January 31, 2017. Panel members have the first draft and comments are due back to WRI by December 16, 2016. WRI will then incorporate comments, format the report, and email it back to Panel members for a second review, however with a shorter turnaround timeframe. Ms. Lounsbury reminded Panel members that the recommendations included in the report reflect the discussion and vote at the October 2016 joint Panels' meeting. She thanked Panel members who have commented to date.

Agenda Item: Topics for 2017

Wayne Ho

The Panel discussed potential topics for the next Panel meeting, including:

- Analysis of NYC Fatality Reports that WRI will prepare.
- Follow up with Governors' office regarding Home Visiting.
- Data about the impact of the opioid crisis on child welfare, if available from OCFS and/or ACS.

Mr. Ho adjourned the meeting.