

# Western Citizen Review Panel for Child Protective Services

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## Meeting Summary

May 18, 2018 • 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

### Attendees:

#### Panel Members

Ellen Kennedy

Linda Brown

Karl Wiggins

#### WRI

Ellen Unruh (by phone)

Jennifer Goldman

#### OCFS

Karen Lewter (by phone)

#### County Foster Care Caseworkers

Mike Drum, Genesee County

Michelle McNaughton, Niagara County

Karyn Riordan, Niagara County

Paula Maue, Erie County

John Pryzbyl, Erie County

#### Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

Kari Siddiqui (by phone)

Nawshin Ahmed (by phone)

### Handouts

Agenda

Caseload Taskforce

CCWIS article

CPS Protection Order

Child Welfare Opioid Study

Family First Act

Family First Act

Minutes 3.16.18

PAT study

Pregnant Woman Subsidy Program

Prevention Taskforce

**Welcome** – Ellen Kennedy, Panel Chair

### County Roundtable – Impact of Opioid Addiction on Foster Care Cases

- Foster care unit staff from Erie, Niagara, and Genesee counties joined the meeting to discuss the longer term impacts of opioid addiction on foster care cases.
- The foster care workers observed that opioid addiction has been related to an increase in:
  - The number of cases related to opioid addiction
  - The number of relative placements and certification of relative foster parents
  - Cases with prenatal and postnatal drug exposure through breastfeeding
  - The length of time that cases are open and
  - Complexity of cases.
- The panel members and guests then discussed available services for parents with opioid addiction and their children. Although not available in every county some of the services discussed included:
  - Drug treatment courts
  - Drug treatment programs
  - Programs for both parents and children.

Despite the available services, panel members and guests discussed some of the challenges to access treatment related to services including transportation in especially rural communities and a limited number of spaces resulting in lengthy waiting lists.

- Panel members then asked if the county foster care workers had any recommendations. Some recommendations were:
  - Additional funding for more caseworkers to decrease workload
  - Services in a campus setting where the family can remain together while the parent is seeking treatment
  - Work with the courts to decrease the amount of time that drug-related cases are open.
- Panel Chair Ellen Kennedy thanked the guests for their time.

### **Home Visiting and the Opioid Crisis – *Nawshin Ahmed and Kari Siddiqui, SCAA***

- Nawshin Ahmed and Kari Siddiqui from the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA) joined the meeting by phone to discuss a project at SCAA to examine the relationship between home visiting programs and child welfare involved families with a parent or caretaker that has an opioid addiction.
- Currently, there isn't any extensive research in this area.
- Home visiting can play a role in recovery in rural communities where there are less treatment resources.
- SCAA is developing a "think piece" targeted to legislators and policy makers. Some recommendations include:
  - Improve professional development of home visitors so they are more able to identify signs of opioid use
  - Improve relationship between home visiting programs and treatment centers
  - Build a collaborative between home visiting programs, county social service departments and treatment centers
  - Increase the number of kinship care provider connections to home visiting programs
- Panel Chair Ellen Kennedy thanked Nawshin and Kari for their time.

### **Monroe County Family Assessment Response (FAR) Program – *Karen Lewter, OCFS***

- Karen Lewter from the Office of Children and Family Services, Rochester Regional Office, joined the meeting by phone to provide an update on the status of the FAR program in Monroe County in relation to a recent, highly publicized child fatality.
- OCFS is conducting additional case reviews of FAR cases for program efficacy.
- The FAR program in Monroe County will be suspended until the completion of the review. Status of the program going forward will depend on the results of the review.

- Ms. Lewter noted that Monroe County has been extremely cooperative during the review.

### **NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Updates** - Lisa Gordon, OCFS (via email)

- Child and Family Service Review – NYS has still not heard back from the federal Administration for Children and Families regarding the approval of NYS Program Improvement Plan. OCFS continues to implement strategies in the plan while awaiting approval.
- Family Assessment Response (FAR) – A strategic planning workgroup is working on revisions to the FAR curriculum and surveying counties to identify needed updates in FAR protocols. OCFS is also looking at county plans to identify new counties that could benefit from FAR implementation.
- Home Visiting – OCFS is looking for ways to expand existing programs and also identify potential sites for new programs through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding.
- CPS Caseload Study – OCFS is still interested; however there is no update.
- Raise the Age – A Request for Applications to develop Raise the Age related programs was released. Thirteen sites were selected, and the foster care model contract for these sites will be revised to include Raise the Age programming. OCFS is also convening a Raise the Age taskforce to work out implementation details.
- Family First Act – OCFS has been convening weekly meetings to assess the potential impact of this new federal law and is awaiting additional guidance from the federal government.

### **Debrief and Next Steps**

- Panel members agreed to continue to champion expanding funding for home visiting, including examining how home visiting can potentially address the opioid crisis in NYS.
- Next meetings
  - Joint Panel Meeting – June 14, 2018
  - Western CRP Meeting – September 28, 2018
- Panel Chair Ellen Kennedy adjourned the meeting.