



FINAL

DHS Children, Adults and Families
Child Welfare Advisory Committee
Future Issues Work Group
October 4, 2006

Attending: Mike Balter, Pam Patton (by phone), Mickey Serice, Judy Stiegler

Minutes recorded by Pam Pearson

APPROVAL OF MINTUES

One correction was made to the August 1, 2006, minutes on page 3. A comment by Pam Patton was changed to:

- Patton: There is language in the Strength/Needs Based policy about valuing parents, children, attachments, etc.

The corrected minutes were approved.

DRAFT PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM CHANGE

- Stiegler: The plan is to send a final version to CWAC for an email vote prior to the November 8, 2006, meeting. Judy provided a revision to several of the bullets based on the discussion during the September 13 CWAC meeting. Some CWAC members had proposed developing an abbreviated version, but others recommended keeping this document to one page and were concerned about losing content with a shorter version. Judy did not make any revisions to the 1st and 3rd bullets.
- Patton: She thought there had been some discussion on the 3rd bullet; Ruth Taylor had comments about involving recipients of service.
- Stiegler: Ruth's comments were in line with bullet #5 rather than involving recipients in discussions on the financial aspects. #3 is about the issue of allocations and how we cannot have a conversation without considering resource issues. It was very difficult to capture all of CWAC's comments and keep it to one page. She attempted to capture the concern and the essence of the conversations.

Bullet #1:

No changes

Bullet #2:

- Patton: Using the term 'lure of the quick fix' validates that a quick fix should even be considered.

- Stiegler: Is not sure that it validates. ‘Lure’ is a pejorative term and was chosen deliberately, in that being lured is not always wise. An example is when media pressure lures the agency to make changes.
- Serice: Suggested ‘balance the pressure for a quick fix...’
- Balter: Suggested ‘the desire for a quick fix...’
- Patton: Understands what Judy’s intent was as that is why some policy changes happen. Her concern is the validation.
- Balter: Asked if there was any place for this more provocative language. It implies that the people attracted to the quick fix are being seduced and are not good thinkers. We should say something about the desire for a rapid response instead.
- Stiegler: She was trying to say that we recognize and acknowledge the desire to get things done quickly, but the need to balance that desire with change that is systemic, workable and based on sound research and information.
- Balter: Suggested ‘pressure’ rather than ‘desire’ to express the aspect of being tired of talking and wanting action.
- Patton: Suggested ‘immediate solution’ instead of ‘quick fix.’
- Stiegler: ‘Pressure’ or ‘desire’ for an ‘immediate solution.’ FIWG and CWAC both had discussions about the knee-jerk reaction to the media.
- All: Agreed to ‘pressure for an immediate solution.’

General Editing Discussion

- Balter: Asked if there would be value in developing a code phrase for CWAC internal use for each bullet. Suggested: #1 – balance of prevention and intervention. #2 – balance of immediate and long term. We may also want to consider renaming the document to something such as ‘Principles for Balanced Child Welfare System Change.’
- Stiegler: At some point we may develop a shorthand for each bullet.
- Patton: We may want to add a header to each bullet using the shorthand phrase. However, she reiterated CWAC’s concerns about how an abbreviated version might be used.
- Stiegler: Agreed that with a caption, people tend to read only that and not the text that follows.
- Balter: Any shorthand version should be for internal CWAC use only to be used as a tool for applying the principles.
- Serice: Suggested bolding key words in the bullets rather than using a shorthand phrase.

- All: Agreed to Mickey's suggestion. That step will be done after the editing is completed.

Bullet #4 (and #3 where specifically noted)

- Stiegler: She made significant changes to #4. CWAC did not want to identify a laundry list of categories, instead saying that any change consider the needs of all children along with the need for an individualized response. She added 'youth' because it has a connotation that they are older children. She attempted to capture the concerns about overrepresentation in the second sentence.
- Serice: Noted that the style is different than some other bullets in using 'we.'
- Balter: Not using 'we' moves from the personal to the institutional. It sounds cold, but that is where we are at.
- Stiegler: We can delete the use of 'we' in all the bullets. Returned the conversation to bullet #4 and the wording, 'the individualized response for all children and youth at risk.'
- Patton: Suggested saying that the system serve all children and youth at risk, followed by a list including that it be reflective of all needs, that no population be ignored at the expense of another, and that the system must ensure that no specific population is overrepresented without justification. The last sentence could be moved to be the third thing the system needs to do and then the sentence about 'no population' would be the last sentence.
- Balter: It should go from broad to specific. 'Serve all children...' first. Then 'no population...' next.
- Stiegler: Overrepresented is an overused term. There may be times to focus on one group for a good reason. We must not limit it to only race and ethnicity.
- Patton: Perhaps 'focus' is not the right word.
- Stiegler: Overrepresented usually refers to ethnicity and race – that those are the children more likely to be removed from their homes.
- Patton: Separate funding and services into two sentences.
- Stiegler: Suggested: 'No population should be targeted unless there is sound reason to do so' instead of 'focused.' Overrepresentation is a targeting thing and that is what the complaint is about.
- Balter: Is thinking about pulling out the 'no population' sentence. Does pitting one population against another fit better with the fragmentation line in bullet #6? Perhaps it is an issue of fragmented services for populations.
- Stiegler: Maybe we are trying to combine concepts that don't go together.

- Patton: Space in the document may be an issue or this may be making too much of a change, but suggested, ‘The system must ensure that no population is ignored at the expense of another and must ensure that no specific population is overrepresented without justifications.’ The principle is that we serve all children and youth that are at risk. But we also need a principle that we cannot vie one population over another, since the reality is that we cannot serve all due to limited resources. Statutes say the system has to serve all, but that doesn’t mean it happens. Principles have to clearly say what we mean.
- Stiegler: Does not disagree, but is not sure how to say this. We do not want to deviate too much from what CWAC said. They do not want a laundry list of specifics because of the risk of excluding someone. This is a principle that deals with all children and youth at risk. We can leave in the part about not ignoring one over another.
- Patton: Ignoring one over another is lost amongst these other sentences in this bullet.
- Stiegler: Noted that the ‘no population’ sentence contains a double negative. Replace ‘ignore’ with ‘expense’ to read, ‘no population should be served at the expense of another...’ Asked if that should be a separate bullet. We developed these bullets based on topics and #4 is on children.
- Balter: As a principle, we want to express the notion that the system serves all at risk children and youth. Do we need another bullet for when the system prioritizes? We dealt with the ‘lure of the quick fix.’ Are we talking about another qualifier to allocate resources? Maybe it needs to go into the resource bullet (#3).
- Stiegler: It is a resource allocation issue.
- Balter: We pit one against the other when there is the pressure of limited resources.
- Stiegler: Is it the allocation or prioritization of resources?
- Balter: We cannot have a conversation about system improvement without including allocation of resources, as stated in #3. We need something about the pressure to pick one population over another.
- Serice: It is right to fit it into the resource bullet. It’s not that we don’t serve one population because we don’t want to.
- Patton: If we believe it is the funding, then how we prioritize funding drives the system that prioritizes one population over another.
- Stiegler: That is the reality. There is a prioritization of services that flows out of issues of resources and the allocation of those resources. If we had all the money in the world, we would serve all at risk children and youth.

- Serice: Our primary audience will be legislators and they are aware of there not being enough money to meet the needs in the state. We don't want to be in their face about that, but we do need to mention that children are falling through cracks for a reason and that reason is a lack of resources or the allocation of resources. We need to give legislators discretion to look one way or another.
- Balter: Suggested: 'When allocating scare resources, the system must be cautious to not pit one population against another or to ignore those children not currently being served.'
- Serice: That sounds more like a principle. It fits in with the idea of informed conversations.
- Stiegler: Should we rework #3 then and abbreviate #4 to serving all children and youth at risk?
- Balter: #4 is to serve all and to meet individual needs. The other part can be moved to #3.
- Stiegler: How do we then deal with the overrepresentation issue?
- Balter: Are we pitting one over the other on the prevention side?
- Patton: These are principles for change in child welfare. They are for legislators and decision makers to consider when making decisions about funding. They need to consider that there needs to be an informed conversation when resources are limited. They should not set up a system that prioritizes one population over another, that sets the focus on one population more than another, and that recognizes children that are not being served. We need to be clear that change is not always an improvement. For that reason, suggested changing #3 from 'system improvement' to 'system change.'
- Stiegler: Suggested keeping #4 to two sentences such as what Mike said earlier ('*When allocating scare resources, the system must be cautious to not pit one population against another or to ignore those children not currently being served.*'). She also suggested using 'guard against over-identification' instead of 'overrepresentation' in #3.
- Patton: The reasons we have overrepresentation or over-identification is that we keep cutting services, not only in child welfare but for all the challenges a family may face. It appears that families of color face more challenges and so they are coming into the system more.
- Stiegler: Perhaps we should say something about how the over-identification/pitting issue comes into play when allocating limited resources. We need a principle about improvement and changes in the system, but we also need one about what we do with what we have. #3 is about system change, which is not always improvement.

- Balter: Overrepresentation does not have a role in this conversation. It is too specific. It is addressed in the statement about the tension of serving all and meeting the individual needs. Do we truly believe the system needs to be responsive to all at risk children and youth? To say anything less gives permission to prioritize; that is the dilemma.
- Serice: In difficult times, legislators have to decide whether to continue to ‘thin the soup’ across the board or look at what programs to do without completely. Agencies are asked to help make those decisions. However, that should not drive a principle. If, in fact, all children at risk should be served, legislators have one bank in which to put their money. Any business will prioritize based on its budget.
- Stiegler: We have a tension here to avoid the minutiae and maintain this document at a principles-level document.
- Balter: Suggested: ‘Although the system must be responsive to the needs of all children and youth at risk, we recognize that when decisions must be made or limited resources demand, we draw attention to these principles: to the need to not do quick fixes, to respect parental relationships, to consider the impact across agencies and to balance prevention and intervention. We may be trying to accomplish something in these principles that has to be done in the public debate.
- Patton: We started out with an opening paragraph justifying why the reader should listen to CWAC. Suggested starting with the initial paragraph, moving to the last paragraph on ‘different perspectives’, then to Mike’s statement above about the need to consider these principles when making decisions. The first sentence in #4 would be part of the initial paragraph. #4 would say that the system must not serve one population at the expense of another, to guard against over-identification of a population, and acknowledge the children and you not currently served. #4 is a principle about ‘who’ we serve; we serve individuals and need to be responsive to their needs. The next bullet then talks about the parents of those children and youth.
- Stiegler: When talking about the ‘who,’ what do we want to say?
- Patton: What happens when there are policy or funding changes in child welfare. Need to say that the ‘who’ be considered when evaluating system changes.
- Stiegler: Regarding resource allocation, likes saying ‘when allocating’ rather than ‘when pitting’ but that gets into the ‘who’ again. #3 is about resources period. It is a matter of allocating existing resources or bringing in new resources. We should not stray away from that.

- Patton: 'Pitting' occurs not only from funding; it can happen from policy decisions, too.
- Balter: What do we believe about the 'who'? That the child welfare system should serve all children and youth at risk? If that is true, then when legislators say there is no money, we can tell them to raise taxes and give the choice to the citizens. Citizen concerns that government spends its money poorly is covered in #3. Once we stray away from 'all children' we get to the slippery slope. The principles should focus on 'all' and guide decisions when there are limited resources.
- Patton: If the overall statement of serving all children and youth at risk is at the beginning of the document, then the principles can list what must be done to ensure....listing them 1, 2, 3.. They should be clear.
- Serice: They need to be broad. He would hesitate to get too specific.
- Stiegler: Again cautioned about categorizing and listing. An omission, whether intentional or accidental, implies it is not important. We need to fight the urge to get too specific. Do we have consensus that is what we are trying to do?
- All: Yes.
- Patton: Yes, however, for 25 years we have been saying the system serves all children at risk and should focus on the individual and the decision makers still don't get it.
- Stiegler: This document will not get them there on its own.
- Patton: Did not think we were writing generic principles, but ones that were focused to help CWAC frame its discussions and also for something to send to Rep. Dalto.
- Stiegler: As we do in the preamble and ending, we need to guard against including the pet issues of each member. We need to have broad statements in order for CWAC to come to consensus. She will rework #4 and send another draft to Mike, Mickey and Pam for their review by email.

Bullet #5

- Serice: What is meant by 'stages of the process'?
- Stiegler: The child welfare process from the moment the child is picked up to the day the case is dismissed. May need to say that in a better way, such as the 'child welfare process.' She deleted 'accountable' and replaced it with 'parents are primarily responsible.'
- Patton: Asked if the last sentence conflicts with putting safety first.
- Stiegler: What we want to avoid is sending a message that the system will come in and take charge.

- Patton: Respecting parents includes recognizing that they are primarily responsible for the safety of their children.
- Serice: It is OK as written, in that a worker doing an assessment is required to first work to prevent the removal, while keeping the child safe.
- Balter: There is a tension between respecting parental rights and protecting children. Suggested the last sentence should read, ‘...balanced with the recognition that children must be safe.’
- Patton: Suggested: ‘Support and respect for the parental relationship and recognition of the parent being primarily responsible for the safety and well being of their children.’
- All: Agreed to: ‘Parents are primarily responsible for the safety and well being of their children; however, this must be balanced with the need to keep children safe.’

Bullet #6

- Balter: For the first sentence, delete ‘fragmented’ and replace with ‘...services are integrated across agencies, flexible and responsive to the needs of children and families.’
- Stiegler: The last sentence incorporates Judge Waller’s comment that when changes to systems and agencies are proposed, the impacts on other agencies and systems must be recognized.
- Balter: It is important to recognize that changes in one agency will likely have an impact on other agencies’ services. It is not enough to be integrated as we say in #5.
- Patton: Is ‘acknowledge’ a better word to use than ‘recognize’? One can recognize something and not do anything about it.
- Stiegler: ‘Acknowledge’ may be a more proactive term.
- Balter: Suggested: ‘It is important to note that this is a system and any change in one agency is likely to impact or affect the services of another agency.’

ACTION: Judy will redraft based on the above comments. The revisions will be emailed to Mike Balter, Mickey Serice and Pam Patton for review. The revised draft will need to have key phrased **bolded** in each principle. It will then go to CWAC for an email vote prior to the November 8, 2006 meeting.

FRAME ISSUES FOR NOVEMBER 8, 2006 MEETING

- Stiegler: Pam Pearson developed a list of future issues based on requests from CWAC members and issues Ramona decides need to go to CWAC. Our job is to figure out how to tee them up. See the draft 11/8/06 agenda.
- Patton: Asked about the agenda item on Core Values.
- Serice: DHS has five core values on which we base our work. Clyde Saiki and Lisa Harnisch have been giving a high-level presentation to other community groups and will be doing the same for CWAC.
- Stiegler: Suggested compressing the items already on the agenda and using the open time for an expanded discussion on the Oregon Safety Model, since time was cut short during the September meeting. Also, CWAC will need a concrete proposal in advance on the definition of 'special needs children.'
- Patton: DHS child welfare staff are currently being trained on the Oregon Safety Model. This training is not open to outside stakeholders. There was an offer to give CWAC this training.
- Stiegler: We had talked about adding an optional meeting for interested CWAC members for this training. She would like to have the Safety Model on the November agenda, but is not sure about setting an additional meeting.
- Patton: She is a member of the Multnomah County Child Welfare Advisory Committee. That committee is sending a letter to Ramona Foley with some questions they have in understanding how the concepts in the Safety Model are being interpreted and trained on. Wants to invite Toni Peterson to talk about some of those questions.
- Stiegler: Is the issue to have separate training for CWAC or only an update?
- Patton: It is both. Training is needed for interested CWAC members. Also, the process of developing this model has not gone through CWAC. If questions arise in the community, should CWAC have a discussion?
- Stiegler: CWAC would not be the appropriate venue for that discussion.
- Serice: One issue is closing the loop with CWAC. Another is that Pam Patton, for example, is a CWAC member who is also on an advisory committee in the local community that has issues and needs that may go beyond those of CWAC. If we were to train CWAC, we would need to work out the logistics for the program managers conducting the training. We are using the same staff to give the training statewide so that all staff hear the same message. Their availability is limited.
- Stiegler: Will put a more detailed discussion about the Safety Model on the November agenda. At that time we can decide if CWAC wants more than that

and how CWAC members can get it without adding to the program managers' workload.

- Balter: In trying to link policy and practice with current events, he asked about two recent high profile cases. Isn't that what should be coming to CWAC? Asked if the new model was applied to those cases or if it is premature for that. He would like to get an understanding of the principles in the safety model and then apply them to one or two cases, even theoretically.
- Serice: Ramona is receptive to sharing cases with CWAC that have hit the media whenever possible.
- Balter: He would like to apply the principles to specific examples and cases: Would these high profile cases been different if the model had been applied to them?
- Stiegler: That weds the theoretical to the reality.
- Serice: We could do something like that.
- Stiegler: Asked Mickey to talk to her outside this meeting to work out the November 8 Safety Model presentation, perhaps using an actual case.
- Balter: We need to be prepared to be better representatives when we speak to legislators and the community. Our principles document and knowledge about the safety model will help.
- Stiegler: Currently we have general knowledge so that we can speak from a conceptual standpoint.
- Balter: But I don't know if I am talking from DHS' viewpoint. His agency may have another viewpoint.

ACTION: Judy, Mickey and Ramona will meet by conference call two weeks prior to each CWAC meeting to finalize the agenda. New agenda items will require a briefing paper including what is requested from CWAC and where to go for more information.

Meeting adjourned.