



**FINAL**

DHS Children, Adults and Families  
**Child Welfare Advisory Committee**  
September 12, 2007

Members

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|--|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dana Ainam                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leslie Currin        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jean Lasater      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pam Patton    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christine Stetzer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Janet Arenz                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Darland          | <input type="checkbox"/> Phil Lemman                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Doug Poppen              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judy Stiegler     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Balter by phone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sara Gelser          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Benjamin Hazelton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Angela Sherbo | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruth Taylor       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Iris Bell            | <input type="checkbox"/> Ben Leftwich for Cathy Kaufmann | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jerry Moore       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Becky Smith   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nan Waller        |

DHS Staff

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ramona Foley  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marge Reinhart for Jim Neely | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Toni Peterson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Feeny   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mickey Serice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nancy Keeling                | <input type="checkbox"/> Madeline Olson           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Debbi Kraus-Dorn |

Guests: Bruce Goldberg MD, Kamala Shugar – AAG, Christine Stolebarger, Diane Cohen-Alpert, Michelle Cole, Pat Melius, Karen Wheeler

Minutes Recorded By Pam Pearson

**OVERVIEW OF AGENDA, APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Stiegler: Reviewed today’s agenda with a reminder of the difference between items listed for information, discussion and action. Reminder that corrections to draft minutes are welcome for grammatical and clarification purposes. They should be within the realm of correcting the recorder’s wording if it was recorded inaccurately.
- June 13, 2007 Minutes: Approved.

**RECOGNITION OF DON DARLAND – presented by DHS Director Bruce Goldberg MD**

- Goldberg: It is an opportunity to honor Don Darland, who received the Commissioner’s Award from the US Department of Health and Human Services for his outstanding leadership and work in the prevention of child abuse and neglect and advocacy for children and families. Don has been a foster parent for over 16 years and well over 50 children have been in his home. He founded the Oregon Foster Parent Association.
- Darland: Gave recognition to Pat Melius, friend, mentor and previous Linn County branch manager. He has also learned a lot from CWAC members and is appreciative of all the work of the committee.

## **CONTINUOUS SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT AND SUBCOMMITTEES**

- Stiegler: At the June 13 CWAC meeting, we discussed the committee's continuous system improvement.
  - Though it was a good discussion, it drifted to the Oregon Child Welfare Safety Model (OSM). One purpose of talking about system improvement is to have more disciplined dialogue amongst ourselves and DHS. As a result of the June meeting, the continuous system improvement discussion was punted to the Future Issues Work Group (FIWG) for refinement and further discussion.
  - At the August 8 FIWG meeting, we had good representation from CWAC and a lengthy discussion about how issues come to CWAC, how we deal with them within CWAC, the role of CWAC and the obligations of DHS to CWAC. We were trying to come to an understanding of the process under which we need to function and how to deal with substantive issues. FIWG recognized that we have moved some hefty issues through to the recommendation stage, but have not followed through in learning the final actions taken by DHS and the results of our recommendations.
  - An ad hoc CWAC subcommittee on the OSM was suggested during the June CWAC meeting. Because one role of FIWG is to vet substantive issues and we are aware that subcommittees create more work for staff, the thinking is to use FIWG instead of forming another subcommittee.
  - We still have the Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee coming on board. FIWG will be working to refine that subcommittee's charge and topics.
  - We need to periodically return to the CWAC operating procedures. Our main goal is to be an advisory body to the agency. With that in mind, we want our discussions to be focused. The processes outlined in the operating procedures may need to be refined over time. They do include the movement of issues from information to discussion to action and to response. The response piece is what we are still working on and addressed in the continuous system improvement paper prepared by Mike Balter on FIWG's behalf.
  - We have two types of issues that we grapple with and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between them: operations/procedures issues and policy issues. An example of a policy issue was when Ramona Foley asked for a recommendation regarding the definition of special needs in adoptions. For operations/procedures, much of the OSM falls into that arena, though it has policy implications too. We want to have productive meetings and be

useful to DHS by making recommendations and giving advice that is beneficial to the department. We recognize that DHS may not always agree with our advice. We also want a feedback loop for the department to report back to us after we make a recommendation. That feedback may show that our recommendations need refinement or it may show that the issue is resolved and no further discussion or follow up is needed.

- FIWG recognized that CWAC members have diverse interests and they will not be able to agree on everything, including whether an issue is one on which we should be advising.
- Mike Balter was given the task by FIWG to define our next step in this continuous system improvement process.
- Balter: Provided additional explanation about the FIWG recommendations:
  - Certain rhythms occur. Legislative sessions come and go, yet we seem to be surprised when they arrive. Changes to policy frequently take longer than one legislative session to finalize. Most policies turn into operations and procedures. These processes can take a long period of time. In a committee with an ever-changing membership, we need to develop a system that will work in the environment just described. We have made progress in developing such a system and need to realize that. Now we need to decide what we want to improve.
  - One key FIWG recommendation is to separate policy discussions from operations/procedures discussions. They are very different conversations. The recommendation is that the CWAC agenda have section for each. We then need to practice these discussions for the next six months or a year on one policy issue (reducing the need for foster care) and one operation/procedure issue (OSM). Both are large enough to give us room for practice.
  - Other discussions, such as budget impacts, fit under these broad topics. Teen issues of safety fit under the OSM context. Issues of interest to members can fit under these topics also.
  - Another challenge is to ask for information from CAF within a context. We may ask for data after we make a recommendation so that we can look for the impact the recommendation made, look for patterns and not drop the issue until it is concluded.
  - FIWG could be used as a switchyard between meetings.
  - FIWG could reevaluate this process within six months.

- One risk is that the suggested topics are too narrow, but without creating some focus and discipline, we will continue with go-nowhere meetings and advocacy with no impact.
- Foley: The separation of policy and operations is good. However, we need to remember to keep some flexibility in the process. The world of child welfare can change even with a newspaper article. We are committed to bringing updated data on face-to-face visits to CWAC. We also have the case reviews for the federal CFSR (Child and Family Services Review). The CFSR program improvement plan (PIP) may include some policy and operations impacts that we will want to bring to CWAC. We hope CWAC will agree to review them even if they are outside the selected policy issue of reducing the need for foster care and the selected operations issue of the OSM.
- Stiegler: Realizes that other issues may come along. Our goal is to have a process in place to discuss them in a more disciplined way. After the June meeting, she heard frustration from some about the discussion not going anywhere. We are working on a process by which to bring issues to the floor.
- Balter: There is a difference when DHS asks for input from CWAC as a committee and when asking for input from the individual advocates who make up the CWAC membership. Immediate advice from the individual members could be part of the agenda titled “Highlights and Hot Topics.”
- Stiegler: When DHS brought the issue of the definition of special needs in adoptions to CWAC, we put the process into play. It is an example of how it works effectively when the agency solicits for advice from the committee as a whole. It is different when the agency asks for individual points of view.
- Patton: That is an important distinction and provides structure and a framework for how to do our business. During Ramona’s assistant director report, she will say what she needs from CWAC. Those issues then go to FIWG to refine before coming back to CWAC for discussion. If urgency does not allow for that process, then the input from CWAC would be individual points of view and not consensus of the committee.
- Cohen-Alpert: Applauds CWAC for putting more structure into the meetings and separating policy and procedures. There are many people around the table with different opinions, so it will often happen that DHS will get individual opinions and not consensus. She was not frustrated after the June meeting; she enjoyed the variety of input.
- Stiegler: The discussion at the June meeting was not useless; the frustration was with the process. We began with one issue and drifted away from it. There is

value to an OSM discussion, but we need to corral it and make it more productive.

- Sherbo: The second to last bullet on the continuous system improvement discussion paper describes how FIWG will work with the committee chair to craft CWAC agendas, using the draft minutes from the prior CWAC meeting and developing a list of information needed for the upcoming meeting. We practiced that process for today's meeting. The list of requested information is on the back side of today's agenda.
- Balter: There has to be something that follows the brainstorming. FIWG will summarize the brainstorming and discussion, shaping it into lines of actions to bring back to CWAC.
- Stiegler: Part of the frustration from the June meeting was that the conversation was too free-flowing and we didn't know what the next step was going to be.
- Balter: There is value in the richness of such discussions, but we need to take it to the next step to have another rich conversation.
- Patton: Reminded members of their obligation to come to meetings prepared by reading meeting materials in advance. That obligation is described in our operating procedures.
- Stiegler: Our requests for information are not just to create work for DHS; there must be a purpose behind them. They need to hook behind an active discussion, such as the face-to-face data that is directly connected to our recommendation to increase the percentage of visits. When information is provided to CWAC, the expectation is that members be prepared to discuss it.
- Waller: The operating procedures say members are to submit their requests to the CWAC chair 30 days in advance. Going through FIWG adds an additional step to determine when the issue will be on the CWAC agenda.
- Stiegler: We are fine-tuning what is written in the operating procedures with this additional step.
- Balter: We need to be patient with ourselves due to our diversity in getting to agreement.
- Keeling: Asked how requests for information come to DHS' attention, so that we can know exactly what the requests are.
- Serice: Attends FIWG meetings and so hears the requests there. Part of the last FIWG meeting included a discussion of how to better know what the request is so that the right material can be provided.
- Balter: There is a lot of information already being examined by DHS. CWAC wants to examine this existing information along with DHS.

- Foley: It may be that CWAC will ask for something that we don't capture. We will let you know when that is the case.
- Stiegler: We do not know the richness and depth of what can and cannot be captured and leave it to DHS to tell us.
- Patton: Data is not always collected in how it is being asked. Making changes to how it is collected then takes staff time. We need to be mindful of not asking for data that takes additional staff time if it is not going to get us where we want to go.
- Stiegler: FIWG meetings are open to all CWAC members. They meet again on October 10.

**MOTION:** A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the FIWG Continuous System Improvement recommendations presented today with the proviso that we are not restricted to the two topics of "reducing the need for foster care" and "the Oregon Safety Model." Those two topics will be used for practicing our process.

**ACTION:** CWAC agendas will be formatted to incorporate the FIWG recommendations.

## **SHARING OF INFORMATION PROMISED AT JUNE 13 MEETING**

### **Face to Face Visits data**

- Foley: The Dashboard in your meeting packets includes the face-to-face data. This Dashboard document includes child welfare and self sufficiency measures, both federal requirements and Oregon grown. It is an expectation for district managers to show gradual progress and this tool helps them see their progress. We have received feedback that it is a good tool. With such a tool comes accountability. The data gets more accurate each year we gather it. We will share it with you at every CWAC meeting as part of our reporting back to you on your recommendation to increase face-to-face visits to 80% during 2008. Marge Reinhart will explain how we use the Dashboard.
- Reinhart: This report is an ongoing work in progress. It reports information that field staff have said is supportive to them. Program staff have helped determine how best to report and display the data in meaningful ways. It is produced monthly for each district. At the back of the Dashboard are definitions for each measure. Contact her if you need help understanding the definitions. We want the document to be useful to staff and partners. At each district manager, child welfare program managers and self sufficiency program managers meeting, we

talk about best practices. We are careful to not overly focus on one measure at the detriment of another.

- Gelser: Are these percentages of face-to-face visits based on what is considered best practice or what is required in current law?
- Foley: They represent a percentage of cases meeting our requirement in policy to visit once every 30 days. A federal rule recently went into effect that requires visits every month, which is different than every 30 days. The first federal CFSR found that the cases that moved forward were those that had face-to-face visits. That provided the evidence. Our policy requires visits every 30 days, with exceptions possible for residential treatment and permanent foster care. Possible exceptions for residential care were allowed by policy based on the reasoning that the child was being seen by professionals and oftentimes the residential placement was located far from the worker. However, too many exceptions were granted and over recent years, there have been situations of harm in such cases. States are all working to get to the federal requirement. Our rules have not been changed yet, but we are working to get to the 30 day requirement statewide. The caseworker provides the stability in the case. Our core training will be changed to teach the ongoing worker how to confirm safe environments.
- Waller: The trend to move away from allowing 90 days between visits goes beyond just the safety issue and focuses on the agency providing a good transition out of foster care. The greater contact allows for a better transition.
- Patton: We hope safety issues in residential treatment are not why caseworkers need to visit every 30 days, but rather it is to build the child's relationship with the caseworker, who is the person there to help the child transition to the next placement setting.
- Darland: The quality of those visits is critical. Workers need training on how to ask the difficult questions during the visit. Also, the location of the visit is important. Older children do not want the visits to occur at school because they feel labeled and discriminated against for being a foster child. Supervisors need to be training their workers on how to have quality visits.
- Foley: The federal requirement includes capturing length of visit and the topics that were covered in a move to improve the quality of the visits.
- Darland: The Oregon Foster Parents Association can help train foster parents to help the caseworkers develop relationships with the children.
- Foley: One federal requirement is that a portion of the visit be with the worker and child alone. Perhaps the OFPA could help foster parents not feel threatened by that.

- Keeling: The procedure manual has a large portion on visitation, broken down by age of the child and what to do at the visits.
- Cohen-Alpert: What happens to local policy that doesn't match federal requirements?
- Foley: There is no local policy. The state policy will be revised to match federal requirements. We have already started training on how to do face-to-face visits. Page 31 in the Dashboard shows the history and improvements made. The feds are monitoring to their new requirement in the current CFSR.
- Gelser: What are the main reasons for the increased percentage of visits?
- Foley: Diligence that this is one of the most critical measures and tools such as SpeakRight. It allows workers to call in and have their documentation automatically entered into the database.
- Sherbo: Would like to see the data for 30 day visits separated for in-home and out-of-home cases to find out if children in foster care are seen more frequently than children in in-home cases.
- Reinhart: We will provide that information.
- Foley: In-home cases are just as volatile. We will start pulling out that data and will send it to CWAC prior to the next meeting.
- Sherbo: Noted that the data on visits with parents is quite different than visits with the child. It would be useful to separate in-home and out-of-home cases here too.
- Foley: We will need to split that data out for foster care and in-home cases. There is no federal goal for parent/worker visits. In some situations there are reasons to not allow the visits.
- Hazelton: In response to Rep. Gelser's questions, the citizen review boards are attentive to the 30 day visits. That is another reason for the increased percentage of visits.

### Management Actions

- Reinhart: Handed out a summary of management actions regarding face-to-face visits.
- Foley: Workers asked for a tool to show which visits are coming due. We are now able to provide that tool. Only the visit with the caseworker counts, even though others in the agency are seeing the child. A group setting such as a holiday party for all the children in a worker's caseload does not count.
- Waller: Does the number of children required to be seen include permanent foster care and residential treatment; that is, all children in open plans? If not, how will the data change when they are added?

- Foley: We will find out and calculate how the number will change if they are not already included.
- Reinhart: We are focusing on the importance and development of tools. We continue to have gains to make. We may reach some plateaus in some pocketed areas of the state and may need to take additional actions there.
- Keeling: Some challenges include how to assign cases taking into consideration large sibling groups, geographic locations and travel logistics.
- Waller: To improve the quality of the visits, in addition to training workers, children need to be instructed on how to make the most of the visits. There is a tendency for children to believe they cannot speak up. They need to feel they have a voice in their case planning. FosterClub.com is a tool to help empower children to have a voice in their planning.
- Foley: Part of that is having the child see the same worker each month. We need to stop arbitrary movement of cases from worker to worker.
- Waller: Another way to help children is by having them come to court. There is a therapeutic benefit when children come to court.
- Patton: Training is so important at all levels. We don't invest enough in training. The culture needs to change to one in which children are involved in their cases and have relationships with their caseworkers. Changes in how an agency does business comes from training, not from rules.
- Foley: We have multiple strategies, including identifying the supervisor as a key person to help make the culture change. One culture that we had to change was that past policy contemplated more responsibility on the foster parent and less on the agency. We have worked to move away from that and OFPA has helped us. The foster parents are the resource and we need to support them.

#### Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services

- Wheeler: Karen Wheeler is the addictions policy and program development manager within the Addictions and Mental Health Division (AMH).
  - DHS has lost capacity to serve child welfare clients with D&A treatment. These clients' children had been placed into foster care as a result. For the 2007 legislative session, we worked on budget packages to fund additional capacity (SB 184) with a tax on alcohol. That did not become the funding mechanism; instead, general fund support was provided by the Legislature.
  - This is the first time new money is available during her time with AMH. It provides more recovery services focused on parents, including TANF clients.

- The outpatient component has \$7.9 million. The Request for Plan Amendment has been sent to community mental health directors. It was also sent to CAF state partners and district managers. AMH worked with Ramona and her staff to develop the distribution formula. We will send that formula to CWAC. Some counties that were below a per capita funding level are also receiving equity funding.
- There are an additional 30 adult residential beds for parents and 20 beds for children who go with their parent to treatment. Where to place the beds is a difficult decision.
- The additional funding comes with outcome measures built into the contracts, including measuring the number of parents who reunite with their children and parents retained in treatment for a minimum of 90 days. The residential treatment contracts will require that clients are seen in outpatient treatment within seven days of leaving residential treatment.
- The proposals are due September 27.
- Patton: Can the 30 adult and 20 child beds be used by teen moms and their babies?
- Wheeler: Two parent/child providers currently have the ability to serve teen parents. The RFP is not competitive for additional programs, but adds capacity to existing programs.
- Darland: Critical to parents' success is their ability to see their children. CAF has limited capacity to provide these visits. Asked if there was a way to engage foster parents, such as paying them a stipend, to help parents get more visits with their children. Suggesting asking the D&A treatment providers how they will engage the foster parents.
- Wheeler: We do support parents visiting their children and promote the research on the connection between attachment and brain development. We are working on the case rate; that is, how many families we will be able to serve with this funding.
- Cohen-Alpert: Asked for information about the TANF piece.
- Wheeler: Sixty percent of the beds must be filled with Medicaid eligible clients.
- Foley: We hope to decrease the number of children coming into foster care from TANF caseloads and improve the measurement of TANF clients entering or returning to the workforce.
- Wheeler: We will also work with CAF and TANF programs on access issues and retaining clients in treatment. A housing development coordinator will work on drug-free housing for families.

- Foley: This is very encouraging. We are thankful to the Legislature for this funding.
- Patton: Recovery is a process. Concerned about children returning to foster care due to a parent's reabuse.
- Foley: We need to have a solid plan that helps parents deal with crises without reabusing, including the parent making sure a responsible caretaker is in the home during a crisis.
- Keeling: There is material in the Oregon Safety Model that, though not specific to D&A, addresses the least restrictive placement. If we need to make an adjustment to the model because of this initiative, we can do so.
- Foley: This D&A funding will go further if we can reopen the OHP to more categorical eligibles. We also have a revised version of our staffing allocation that we can send to CWAC. We did not receive as many positions as we originally thought due to a drop in foster care caseloads. We can watch how the staffing impacts face-to-face visits as staff are put in place. That was one of our reasons for requesting additional staff. As for visits between parents and children, our system does not currently capture this data element. It could be captured in a specific case review. Our intent is that increased face-to-face visits by caseworkers will not decrease the number of visits between parents and their children.
- Stiegler: There are many more variables that can impact the parent/child visits.
- Foley: We are open to ideas on how to capture that data. The length of time between visits will vary; it may decrease as a child has been in care longer and increase if a child is due to return home. Research and IT staff will be asked if the data can be captured.
- Waller: There is evidence to show that more visits between parents and children improve the outcomes for the family.
- Sherbo: Perhaps FACIS could have a checkbox to measure the number and dates of the visit. Quality could be measured the same way face-to-face visits are being measured for quality.
- Stiegler: There is agreement that workers ought to be having contact with the children. However, there are many variables that come into play regarding whether or not visits between parents and children should occur and there is no baseline for comparison.
- Waller: A checkbox to count these visits would show the impact of staffing changes.
- Foley: A case review process will show that. Some counties have visitation centers, which also has an impact on the ability to arrange these visits. Asked

for time to consider these suggestions and to discuss this with Research and IT staff to see if the data can be captured.

- Sherbo: If you can't capture it, the anecdotal information will overwhelm you. Concerned that workers are making choices between visits with the child (which are captured) and coordinating parent/child visits (which are not captured).
- Foley: Asked Benjamin Hazelton if the citizen review boards capture this data.
- Hazelton: Not currently, but they might be able to.
- Foley: We are not opposed to counting these visits, but we need to see if it possible. We are going to a SACWIS system, but we are not there yet.
- Keeling: We also are working to make the visits therapeutic and not just an occasion during an SSA's transport.
- Patton: It is difficult to ask for more capacity if you don't have the data as evidence of the need.
- Foley: We want to put more effort in the front end to keep the child home in the first place.

**ACTION: DHS will provide CWAC with responses to these questions:**

- A. Are the measures in the Dashboard for face-to-face contacts with both children and parents include both in-home and out-of-home cases?**
- B. Are kids in out-of-home cases seen more often than kids in in-home cases?**
- C. Can the data on face-to-face visits with parents also be broken down to in-home and out-of-home cases?**
- D. Does the face-to-face data include children in residential treatment and permanent foster care who have exceptions to less frequent contact than every 30 days? If not, how does the data change when they are included?**

**Action: DHS will provide the following information to CWAC**

- 1. A&D intensive services distribution formula**
- 2. Staffing allocations update**

**Action: CWAC members are invited to send ideas to Pam Pearson on DHS how to capture the number of visits between parents and**

**children. This is follow up work to a previous question from CWAC to see if increased face-to-face visits with caseworkers had an unintended consequence of decreased visits between parents and children. DHS' response to that previous question was that we currently are not able to capture that data.**

**Research and IT staff will be asked if this data can be captured.**

## **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT – RAMONA FOLEY**

### End of Session Report

- Serice: If members have any questions about passed legislation, budget notes or workgroups, they can contact him, the bill manager or staff assigned to the bill. The list includes all passed bills tracked by CAF. He will be traveling and working with Timothy Travis for the JCIP legislative road show talking to communities about these bills.
- Smith: The JCIP website has the details about the road show sites.
- Hazelton: All 16 DHS districts will be visited. VCON sites have been reserved in case the date in your local area does not work for you. Registration is required because the event includes lunch. Helen Hoang should be contacted if additional VCON sites are needed.<sup>1</sup> Asked that the link to the JCIP website be sent to CWAC.<sup>2</sup>
- Keeling: The afternoon session includes time on the OSM. Local DHS managers will make the presentations to their communities, with program experts available to answer questions.

### Requests to CWAC

The following issues are of concern to DHS and Ramona Foley is looking to CWAC for suggestions and comments:

- Transportation of foster children to school (HB 3075 – 2005 session): This has become a significant issue in the Portland area due to the volume of foster children needing transportation to their school of residence. Foster parents are reimbursed, but sometimes their foster children need to be transported to multiple school districts. Taxi service is not an acceptable alternative. We are working with a brokerage, but are looking for other ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Hoang, Juvenile Court Programs Analyst, Phone: 503.986.4523, [helen.h.hoang@ojd.state.or.us](mailto:helen.h.hoang@ojd.state.or.us)

<sup>2</sup> The JCIP link is: <http://www.ojd.state.or.us/osca/cpsd/courtimprovement/jcip/index.htm>

- Overrepresentation of children of color in foster care: Though Oregon's rate is lower than other states, we are looking for ideas. A national council (*Ramona, do you recall the name of the council?*) is collaborating with Annie E. Casey Foundation. This may be an opportunity for funding as Oregon has no Casey projects at this time. Per Ramona, Erinn Kelley-Siel in the Governor's Office is also interested in this issue. We will tee it up to FIWG because it is connected with CWAC's selected policy and operations issues. Per Iris Bell, this is a national issue and several efforts are occurring. She suggested we look at what other parts of the country are doing. Judge Waller is familiar with efforts in King County and is glad to have this issue on the agenda.
- Adoption Resource Center: This national resource center reviewed our adoption selection process and we expect their report to be available in October 2007. We will send the report to CWAC when it is available. CWAC members are invited to help us review the recommendations.
- CFSR: The case reviewers are on site this week. They are looking at cases over the last 18 months, which predates the OSM. CWAC has already been invited to the exit conference on Friday, 9/14/2007. We will share more information about the final report at the next CWAC meeting.
- Relative care: We are looking for ideas on how to increase opportunities to use relatives for placements. Relatives are not to be automatically excluded if they have prior criminal convictions. We have an exception process if circumstances warrant a review. Workers need to be trained to know that a criminal record is not an automatic 'no.' Our rules are being reviewed, and will be revised as necessary, to rule families in rather than rule them out. District managers are looking at how their offices work with families and how they search for family members. Iris Bell recommended expanding the use of Reconnecting Families that was piloted in 14 counties. This program seeks positive outcomes for these children and work is underway to involve more communities. Per Judy Stiegler, even if the relative is not a suitable placement, there is value in giving the child the sense of belonging through contact with the relative.

**Action:** CWAC members are invited to send ideas to Pam Pearson on:

1. **Ideas on how to better meet the intent of HB 3075 (2005 session), in transporting foster children to their resident schools.**
2. **Overrepresentation of children of color in foster care.**

**3. How can DHS increase the opportunities to use relatives for placements?**

**Action: DHS will provide the final Adoption Resource Center report and CFSR report to CWAC when they become available.<sup>3</sup>**

**HOT TOPICS**

- Sherbo: Asked if anyone from CAF was involved in drafting a proposed DHS rule that establishes a process for restricting an individual's access to DHS premises, employees and visitors. There should have been Child Welfare involvement because CW clients are among those that would be restricted.
- Foley: Is not familiar with these draft rules. Asked that Mickey Serice research and respond to CWAC.

**Action: DHS will provide CWAC with a response to this question: Was anyone from CAF involved in drafting the proposed DHS rule that establishes a process for restricting an individual's access to DHS premises, employees and visitors?**

The next CWAC meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2007.

Meeting adjourned.

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<sup>3</sup> On 9/20/07 a "Save the Date" notice was sent to CWAC regarding kick off work on the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) for the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) at an all day meeting on **October 22nd in Salem.**