



**FINAL**

DHS Children, Adults and Families  
Child Welfare Advisory Committee  
**Future Issues Work Group**  
December 10, 2008

Attending: Janet Arenz, Mike Balter by phone, Iris Bell, Benjamin Hazelton, Erinn Kelley-Siel, Mickey Serice, Judy Stiegler

Guest: Pam Patton

Minutes recorded by Pam Pearson

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The 10/8/08 FIWG minutes were approved with the following changes to the draft minutes:

- Page 1: Comment by Hazelton: His preference is not to receive every individual report, but use CWAC's expertise to look at barriers or opportunities to proposed policy changes **that may be raised by SRCs or CIRTs.**
- Page 3: Comment by Hazelton: Hazelton: For example, if a recommendation was to adjust a certain policy, CWAC members would consider the implications of that policy change and respond saying they can support it or that it ~~does~~ **may** not provide the desired change.

### **REVIEW OF AGENDA**

- Stiegler: Today's agenda is an outline of the current list of issues on the table.
  - Pam Patton will join us by phone for the Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee portion.
  - Erinn Kelley-Siel will be joining us at 10 a.m. to talk about the chair and vice-chair positions.
  - Regarding DHS Transformation, CWAC had been offered training, but we prefer to receive reports and give feedback as things roll out.
  - Regarding the CFSR – PIP, the January update may be the last regular one, assuming the final PIP has been received from the feds. We may be given periodic updates as needed, but it won't be a standing agenda item.
  - Regarding the Status of Children report, we did not have time during the November CWAC meeting to discuss so it has rolled over to the January meeting.

- Regarding property crimes initiatives, during Erinn Kelley-Siel's budget and legislative update, she might want to say Measure 57 will receive much legislative attention.

The items on the draft January 14 CWAC agenda at this time are items that were rolled over from the November meeting or things Erinn said she would bring back periodically. Today we need to decide what else needs to be on the January and future agendas.

## **SET AGENDA FOR 1/14/09 CWAC MEETING**

### **Issue: Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee**

The discussion refers to this recommendation approved by CWAC on 11/12/08:

Recommendation on the  
Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee  
(approved by CWAC 11/12/08)

The FIWG thanks the Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee (TICWS) for its work and report. The FIWG agrees with the TICWS that the available data was inconclusive on the question of change in access for teens due to the implementation of the Oregon Safety Model.

FIWG recommends that the question of access should be set aside at this time.

The data did raise interest in the second question of "how well teens are prepared when they exit the Child Welfare system."

FIWG recommends that it work with the TICWS in the next 60 days to frame the next subcommittee charge to answer the second question of teen preparedness upon exit from the Child Welfare system.

- Stiegler: There was general agreement among CWAC members that teen issues are important, but the question posed in the subcommittee's 9/10/08 report needs to be narrowed.
- Patton: Regarding the first recommendation, asked if a report updating the data should be prepared by DHS and if it should go to CWAC or the TICWS. Regarding the second recommendation, we need to review which questions are appropriate to ask in light of the difficulty of getting data.

- Stiegler: The issue of preparedness is not just a data issue.
- Patton: What to look at has not been decided, as that did not come out of the subcommittee's report.
- Stiegler: FIWG's recommendation that CWAC approved was to hone in on the second question which the subcommittee did not focus on initially because it arose during the middle of its work on the first question. We are trying to narrow the preparedness question and decide what issues/topics to look at more thoroughly as indicators of the success teens have when they leave the child welfare system – to put some definitions to the issue.
- Patton: Agreed, but we need to decide if additional 6-month reports will be prepared for the first question before moving to the second question.
- Stiegler: Asked if, without it being work intensive for DHS, there is a compilation that can go to the subcommittee or to CWAC to periodically determine if teens' access to the child welfare system is changing under the Oregon Safety Model.
- Patton: Recalled that Mickey Serice had previously said it is possible to collect such data every six months without having to set up a separate computer program. The subcommittee recommended the update to see trends over time.
- Serice: Asked Pam if she recalls which data set it was. Concerns of how well teens are doing came from reports at the national level, not our data sets.
- Stiegler: The preparedness question was generated by Bryan Johnston to see how well teens are doing when they leave.
- Hazelton: Regarding the access question, the data did not show any significant difference so we should turn our interest to the preparedness question.
- Patton: One of the problems with the access question was that we are not able to get data on unfounded dispositions. Since we cannot get that data, we recommended continuing to look at the data we can get.
- Stiegler: Agreed there had been discussion about getting periodic reports to see if there is a discernable movement up or down of that data point. Hears Mickey saying that we can receive that data without creating a new report.
- Patton: The goal was to set a baseline which we did and then have CWAC receive reports every six months with an explanation of the data

saying if there was a change or not and why. This is so we don't lose track of the access issue.

- Serice: The way the recommendation is stated, data is to go to CWAC every six months.
- Stiegler: Yes, but to whom?
- Patton: Suggests the data go to CWAC because the TICWS is an ad hoc subcommittee and may not be meeting at the time a report comes out.
- Balter: Struggles with CWAC's ability to keep a thought over six months. Suggests the subcommittee write the questions for which the data would be collected. A concern was that teens would be driven out of the system by the Oregon Safety Model. The subcommittee should indicate what a trend line would look like if that concern were happening so they know what to look for when reviewing the data.
- Patton: A disclaimer would need to be added that we are not able to answer the original access question because DHS does not collect data on unfounded dispositions, so the question has to be on founded dispositions.
- Balter: There must be some counting of unfounded dispositions.
- Hazelton: There is a frequency count.
- Serice: If we collected any data on unfounded cases, it would create a secret file. If we create a data bank, then we are creating a file of unfounded cases. We do not necessarily notify clients if we receive a report that is unfounded.
- Patton: Anna Cox had said that she cannot create a report of breakdown data, only frequency.
- Serice: Offered to talk to Anna Cox about what is collected on child abuse reports that are "unfounded"<sup>1</sup>. If it is unfounded, abuse/neglect did not happen. It is a zero. Some have asked what happens if there are 20 unfounded dispositions for a particular family. But the agreement from a work group on records retention is that  $20 \times 0 = 0$ .
- Balter: There is a workload though in that workers are responding to those calls.
- Serice: Yes, there is on the screening aspect of a child abuse report.
- Stiegler: How does data on unfounded cases answer whether teens are being dumped out of the system or if the agency is doing a better job looking at teens?

- Patton: To compare the number of reports for teens and non-teens being founded or unfounded.
- Stiegler: Does not sound like that data can capture what you are looking for.
- Patton: Which is why the disclaimer is needed.
- Stiegler: If you're only getting half the story, what is the purpose of continuing to track? To see if there is a change in the numbers of founded cases for teens?
- Patton: The reason is to make sure that where the Oregon Safety Model is being carried out in branches, it has no impact on teens getting into child welfare. We know that the vulnerability level system of 20 years ago did impact teens. At least we would be tracking it to make sure what happened before does not happen again. The disclaimer would state that we are only able to count founded cases.
- Balter: Does DHS capture demographic information on screening?
- Patton: Anna Cox had said they do, but manually, not in a central data system.
- Balter: Is there any data by age, even gross age groups, tracked by screening?
- Serice: When the TICWS meets again, we can ask Anna to attend and answer some of these questions.
- Hazelton: We are moving backwards into territory already discussed. We need to decide if these reports are needed and if they should go to the CWAC or the subcommittee. He would vote that the CWAC chair receive the report to screen it. If the chair sees something concerning in the data, then it would be brought to FIWG and FIWG would decide if it needs to then go to the subcommittee or full committee. Each CWAC member does not need to receive the report every six months.
- Stiegler: So we have consensus on receiving periodic reporting and settled on six month intervals. The specific data points of the report can be refined by TICWS. Do we agree the report would go to the CWAC chair only?
- Patton: Agrees.
- Balter: Agrees as long as the report has a cover memo explaining what we are looking at with the data.

- ACTION:**
- **Mickey Serice will ask Anna Cox if the data set to answer question 1 could be produced on a regular basis and if DHS gathers information on child abuse reports that are “unfounded.” [See endnote #1.]**
  
  - **Consensus that CWAC should receive periodic reports and settled on six month intervals. The specific data points of the report are to be refined by TICWS. The report will go to the CWAC chair only. If the chair sees something of concern, the chair will bring the report to FIWG. FIWG will decide what action is needed by the TICWS or CWAC to respond to the data.**
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- Stiegler: Now, moving the question 2 (how well teens are prepared when they leave the child welfare system), FIWG or TICWS needs to identify some specific indicators that they want measured.
  - Patton: Suggests the subcommittee select one area studied by the Foster Care Alumni Study to study deeper and make recommendations to DHS. FIWG could decide which issue that would be. Another possibility is to look at the 18-21 population and what DHS does for them.
  - Stiegler: Agrees to having the inquiry narrowed down, but not just an anecdotal look; need numbers/data too.
  - Patton: One area where we do have data is stability of placement while in foster care. We discovered children in Oregon tend to have more placements than what the national study says is healthy. There are also fewer teens in relative placements. We made some assumptions about why fewer teens are in relative placements, such as they have blown out those placements by the time they becomes teens or they run. She would recommend the subcommittee look at stability of placement to answer what is happening to teens and why as compared to younger children. During DHS Transformation, this is an important issue to look at.
  - Hazelton: Suggested that as subcommittee chair, Pam formulate a proposal on a narrowed focus and why it needs to be investigated further. FIWG can then review the proposal and bring it to CWAC to get the full committee’s support or not.
  - Patton: The problem with that suggestion is that she became the subcommittee chair because someone needed to and the access issue was

a high priority for her. At this point, she is not hearing from FIWG or CWAC a particular question to answer. Access was a question that had to be answered. The subcommittee should meet only if there is a serious issue for teens about their exiting the system that if the subcommittee does not focus on it, it won't be looked at.

- Stiegler: There was some perception that there was a need to continue on the preparedness issue and it was punted to FIWG to narrow. When the subcommittee is reconstituted, it is to be narrowly focused.
- Bell: It is not anecdotal that teens leaving child welfare are ending up in the criminal justice system, homeless or runaway. There is a percentage in each that come directly from the child welfare system. How can we look at that and make an impact to ensure positive outcomes?
- Hazelton: Hears that Pam's primary interest was access.
- Patton: That was how she became the subcommittee chair. She is willing to continue as chair if given a valid issue from CWAC. But she does not want to be responsible for coming up with the question. There are many issues for teens. Bryan Johnston's question was for teens exiting at age 18 into adulthood, not exiting younger to return home. We can change the question – what Iris said is an important issue.
- Hazelton: When Lisa Kay and he used the Alumni Study to identify potential data points, they compared the current cohort of 13-18 in DHS care with the Study to see how they were fairing and to point out areas to focus on to help them before they exit.
- Balter: We don't know if the current CAF administration has this as a point of interest. We need to ask Erinn Kelley-Siel what her main interest for teens is. Otherwise we are operating on a prior interim director's interest.
- Patton: We need to ask Erinn if there is an issue for teens in light of the Oregon Safety Model, DHS Transformation, where child welfare is going and what she wants CWAC to focus on.
- Bell: What do we do if Erinn says this is not her top priority?
- Serice: Erinn is doing a lot with strategic planning for each program area and that plan will come to CWAC when it is ready.
- Stiegler: We are an advisory committee first and foremost. If ever a member had a hot issue, that member can of course bring it to CWAC. As we focus on an area, we do need to see if it is within where the agency is looking for guidance. Because Erinn has now joined our meeting, Judy

briefed her on the discussion to this point regarding the preparedness issue.

- Kelley-Siel: CWAC has the ability to work independently on what the committee is most interested in. DHS Child Welfare's focus is:
  - 1) Increase the percentage of children who remain safely at home with their families,
  - 2) Children in substitute care will be returned to their parent's or caregiver's home in a timely manner, if safety allows,
  - 3) Children in substitute care will be safety maintained in their out-of-home placements, and
  - 4) Every child receiving in-home or substitute care services will receive timely and appropriate medical and mental health assessments and seamless services.

What is the gap between Child Welfare's ability to meet the needs of children to keep them safe and what prevents us from doing that? How prepared they are when they leave relates somewhat to "timeliness to exit." We will soon be applying for the Independent Living Grant. There will be some conversations that CWAC should be involved in on how to structure the grant. That would be a place where the committee could be very focused. It will involve looking at what we are currently doing with the ILP resources. It is more a program issue than a policy issue. Other issues include health and safety of children in care: To drill down would mean looking at the mental health needs for older youth and how that is related to them transitioning out. The subcommittee could pick any one of the four areas she mentioned to see where we are at, where we want to be and how to move to get there.

**MOTION: Motion made and seconded that the Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee look at the issue of permanency of children, ages 17-19.**

Discussion:

- Kelley-Siel: This would include APPLA (Another Planned Permanency Living Arrangement) and why we accept permanent foster care as an option. Need to think about different strategies for these children.
- Balter: The subcommittee should consider defining "independence" in a way that aligns with permanency = permanent independence.

- Kelley-Siel: The loss of mentor programs have impacted older youth. Encourages the group to think about community engagement and such outside the DHS independent living program. We have an opportunity with the new federal law (Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act), but it requires state resources. What resources exist outside DHS? As we look at the ILP, look outside for partnerships with community that could leverage that which we are not doing now.
- Patton: Pamela Butler, Children First for Oregon, is forming a foster advocacy group and could be a resource.
- Bell: Also foster youth alumni associations.
- Balter: Asks that the TICWS bring a proposal to FIWG.
- Patton: The subcommittee should be broadened from its current membership to anyone interested in participating.
- Stiegler: We will send a notice to the subcommittee and CWAC to invite them to a planning meeting. A set time such as six months (or longer if necessary) should be determined for this work.
- Balter: Benchmark it with the window of the ILP grant for timelines.

**Amended Motion: The motion was amended, seconded and approved: The TICWS will meet during January or February 2009 to 1) decide on the data points of the 6-month report on founded cases for an ongoing look at teens' access to child welfare services, and 2) to develop a proposal to bring to FIWG, including scope and length, regarding the issue of permanency of children, ages 17-19, to address the issue of how well prepared teens are when the exit the foster care system to enter into adulthood.**

### **CWAC CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR VACANCY**

- Kelley-Siel: Presented Judy with a certificate for her service on CWAC and expressed congratulations on Judy's election to State Representative. Commended her for all she has done for CWAC and DHS. Distributed a draft letter that she is considering sending to CWAC asking the committee to submit 3-4 names for its choices to fill the chair and vice chair positions. Hopes to strike a balance between Bruce Goldberg

commissioning the CWAC as the key child welfare advisory body and being one step removed so he is not making the selection without CWAC input. This still follows the CWAC bylaws that state the DHS Director makes the appointment. Asked for feedback on that approach.

- Stiegler: She and Erinn talked about this earlier and she agrees it should not be just an internal decision. Also, it need not be a current CWAC member.
- Kelley-Siel: We also want to look at recruitment of other members. Who would CWAC want at the table?

**CONSENSUS: There was consensus agreement to the approach of seeking input from CWAC for filling the chair and vice chair positions.**

- Arenz: Attach the bylaws to the letter to clarify the roles and responsibilities of these positions.
- Kelley-Siel: When assessing who the chair should be, consider the individual's ability to bring his/her expertise to the table but to take the individual's hat off at the table and when giving advice. She will include a paragraph in the letter about how that can be a challenge. Also, consider who has the skills to run a meeting. FIWG should discuss how the CWAC as a whole would respond to this request, especially in light of not having a chair during this decision-making time. You may want to choose an interim chair for the January 2009 meeting. She and Bruce would commit to having an appointment made in time for the March 2009 meeting.

**ACTION: Iris Bell nominated Benjamin Hazelton as interim chair. Unanimous vote to accept the nomination.**

- Stiegler: As names are submitted by individual CWAC members, should they go to CWAC, DHS or FIWG?
- Hazelton: Recommends they go to Erinn and Bruce.
- Kelley-Siel: This gives every member an individual vote rather than it coming as a CWAC agreement. She will frame the letter so that it is clear these are individual recommendations to be sent to her. This will be an agenda item at the January meeting.

- Stiegler: If names are submitted before the January meeting, the meeting time would be used to narrow the list. No names could be added on the date of the meeting.
- Balter: Concerned about trying to get the committee to make a group recommendation. DHS has the freedom to select one from the names CWAC members submit and one from an outside list. A current member and a nonmember might be a good mix.

**ACTION: Erinn Kelley-Siel will ask that CWAC members submit three names, one of which is to be outside the current CWAC membership. She will hand out the letter during the January meeting and email it also on the same day. The names will be due two weeks later. She and Bruce will make a decision so that the appointment is in place for the March CWAC meeting.**

### **SET AGENDA FOR 1/14/09 CWAC MEETING (Continued from above)**

- Arenz: Regarding Behavioral Rehabilitation Services Redesign, a quality assurance process including a monitoring commitment has been implemented and would be a better guardian than CWAC. We should keep this on our list of issues, but no action until April or May when we could get an update from Donna Keddy.
- Stiegler: Issues on the January agenda include current initiatives and the Status of Children report. Where do we want to go with the face-to-face visits?
- Balter: We need to know what we were looking for on those reports. FIWG needs to discuss.
- Stiegler: Is there anything else on the list of issues that needs to be on the January agenda? If not, FIWG will review the list during its February meeting to prioritize and pare it down. The chair/vice chair discussion will be added to the January agenda.
- Arenz: Perhaps we need to talk about whether or not the CWAC Legislative Subcommittee should be activated during session or if there is

another process by which members can keep informed of legislative issues.

**ACTION: Benjamin Hazelton will take the above discussion to develop a CWAC agenda.**

Meeting adjourned.

**End Note #1:**

12/15/08

EMAIL TO CWAC FUTURE ISSUES WORK GROUP

From Mickey Serice

At the last Future Issues Work Group meeting, members asked if the CAF Research team could produce the data set on a regular basis. The request was for the data to be produced once every six months.

I checked with the CAF Research team and this is doable.

Also, I agreed to confirm that DHS does not gather information on child abuse reports that are "unfounded." Please see response below:

"Also, I did verify that what you all remembered about demographic data not being available for unfounded cases is correct (we don't collect child data until they are determined to be a victim)."