



FINAL

DHS Children, Adults and Families
Child Welfare Advisory Committee
January 10, 2007

Members

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

DHS Staff

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

Guests: Kamala Shugar – AAG, Christine Stolebarger, Lorie Morphis, Michelle Cole
– *The Oregonian*

Minutes Recorded By Pam Pearson

Review of Agenda and Materials, Approval of Minutes

The November 8, 2006, CWAC minutes were approved.

Included in the packet of materials is a copy of Judy Stiegler’s cover letter sent to the listed names enclosing the CWAC Principles for Child Welfare System Change. A generic version of the letter addressed to “Child Welfare Advocates” may be used by CWAC members when talking with partners and constituents. It was noted that CWAC should commend itself for sending this to the state leadership and legislators at the beginning of the legislative session. It helps solidify this advisory body to legislators.

TEENS SUBCOMMITTEE PROPOSAL

- Stiegler: The Teens Subcommittee brought a proposal to the Future Issues Work Group regarding its continued operation and existence. It provided three requests for CWAC consideration:
 - What should the Teen Subcommittee’s function be in relation to CWAC?

- Is there a current need/issue that the subcommittee should be meeting about? If not, should the subcommittee exist on “an as needed” basis when CWAC has a specific need/issue about teens? Or is the information better delivered to CWAC directly from DHS and not through the subcommittee?
- Do we have your support for the CWAC Teen Subcommittee exploring with the Oregon Partners for Children and Families taking on a specific initiative/action about teens based on the information we have gathered?
- Serice: Some years ago, the subcommittee took on a couple of specific topics.
 - To look at what services were currently available to teens. It surveyed many agencies to identify the services. By the end of the study, budget cuts had changed the landscape, which required the subcommittee to put a disclaimer on its report because the data had changed significantly.
 - To look at services to teens through CPS intake. As it moved through that study, the project evolved to look at broader services to at-risk teens not yet in the CPS system. The second project concluded with a videoconference with local communities to find out what they were doing to triage services for at risk teens. They found these communities were doing many positive things.
 - In looking at the future of the subcommittee, one scenario is to model the CWAC Legislative Subcommittee, becoming active as needed. We may also want to revisit the membership and would want to select a chair. The subcommittee would need clear direction from CWAC on a project, including the scope of the assignment. Teens issues are a passionate area for the members, so it is easy to move toward a topic that is too broad. Also, there are several other groups in Oregon working on teen issues. For example, the Homeless and Runaway Coalition within the Oregon Commission on Children and Families has been operating for several years and has been moving projects forward. The subcommittee’s proposal asks if CWAC would be able to get information about teens from these groups without the Teens Subcommittee.
- Stiegler: With that background, FIWG looked at the proposal’s three options: disband, continue, request the Partners for Children and Families take on a specific initiative/action about teens based on the information they have gathered. FIWG recognized there is value to continuing the subcommittee, but it would need a narrow focus and be redirected to tangible projects. As we open this up for discussion, remember that subcommittees exists underneath the CWAC.

- Balter: The origination of the subcommittee started because there was a common belief that CAF did not serve teens. This came out of the history behind Level 7 children and the creation of the Oregon Youth Authority. Agency administration said that belief was not true. The subcommittee surveyed SDAs and the results showed that the issue was a lack of resources and that DHS did, in fact, serve teens. The follow up questions centered on CAF's role in the interface between other systems. These are more viable questions with today's budget climate bringing the possibility of additional resources.
- Stiegler: Explained that FIWG's recommendations for the Teens Subcommittee includes five possible options for subcommittee projects. She pointed out that the first subcommittee report was never officially presented to CWAC, therefore one of the options is to review that report to bring it to closure.
- Foley: CWAC was concerned about the anecdotal nature of that report, and for that reason, there was concern about it becoming a public document.
- Stiegler: It did not go back to CWAC after CWAC returned it to the subcommittee for refinement.
- Darland: Our principles say that the child welfare system is to be responsible for the needs of all children at risk. If there is no Teens Subcommittee, CWAC needs another method of getting information about teens. If that is assured and there is no specific project, then there is no need for a subcommittee.
- Stiegler: That was the feeling of FIWG. Pam Patton is one of the most ardent supporters, but agreed the subcommittee had gotten out of hand.
- Darland: If the subcommittee disbands, we must not lose the ability to get information about teens in Oregon.
- Foley: The agency could report to CWAC periodically on the status of serving teens.
- Cohen-Alpert: Co-chairs the Multnomah County Child Welfare Advisory Committee with Pam Patton. That committee had requested data on the number of teen parents in foster care. The only way to get that data was with a hand count. The number was higher than anticipated, which reinforced the need to keep that issue on their list of concerns.
- Foley: That is a good example of narrowing the focus to something specific to track that can be used to compare services now vs. a year ago.

MOTION:

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the FIWG recommendation.

ACTION: The Teens Subcommittee membership will be rebuilt. It will be narrowed in numbers but not in representation. Past reports will be reviewed for unresolved issues and others may be added. The topics must be narrow and may include those in the FIWG recommendation and others.

If no one is willing to serve as chair, the subcommittee will not exist. A chair is needed to set the agenda, run the meetings and tighten the structure.

CWAC will decide what issues the subcommittee will study.

DHS CORE VALUES – Clyde Saiki, Lisa Harnisch

- Saiki: About 1 ½ years ago, a discussion began about what it means to be a values-driven organization, with values that drive how we do our work, interact with each other and our customers, form policy and make decisions. Interim Director Bryan Johnston helped lay the foundation. The five core values are: integrity, stewardship, responsibility, respect and professionalism. They are especially important when making decisions when there is no absolute right or wrong answer. We recognize that these terms can have more than one meaning. DHS has defined them for how they are used in the agency. He referred to a green brochure that describes each value.
- Harnisch: We are doing many things to advance this initiative. We want to hear from CWAC about how we can do a better job in living out the values. It is not being approached as a training initiative, but as a shift in focus. She referred to a pink handout describing the efforts underway to advance the initiative. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to be frank in their work to bring the values forward. DHS Cabinet and executive teams are the initiative's leaders.
- Saiki: January 16 is the formal kickoff day. There will be continuing conversations with partners.
- Lemman: Asked what drove the initiative and what will be used to measure success.
- Saiki: We are still working on the measurement piece. We are considering a client survey to see if service has improved. The genesis for the development of core values came from the field due to a number of incidents that involved ethics issues. Workers face decisions on a daily basis with clients, staff, and

providers in which a values framework will help them make the “most right” decision.

- Foley: When seven divisions were brought under the DHS umbrella, they came with different philosophies and codes of ethics.
- Stiegler: What strategies have been devised to gain the support of skeptical staff?
- Harnisch: Skepticism is one reason the initiative is being rolled out in many layers and not with only a one-time training session.
- Saiki: We are also making an effort to communicate the reason for these values: to provide better service to clients. It is more than a philosophy.
- Darland: How these values apply to foster parents needs to be explained in the staff training – as clients, volunteers, providers or agents of the state. His hope is that this will reduce the comments such as, “You’re just a foster parent so your opinion doesn’t matter.”
- Saiki: We will be having conversations with foster parents and all others with whom we have contact.
- Foley: DHS work is emotional. There is a difference between clients being unhappy with a decision about their case and being treated unfairly.
- Cohen-Alpert: Noted that community partners were invited to the pilot training in District 2, but the class was full by the time they received the invitation and had an opportunity to respond. It is important that partners receive the same staff training and receive timely notices.
- Taylor: Asked what the training covers.
- Harnisch: It covers the definition of each value and how it plays out in the workplace. Small groups apply the values to real time scenarios.
- Balter: When his organization went through this process, they created the ability to safely report when a decision must conflict with a value – in DHS an example would be when managers are unable to talk about a lack of resources because they are required to support the Governor’s budget. Integrity as a value means being open to talk about these dilemmas.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND REDUCING THE NEED FOR FOSTER CARE

- Balter: At the November 8 CWAC meeting, at Director Bruce Goldberg’s request, each member had an opportunity to express suggestions on ways to keep children safe and reduce the increasing need for foster care. FIWG was asked to use that list to narrow them to one or two on which CWAC could

come to consensus. Today's agenda packet includes FIWG's beginning work. They looked for a strategy for a desired outcome. They did not have time to address ways to keep children safe, but did work on how to reduce the need for foster care. There is a belief that a number of children enter and remain in foster care because their parents are waiting for treatment. There is a bottleneck caused by the inability of parents to get D&A and mental health treatment. Therefore a strategy is needed for more treatment. FIWG talked about the need to look at cases to profile the need. The assumption is that existing resources are not being applied correctly to affect the outcome. Once a parent successfully completes treatment, other barriers to returning the child home include inadequate housing and employment. FIWG suggested looking at ways to link TANF and other resources to build a package that has the highest likelihood to resolve the issues of children being in foster care because their parents are unable to access D&A or mental health treatment.

- Stiegler: We must make sure our assumption that lack of access to D&A and mental health treatment is a barrier and, if so, recommend to DHS that connecting the resources to this problem should be a top priority.
- Balter: CWAC would not prescribe how to make it work. That is the job of DHS.
- Stiegler: DHS should not let where the dollars are sitting within the department be a barrier.
- Darland: Local DHS child welfare offices used to have parent trainers. Perhaps the loss of those positions is a barrier. There seems to be an assumption that the resources are there, but there are not enough staff to manage it. We must not forget that the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement's report includes a recommendation that DHS have a staffing ratio that makes it possible to get the work done.
- Stiegler: Safety and reducing the need for foster care are companions and cannot operate in isolation.
- Balter: We may decide to have three recommendations: one on keeping children out of foster care, one to get children out of foster care and one to keep children safe.
- Stolebarger: Agrees with the direction this recommendation is going. When she was a DHS client, the things that helped her get her children back were the D&A treatment; access to safe, affordable housing so that she could go to school; counseling for her son; and having a family mentor. DHS divisions need to work together.

- Stiegler: We will not send any recommendation to Bruce Goldberg until the complete package is completed. She asked if there was consensus that FIWG is moving in the right direction.

ACTION: There was consensus that FIWG is moving in the right direction with their draft recommendation. FIWG will continue its work and bring the final, complete package to CWAC for approval at the next meeting.

DEFINITIONAL CHANGES ON 'SPECIAL NEEDS' IN ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

- Stiegler: In response to Rep. Richardson's concerns about the sustainability of the adoption assistance (AA) program, Ramona asked CWAC to look at the definition of special needs in the AA program and determine if modifications to the definition were needed. CWAC began a discussion during the 11/8/06 meeting and asked FIWG to continue the discussion and bring a recommendation to CWAC. FIWG determined that no change is needed to the definition. She referred to the document that presents FIWG's rationale and recommendation. Some of the increase in the program costs is due to a change in federal law (Adoption and Safe Families Act) that resulted in cases moving to adoption sooner. Children with special needs receive a subsidy in foster care that is more than AA. Encouraging adoption is the right thing to do. Providing adoption assistance is not seen as buying adoption, but supplementing a family's ability to care for these children.
- Hazelton: The definition is not responsible for the increase in AA. The increase comes from the Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA).
- Cause: AA is meant to prevent barriers; it is not an incentive. If the barrier is money, AA is there to offset that concern.
- Keeling: It is also based on the assumption that these children coming out of foster care have special needs that serve as barriers to adoption.
- Stiegler: No hard evidence exists that the AA amount is an incentive. FIWG had total consensus on the recommendation to not change the definition.
- Foley: Commended FIWG for taking an emotional topic and putting it in neutral language. Suggested that CWAC's recommendation include FIWG's language and point out that to reduce the need for adoption there must be an investment with families at the front end of the system. By

investing in the front end, children have a better opportunity to be safe with their own families.

- Keeling: Rep. Richardson's question was if Oregon's definition of special needs in AA was too broad.
- Stiegler: He also asked if narrowing the definition would save money. Before we could answer we needed to know if there was rationale to narrow the definition. FIWG concluded there was no rational to do so.
- Darland: The question is not about adoption, but supporting children that need adoption. We need to emphasize the front end at every opportunity. Supporting families at the front end is how to save money.

ACTION: A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept FIWG's recommendation, embellishing it with a statement about investing in families at the front end. Judy will draft a letter addressed to Ramona from CWAC with this recommendation. FIWG will finalize the letter at their next meeting. It will not be brought back to CWAC for review.

- Morphis: Shared her concerns about the semantics used by caseworkers in the case plan that says the plan is to "return to parent" and the alternate plan is to "achieve adoption." Suggested that the first language be changed to "achieve return to parent."

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Ramona Foley

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

- Foley: The CFSR is a federal review on how well states deliver child welfare services. All states have had one review during the past five years and no state passed. Now the standards have been raised for the second round of reviews. Oregon will be one of the first 15 states in the second round. We appreciate the CWAC members who will be participating in the review. The first meeting will be in late January and we have until July to complete the self-assessment. We have more data available compared to our first assessment. She noted that the data will be from 2005. The federal review teams will be in Oregon on September 10-14. They will visit Multnomah County and two other counties. There will be more emphasis on the court system this time. The review teams will read 60 cases. While 60 cases cannot tell you how a state is doing, they

can give a flavor for how cases are handled. Reviewing such a small number of cases means we need to look closely at data for things such as face-to-face visits. The review will consider not only the number of face-to-face visits, but also the quality of the visits. If any CWAC members are interested in participating, they are asked to contact Angela Long. Stakeholders need to be involved to make the review worthwhile. We will always have areas in which to improve. The federal goal for face-to-face is 90% of all cases by 2011. We will not settle for that standard; we will seek 100%. The federal review will look at independent living programs and tribal cases this time. While the federal government has no authority to request workload data, we will be volunteering to give them that data.

- Darland: Asked if data on face-to-face visits by county is easy to collect and appropriate for CWAC to receive. He also asked if workload data is available. This data would be helpful for him as he travels statewide to promote the Foster Parent Bill of Rights.
- Foley: That data was provided to the citizen review boards and Juvenile Rights Project. We can send that report to CWAC. Workload is more difficult to measure. We can calculate the number of cases divided by the number of staff, but the reality is that many workers carry caseloads with both higher and lower numbers of cases.

NRCOI – National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement

- Foley: The NRCOI report was released yesterday. It is a follow up to the NRCCPS report that said there was a crisis in workload, workers were doing things they should not be doing, and there was too much variety in what caseworkers did from office to office. We were not surprised by what the NRCOI report said. It confirmed what NRCCPS and staff hold us. We will put this on the next CWAC agenda for more discussion. She explained that we did not receive this report in time to use it in preparation of the policy option package (POP) on child welfare staffing. The POP is a formula that shows how to get to staffing standards the POP would provide. Its goal is to have more case-carrying staff and reduce the supervisor to worker ratio. It eliminates the CET position, making half of those positions supervisors and half case-carrying. It takes the SSA positions and makes half of them caseworkers and narrows the responsibilities of the SSAs so that they are used consistently statewide. About 25% of SSAs meet the qualifications to be caseworkers.
- Darland: Agrees with this plan. SSAs and foster parents have been doing the casework. This change must happen.

- Foley: It recognizes that screening, referral and adoption are things we need to earn staff for. It will fit nicely with the roll out of the Oregon Safety Model in March.
- Taylor: Is concerned about cutting SSA positions because transportation and visits are huge issues.
- Foley: If SSAs did only what they were supposed to do, then they would have the ability to do the transportation, make appointments and do some paperwork so that caseworkers can supervise the critical visits.
- Stiegler: It is not a cut, but a shift.
- Foley: SSAs should not be carrying cases. Many staff in SSA positions are qualified to be caseworkers, but have chosen not to be caseworkers because current practice has the SSAs, not the caseworkers, spending time with the children and families.
- Keeling: We are also making changes to the foster home certifier position to raise the professionalism of the position and recognizes its importance.
- Sherbo: Going back to Ramona's statement that 25% of SSAs are eligible to be caseworkers, she asked how many SSA positions will be reclassified to caseworkers.
- Foley: Fifty-five percent will be reclassified. However, we will not grandfather workers in to these reclassified positions. They will have to meet the qualifications of the caseworker position.
- Keeling: That is true for the CET positions also. Staff in those positions will not be reclassified to supervisors or caseworkers unless they meet the qualifications for those classifications.
- Sherbo: Page 20 of the NRCOI report talks about maximizing the flexibility of work schedules. Asked if that is a best practice.
- Foley: The report does not make it clear if it leaves it up to the reader to decide what is a best practice. Flexible work schedules should already be possible.

ACTION: This discussion of the NRCOI report will be continued at the next CWAC meeting. Send questions to Pam Pearson, who will forward them to Judy Stiegler. These questions will be given to Ramona Foley and Mickey Serice and the discussion during the March meeting will be based on these questions.

Rule Process

- Peterson: The third conversation with advocates on the draft rules is scheduled for January 17, 2007. CWAC will receive a reminder by email.

- Foley: Appreciates the comments we have received.
- Peterson: The comment period ends January 31, 2007.

Meeting adjourned.