

Family Services Review Commission Meeting
January 4, 2007
HSB-252

Members present: Maggie Bagon, Doreen Binder, Jessica Chanay, Diane Cohen-Alpert, Kim Freeman, Shirley Kaping, Peggy Kennerly (by VCON), Rosemary Lazzari, Rob Potter, and Angela Sanchez (by VCON)

Members excused: Miranda Herrera

Members absent: Bonnie Davidson and Michael Ware

DHS staff present: Ramona Foley, Mickey Serice, Jim Neely, Vic Todd, Lori Nelson, and Nancy Sathrum

Administrative Handouts, sent via email prior to the meeting: Meeting Agenda, Draft Minutes of the December 7, 2006 FSRC Meeting, DHS Summary of Complaints Report for November 2006

Additional Administrative Handouts at meeting: FSRC Member Roster, Degree Completion Initiative Update, Draft Self Sufficiency Program Overview, November 2006 CAF Public Assistance Caseload Statistics, November 2006 Self Sufficiency at a Glance, Draft Customer Service Policy

Greeting and Roll Call:

Meeting called to order at 8:38 a.m. with a membership quorum in attendance. We are using the Video Conferencing (VCON) equipment for the first time today; with Peggy Kennerly participating from Roseburg and Angela Sanchez participating from Hood River.

Chair Report:

- Action and follow-up items:
 - Governor's web site and Legislative Committee assignments were emailed to members.
 - Draft customer service policy – Jim to send out to community partners/contractors for comment when available.
- Approval of Minutes: Rosemary Lazzari motioned and Shirley Kaping seconded the approval of the December 7, 2006 FSRC meeting minutes as written. Vote of approval was unanimous.
- Commission membership: We currently have three vacant positions. Regarding inactive members, Rob will send a notice letter to the member, who has been absent and not communicating their status to the Commission. If there is no response from the member, then Rob will contact the Governor's Office about replacing the inactive member. **ACTION:** Rob to send a status letter to one inactive member and will notify Nancy Goss-Duran at the Governor's Office, if no communication to the Commission is received from the inactive member. (letter sent to member by Rob 12/12/06), no

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response received, and Rob sent e-mail to Governor's Office 1/18/07). Rob will forward the Commission's recommendation regarding the two applicants from the Oregon Law Center. (Email sent to the Governor's Office by Rob on 1/18/07) **ACTION** – Jim to recruit new potential members from Eastern and Southeastern areas of the state.

- Expense Policy – The draft operating procedure expense policy has been written and was sent to Mickey yesterday. We expect to have a draft ready for review at the February meeting. **ACTION:** Include as agenda item for 2/1/07 FSRC meeting.
- FSRC Strategic Plan – discuss committee objectives. Not discussed.
- Review Committee Assignments: Not discussed.

CAF Report, Ramona Foley, Mickey Serice and Jim Neely:

Budget update: The Governor's recommended budget is on the web at <http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/BAM/GRB0709.shtml>. The Governor is investing in many programs that will help children and families and will impact both child welfare and self-sufficiency caseloads. Details are being reviewed and discussed.

TANF Reauthorization

Vic provided an update on TANF Reauthorization. Details of the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) were discussed and are included in the December 7th FSRC meeting minutes. Ramona mentioned that legislative action will be needed to produce a TANF Reauthorization plan for the state. We haven't heard of any changes to the Deficit Reduction Act, but changes may still happen at the federal level. There is a window of time before fines will be assessed; however, we need to demonstrate progress and intent of meeting these guidelines. Will the TANF Oversight Committee continue to meet? Erinn Kelley-Siel will continue to update and provide direction to the committee.

We have heard that Rep. Kotek will be introducing a second TANF bill. Legislative Counsel is currently working on the bill and it will become public when it is introduced in session.

ACTION – Rob will invite Rep. Kotek to our next FSRC meeting. (Rob left voice message for Rep. Kotek on 1/22/07.)

It has been difficult to reconcile the TANF Oversight Committee recommendations with the proposed legislation. It may be best to make the bills as general as possible and put necessary detail in rules to increase flexibility and eliminate stumbling blocks. We currently have, in some areas, more detail in our statutes than most other states. It was recommended that DHS look at other states' statutes for direction.

Ramona reported that Ree Sailors has been hired as an additional Governor's Health Policy Advisor to cover some of the responsibilities previously handled by Erinn. **ACTION** – Nancy will forward Erinn's email to FSRC members. (**Done 1/5/07**) **ACTION** – Mickey will invite Erinn to one of our meetings, possibly February or March.

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Is there any news to report on the Oregon Health Plan? Ramona hasn't been in on these discussions. Allen Douma is the Assistant Director of the Division of Medical Assistance Programs (DMAP). **ACTION** – Ramona will inquire at the next cabinet meeting and report back. FSRC also requested clarification regarding parents who lose medical coverage when their children are removed from the home. Are clients notified that other coverage may be available? **ACTION** – Vic will clarify with Karen House. **(Karen sent an email of explanation to Rob on 1/16/07.)**

Legislative Status:

The Legislative web site is located at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/>. Rob asked that the FSRC receive information on self-sufficiency bills that are introduced. **ACTION** – Nancy will run and distribute a report of bills assigned to the CAF Office of Self Sufficiency Programs at our monthly FSRC meetings.

Session begins on Monday, January 8th. We hear it will be a unique session as they plan to begin working toward the proposed annual session format. We are attempting to get the TANF bill on the fast track to be heard quickly. Most likely the bill will work through the House Human Services and Women's Wellness Committee, Chaired by Rep. Carolyn Tomei. We have the avenues lined up and are ready to go, but need the bill read in floor session. Kim Freeman stated that partners are trying to build programs with a July 1 start date so they would be happy to support our interest in having the bill introduced as soon as possible. The bill, HB 2180 (Legislative Concept 722), remains with Legislative Counsel for amendments. Copies of the original legislative concept and proposed amendments have been distributed and discussed.

The word is that sine die is scheduled for June 29th.

Grievance Policy: Lori Nelson joined the meeting for the Grievance Policy discussion.

Jim reported that the grievance form was discussed at the January 3rd District Managers (DM) meeting. He has requested that the DM or program manager visit each branch within the next month to verify that the forms are available and discuss what changes have occurred to lower the number of grievances being filed. Feedback is that the process may be so complicated that clients aren't using it. Work will continue on the flow chart to include all types of issues and how to follow-up on them.

Maggie has surveyed her child welfare caseload regarding problems with self sufficiency benefits and most clients have said they are afraid to file a grievance. We continue to work with managers to send the message that retaliation won't be tolerated. We appreciate knowing when this situation occurs.

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In the past, the complaint form was very simple. Shirley believes we have over worked this issue and made the form too complicated. When a legislator receives a call, it is sent on to Bruce and Ramona for resolution. The resolution of complaints is high on Dr. Bruce Goldberg's priority list.

Ramona visited a Clark County, Washington child welfare office that had a box on the wall with a simple complaint form asking – how were you treated and other simple questions. A drop box was provided for the completed forms. Bruce has been very clear that we won't tolerate retaliation and that people have the right to talk to whoever they want, including legislators. We have Human Resources investigate certain situations to determine why the client feels the way they do. Staff should be treating clients with respect.

Kim brought up the fact that the FSRC birthed this grievance/complaint form and are responsible for how complex it has become. Diane discussed the customer service policy with a committee that she participates with in Multnomah County. There was a huge response from the group and the outcome is that they have created their own form to find out what clients wish to share. That may explain why we aren't getting complaints from Multnomah County.

Lori reported the latest version of the draft policy would be distributed via email and will solicit comments/concerns about the policy. The draft policy will be sent to external partners and stakeholders soon for their comments. Ramona did not like the "difficult customer" language and suggested that it be changed to "dissatisfied customer". Lori will make the change. Rob questioned the use of customer vs. client and thought it would be best to pick one and be consistent. One reason for keeping both words is that we often work with grandparents that will never be our clients. Lori has received comprehensive suggestions to change the October draft, as follows:

1. Add alternate format language and interpreter language to body of policy.
2. Complaint report should not paraphrase client's statement but keep exactly as written.
3. Add contractor's language/responsibilities.
4. Make changes in complaint form language to differentiate when client should use complaint form or administrative hearing process. Clients are sometimes told that they can't request a hearing because they will lose. They don't understand what issues are hearable.
5. Make changes that clearly define the complaint form vs. the client comment form.

ACTION: Lori will send draft policy out to stakeholder groups. Nancy will forward to FSRC members (Done: 1/8/07), Jim will forward to contractors (Done 1/9/07 – sent to CAF Managers with a request for them to forward to their district contractors for review).

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All DHS staff received the draft policies and has the opportunity to comment. Diane said they want to make sure that compliments and negative statements are both heard.

Lori described a short coming in our current database. Example is in SDA 9's November report where a client filed a discrimination and customer service complaint. The current database can only record one type of complaint. In the past, both types of complaints have been included in the narrative. This report includes both customer service and discrimination complaints. Can this concept be covered in the new draft policy? It was suggested that the policy define both terms to separate out the two concepts.

- **Lobbying Guidelines for Public Officials:** Packets distributed at December meeting.

Mickey spoke with the Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission and it is clear that anyone has the right to lobby as an individual. If lobbying as a FSRC member, you can't speak for the commission unless the issue was voted on by a member quorum. The Commission Chair would likely do the lobbying for the FSRC or create a "talking points" document to use when lobbying. **ACTION** for today's policy committee meeting is to develop talking points document and vote on it so it can be used by members through the session. **(Policy Committee didn't meet so document was not developed.)**

Rosemary asked about Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC) documents. CWAC is planning to send a letter to legislators that have an interest in child welfare issues outlining the core principles that should be considered.

Rosemary was told in the Commission Training that a quorum is required to consider it a public meeting. Mickey has asked for clarification. All documents are public documents.

TANF Reauthorization: Identify and discuss primary TANF reauthorization policy issues.

DHS staff left meeting and FSRC members returned from break and began brainstorm session on TANF reauthorization.

- Support additional funding of alcohol and drug treatment programs
- Although it isn't enough money, support the post TANF payment of \$150 per month for 12 months
- State only SSI program payment while clients are waiting for federal determination. It often takes too long to get paperwork back from doctor's offices. Could mail be sent to the DHS worker to make the process more efficient? We would need a signed release of information form from the client.
 - o Supported the 24 additional workers and funding for contracted medical services are included in the GRB.
- Concerned that the minimal cost of living increase of 2% is insufficient since there has been no COLA for 12 years. It is recommended that the COLA be addressed every year. Support keeping it on the list and continue to lobby for annual increase.

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- Concerned that GRB doesn't include pre-TANF funding as recommended by the TANF Oversight Committee. Pre-TANF concept was to do case management work with clients and connect them with community services/programs prior to being counted in the 60 months. Early connection to these programs may help clients avoid TANF altogether. Rosemary has been hired to work with clients in her area to meet this need.
- Need pre-TANF program to address immediate/emergent needs of clients and connect them with community-driven services which may eliminate the need for TANF dollars. This helps bring DHS and community together to meet client needs with limited funding.
- Angela said they have an assessment program in Hood River. Clients come in one day per week to meet with JOBS worker and supervisor to assess learning needs, discuss alcohol and drug issues and job leads, and obtain gas vouchers and other services needed to meet other immediate needs.
- Visitor, Lori Morphus, said social worker should provide broad look at available services.
- Kim recommended the FSRC support a pre-TANF program to help meet the DHS mission of "helping people to become independent, healthy and safe" and to include minimum standards to provide equitable access to services around the state. The cost effectiveness must be addressed. This may also help with TANF participation requirements.
- Diane suggested that we be cautious because the assessment program works very well and the Governor's Office may not have identified the difference between pre-TANF and assessment process.
- Look at multiple barriers, enhance client evaluation, including client's self evaluation, and enhance TANF case manager training to increase skills and sensitivity when assisting clients.
- Highly trained front desk staff is needed to refer clients to local community services/resources that are available. Bilingual and bicultural skills at front desk are also very important.
- Would like a strong assessment program and training available to support the minimum standards we want in each district.
- Jessica asked a process question: Issues are discussed but we don't seem to reach the next step of making the decision regarding which issues we want to support.
- Diane will contact Rep. Tina Kotek regarding the bill she will be introducing. Look closely at her bill and the DHS bills to see what we can support. The FSRC may want to lobby to present proposal that isn't included in the GRB.
- Support strength/value based services and flexibility to use family/team decision meetings (may be a union issue), tailored to the consistent community services available across the state.
- Take another look at the recommendations of the TANF Oversight Committee, which included creative, flexible programs to meet federal requirements.

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ACTION – Rob will check with Doreen and Diane to come up with top five items from the Oversight Committee and compare them with the FSRC recommendations. He will create and distribute this document and request comments by email. He will also work on initial statement of importance.

Lorie Morphus asked questions about the complaint report. **ACTION** – Jim to follow up on complaint from SDA 16 on last page of report (3 child welfare complaints with no resolution).

Committees: Partnership Committee – discuss recent activities (Diane Cohen-Alpert). No report since CWAC meeting will be held next week. The CWAC full committee meets every other month. **ACTION** – Nancy will continue to forward CWAC Agenda and approved Minutes to FSRC members.

The current Policy Committee hasn't been effective. A volunteer from the FSRC is needed to chair the committee. Duties include scheduling meetings, setting agendas, and running the committee meetings. **ACTION** – Rob will work on document that outlines the responsibilities of the committee chair for discussion at the February FSRC meeting.

February 1, 2007 FSRC meeting agenda:

- **Discuss status of FSRC Committees and Committee Chair responsibilities**
- **Review Expense Report document**

Next Meeting: The next FSRC meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2007, 8:30 a.m. to noon, in HSB-252.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 P.M.