



FINAL

DHS Children, Adults and Families
Child Welfare Advisory Committee
Future Issues Work Group
June 26, 2006

ATTENDING

Mike Balter, Pam Patton, Judy Stiegler, Mickey Serice, Nancy Miller

MINUTES

The 4/19/96 FIWG minutes were approved.

FRAMING ISSUES FOR CWAC

- Stiegler: At the May CWAC meeting, members were invited to give input on future agenda topics. We received responses from Don Darland and Angela Sherbo regarding foster care system issues and have previous input from Pam Patton. Judy is open to suggestions on how to frame issues and get input from members.
- Serice. Suggested that FIWG develop a list of 6-7 items and let CWAC prioritize them. That may prompt others to add to the list.
- Stiegler: We need a more orderly process than what we currently have, but we do not want to squelch things. Some people operate better in crisis mode, so giving them the luxury of time does not work for them.
- Balter: We are training to a new expectation for members to provide such input. The infrequency of CWAC meetings means it will take longer to implement the change. The past practice was, and the current expectation is, that the most urgent issues will be brought to CWAC by DHS. Having members frame issues is a new process.
- Stiegler: And DHS will continue to identify issues.
- Balter: Our goal was to create a broader framework and agreed-upon principles so we have a framework within which to react. For example, with the foster care systems issues we need to find a midrange level of detail that is neither too broad nor too narrow and bring them up against our core principles before presenting them to legislators. If we send our recommendations to legislators, they must be relevant to their priority issues.
- Patton: Another role for FIWG is to assure follow up on issues. One way to implement these changed roles for CWAC members is to provide the opportunity to give input, but not require input in order to move forward. She is not surprised that so few responded to the opportunity to give input on foster care systems issues.

- Stiegler: It could be that FIWG is a place to bring issues into focus (such as the foster care discussion) and to thoroughly vet them, giving CWAC direction and the opportunity to give feedback. FIWG would create a broader framework for the discussion rather than giving into the priorities of individual members. We want to engage a bigger portion of the membership.
- Balter: Boys and Girls Aid Society had ten years of reductions. We are not in that environment at the present time and we will lose ground permanently if we don't know what we need to get back. Suggested framing it with, "What new investments should be made in the foster care system if we had \$ X ." We should not lose the opportunity of an expanding economy and new money. What are the issues? The first one is not enough money; we've been cutting for ten years. Lack of training, caseload sizes, rates, etc. are all about revenue.
- Serice: CWAC is a statutory committee. DHS has over 100 statutorily mandated committees. The recent community meetings on the DHS budget were the avenue and time period for revenue discussions. DHS would not be able to move forward on CWAC input that would come after that timeframe ends. He has asked for the final date by which Bruce Goldberg can receive budget input by email and will let CWAC know about that deadline as soon as possible.
- Stiegler: This may be an opportunity to flex what muscle we have. This foster care issue is not part of the DHS budget building. But it is an example of the problematic system of interim legislative committees. CWAC does not have the same restrictions as DHS in its ability to interact with legislative committees.
- Patton: Recalled that Rep. Dalto said his work is on policy, not funding, but that he can have an impact on funding. The Legislature oftentimes creates its own budget separate from the Governor's. She agrees with Mike's idea of looking at what to invest in to start bringing the foster care system up to where we want it based on our basic values.
- Serice: Suggested that if CWAC is going to talk about investing revenue, they look at what to do to prevent foster care placements.
- Patton: During a recent Multnomah County Child Welfare Advisory Committee meeting, the Multnomah County Commission on Children and Families shared a report about the need for prevention.
- Miller: She is concerned that taking the approach Mickey suggested will result in new prevention money going only to the Oregon Commission on Children

and Families (OCCF). She believes DHS also needs prevention dollars for the population it is mandated to serve.

- Serice: Asked who has statutory responsibility for prevention.
- Patton: During a joint meeting of the child welfare advisory committees in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties, they discussed the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services report and expressed concern that DHS is moving further away from prevention.
- Miller: Reasonable efforts to prevent placement puts a responsibility on DHS for prevention for that population.
- Serice: That may not be seen as prevention. His understanding is that once DHS gets the report of abuse or neglect, you can't call it prevention. It would be good for CWAC to discuss that distinction.
- Stiegler: When OCCF was created, there was recognition that some prevention services were more effective when done by local communities.
- Miller: However, referrals have continued to rise. A difficult conversation would be on whether or not to put additional resources in the local communities through the commission with the express direction to reduce foster care. She is not saying there is any cause and effect to the creation of the OCCF and the rise in foster care rates. She recognizes there are other mitigating issues that increased the referrals. In reference to Mike's earlier comment about ten years of cuts, we need to be clear that DHS Child Welfare has not had ten years of cuts. Providers have, but not DHS Child Welfare.
- Balter: Suggested submitting a placeholder to DHS if we have missed the timeframe for input on DHS' budget to allow time for a CWAC discussion on how new revenue should be spent. If we want to invest in prevention, do we want the buyer to be the one holding the bag. If statutory authority has not changed, we have an illusion of giving prevention responsibility to another agency (speaking about Level 7). There are two populations he is most concerned about: 1) deteriorating families and 2) youth released to their own custody. Real prevention might be to work with those populations.
- Patton: Believes that DHS does not want to give up prevention but is setting up policy and procedures that will be implemented in such a way that workers will feel they cannot do prevention. The two populations Mike identified are discussed in other forums. It would be good for CWAC to talk about what our principle values are to ensure these populations are cared for as we decide what we want to give to the House Interim Committee on Child Welfare. Narrowing ourselves to these two groups would aid in the discussion.

- Miller: Disagrees with narrowing it to two populations because we then get into a Level 7 type conversation when we should be talking about how the system can work more effectively and what resources it needs. Asked for a status update on the child welfare staffing study.
- Serice: The National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement conducted site visits a few weeks ago and will be doing more visits before they make their recommendations. He has not heard if the national staffing standard has changed.
- Miller: Believes the national standard is 1:20 for most child welfare caseworkers. CFSR data from all states show that a key factor to moving cases successfully through foster care is caseworker contact. DHS is doing a comprehensive look at staffing. If we know that caseworker contact is a proven factor to children leaving foster care, we can advocate for caseloads that meet national standards and for adequate resources at caseworkers' disposal to serve families. That may be the message to take to the House Interim Committee.
- Stiegler: How do we frame issues around Rep. Dalto's initiative? Our goal was to send a letter of recommendations to him. We did not receive much input from CWAC following the visit with Rep. Dalto, which puts the job with FIWG.
- Balter: CWAC members are accustomed to reacting to crises and so we may need to format it in that way.
- Miller: We can do that with these two issues: adequate staffing and adequate resources. We can develop subcategories under each, such as drug and alcohol treatment as a resource.
- Balter: There needs to be a balance of technical adjustments for what to improve and the context in which the system is operating. We need to revisit what has been given away during budgetary constraints.
- Miller: Described how all state public safety agencies used the same document, "Justice in the Balance," in their last legislative budget presentations to show how pulling at one end of the system can stretch and break it at another end. She suggested developing a similar one-page document that all CWAC members could support.
- Stiegler: We agreed that the best we could do is send Rep. Dalto recommendations at a conceptual level and not at the minute detail level. Committee members would not be able to come to agreement at a detailed level.

- Balter: We would need to know who is responsible for the ideas we come up with.
- Miller: Not all system players are at the CWAC table. Reminder that CWAC is advisory to DHS and DHS called the individual members to the table.
- Balter: DHS has a different obligation to children. Asked where DHS is being impeded in its mandate or if the Legislature stripped away some responsibility and leave some children uncovered?
- Miller: Cited the ORS mandate (ORS 419B.100) outlining the courts' authority to establish jurisdiction and place children in DHS custody.
- Stiegler: The impacts of squeezing one place causes bulging elsewhere.
- Balter: A cut in an integrated system creates a gap. The spirit behind the creation of OCCF and OYA was that the DHS system was too big and cumbersome.
- Patton: Another reason prevention, then juvenile corrections, broke away from DHS was so they could compete better for funding and gain equally balanced recognition. There was the belief that child welfare received an unequal portion of both.
- Miller: If CWAC could say three big things on behalf of the agency, what would it say?
- Serice: Regarding the conversation about prevention, suggested vetting those issues to see where other members are, looking within child welfare and the larger structure. At the same time DHS hits challenges, others do likewise and agencies don't always factor that in.
- Stiegler: Rep. Dalto will ask what this has to do with foster care.
- Miller: Another piece of prevention is that state money goes to counties through OCCF and the counties can decide how to use it. For example, DHS A&D treatment money may not be used by counties for that purpose. Having to invest in the people that cost the most to themselves and the system is the antitheses of prevention.
- Balter: There are many false opposites, such as babies vs. teens. When we don't have enough for all, we cut off a part.
- Miller: We cannot have prevention vs. intervention. There must be a balance.
- Balter: The illusion was that OYA took care of adolescents and OCCF would take care of babies. However, there are some children in the 0-18 age range that DHS will always be responsible for.

- Serice: Juvenile justice is delinquency and child welfare is dependency. OCCF is prevention for both. Ramona Foley has been clear that DHS child welfare serves the 0-18 abused and neglected population.
 - Patton: The systems are better at recognizing who they serve than in the past; however, some children are still falling through the cracks.
 - Balter: An example is the runaway and homeless youth population. They are dependent youth, but their services fall under OCCF. They should be served by DHS.
 - Serice: That is an underserved population in many states. What is missing in the discussions about services for them is parental responsibility for their children.
 - Balter: This would be a great issue for CWAC, framed within the prevention / intervention balance.
 - Serice: It needs to be broad enough to engage all CWAC members.
 - Miller: Likes the piece about parental and kin involvement. The system exists because parents fail at being parents. But what do we want CWAC to say? Would like CWAC to develop principle statements all CWAC members could get behind regarding a balanced system of prevention and intervention.
Suggested starting with the following:
 - Prevention under OCCF is pre-call (before a report of abuse or neglect).
 - Intervention falls under DHS and is post-call:
 - Intervention includes parental and kin involvement,
 - Adequate resources are necessary (examples: staff that are trained and supervised, foster parents that are supported),
 - Adequate services are necessary (such as A&D treatment).
- The CWAC slice ought to be the children and families for whom services can be mandated, but that takes OCCF out.
- Serice: This is an exercise in deciding who is going to serve each population. Is not aware of any other state that does that.
 - Balter: Those who have the authority and perceived resources to meet the need; the fulcrum.
 - Miller: We can do the mandated population if we agree the DHS mandate is post-call.
 - Serice: FIWG's purpose is to narrow the focus. If we have two or three things for discussion and possible recommendations, what would they be?

- Miller: A balanced prevention/intervention system, post-call. What prevention and intervention means for DHS.
- Serice: Has concerns about some CWAC members getting lost during a discussion at a highly detailed level. Suggests not limiting prevention to those two areas Mike mentioned earlier: 1) deteriorating families and 2) youth released to their own custody.
- Miller: We can present it as a framework with the goal of creating a consistent message CWAC members can deliver.
- Stiegler: We have broadened the scope beyond Rep. Dalto's foster care initiative. How can we put what we have talked about today into something for the purposes of the next CWAC meeting?
- Balter: Two discussions are needed – near and far. The “far” is the bigger framing based on the statute that defines the legislative responsibility for DHS child welfare. We can pull our guiding principles from statute.
- Serice: When OCCF and OYA were formed, some statutory language did not change and that created problems. Is that what we are dealing with here as part of the confusion?
- Miller: No, jurisdiction is clear in the split.
- Balter: Suggested using the principles in the statutes and taking an item like foster care and talking about it in the context of those principles.
- Miller: Section 21 of SB 818 provides a list of the key things Rep. Dalto is seeking and is similar to what we are saying is essential. But we need to know what Ramona would want CWAC to do.
- Serice: FIWG was formed because we have so many issues and CWAC needs to come to a resolution and advise on something. This gives us one or two agenda items to take to CWAC. The SB 818 work is being done by the Legislative Subcommittee.
- Stiegler: Two parallel pieces of work are occurring. The Legislative Subcommittee has SB 818 on its agenda. CWAC will prepare recommendations based on the work of that subcommittee. FIWG is to frame recommendations to CWAC regarding input to Rep. Dalto and the House Interim Committee on Child Welfare regarding foster care.
- Miller: Our initial thoughts today started that framework. We can get further input from CWAC. Asked if a subgroup would take the input from CWAC to develop the recommendations further. As an advisory committee, we need conversations on both the near and far issues.

- Patton: Because funding occurs in silos, children come with labels, but they aren't cleanly only one. Systemically we try to make ourselves what we want, but fund and cut in silos. We need to look at the near and far issues in foster care, but not get lost in issues that are too broad.
- Stiegler: We need to frame within the context of foster care because that is what the Interim Committee will be addressing. She and Pam Pearson will develop a one-page issue statement to send to CWAC prior to the July 12 meeting. Due to time constraints, FIWG will not be able to review it in advance.
- Miller: The paper needs to be clear that CWAC's purpose is to share with Rep. Dalto and the Interim Committee our concerns about the foster care system.
- Balter: Asked if it would be worthwhile to make a placeholder statement that says CWAC recommends the DHS child welfare budget be increased by X % and we work out the details later. We need to have a revenue conversation.
- Miller: Does not agree we are ready for that. The budget is what it is at this point.
- Serice: Not everyone will agree that DHS child welfare needs an increase.
- Stiegler: There are two conversations. The timeline constraints of the budget process restrict our ability to have revenue conversations. She will send an email to CWAC with a deadline of when Bruce Goldberg will accept budget input by email from individual CWAC members. The other conversation is about the bigger, longer-term issues.
- Balter: Then we need a six-year horizon and should begin planning now.
- Stiegler: A&D funding could be used as an example showing numbers and dollars for adequacy.
- Miller: Adequate services include but are not limited to these services for all children for which DHS is responsible: A&D treatment, consistency of practice, foster placement recruitment and retention. Two of our principles are: DHS has a unique responsibility parenting our state's most damaged children. There should be a prioritization of services for those costing the most, both to themselves and systemically.

ACTION: Mickey Serice will provide a list of budget cuts in child welfare since 2000, including program area and staff cuts.

ACTION: Mickey Serice will forward to Judy Stiegler the final date when budget input can be sent by email to Bruce Goldberg. Judy will send an email to CWAC members alerting them to that deadline.

ACTION: Judy Stiegler and Pam Pearson will develop a one-page issue statement to frame the foster care systems issues discussion. It will be sent to CWAC prior to the July 12 meeting. Due to time constraints, FIWG will not be able to review it in advance.

Meeting adjourned.