



MINUTES

Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission May 21, 2018

Members present

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|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Timothy Colahan | Gina Valerie Colas | Elliott Hinkle | Lluvia Merillo-Phone |
| Kari Rieck | Caroline Cruz | Katie Robertson | Bill Wagner |

Staff

Rosa Klein, Kali Scolnick, Pamela Heisler, Katherine Bartlett

Introductions

Review and approve previous minutes

March meeting minutes

Action to approve minutes:

Motion to approve: Kari Rieck

Second: Valerie Colas

Aye - Unanimous

Progress report on the DHS Unified Child and Youth Safety Implementation Plan (UCYSIP)

Nathan Rix, Executive Projects Director, Angela Leet and Pamela Heisler

Bill Wagner: As the UCYSIP continues forward it is important that we (CFCAC) have periodic updates because you are getting close to timeframe endings, and this Commission is very focused on what you are able to propose to do to fix the pieces of the system that have risen to the top of your list of to-dos.

Angela Leet: The UCYSIP was launched in response to the Public Knowledge Report (PK) that was done a few years back that was an external assessment that the Governor asked to be done. That, plus many other assessments that have been done of the child welfare (CW) system were all brought together and created the UCYSIP. The UCYSIP has governing steering body. That steering body prioritized 10 projects to be launched out of a list of 85. The Executive Projects Team was formed, there are 9 project managers that are taking on that work and partnering closely with CW on that work. Today, we want to do a deeper dive into 2 of those 10 projects - Continuum of Care and Training of Foster Parents.

A core team of individuals was brought together last summer to begin looking at this work. When that original group started to talk about how we are going to tackle, what was at that time a

priority that the Steering Team highlighted around same day appropriate placements for youth, we started looking at that topic. We knew we had seen a lot of loss across the system. Not just in foster care retention and recruitment, but all levels of care of children in our state. We had an opportunity with Fariborz coming into his role, and having new leadership. We went to Fariborz and said that we were feeling that the system-wide crisis needs executive level sponsorship. It is not just a CW issue, it is all systems that are impacting kids. Fariborz asked that a memo be put together with the main systemic barriers. That document was done last October. Fariborz said that clearly, we need to be partnering across state agencies. He brought on OHA director Pat Allen, and they agreed to co-sponsor a cross-system effort to improve the children's system. The proposal is from a group of DHS, CW, DD and the OHA coming together to say that they agree on the goal statement and solutions. Allen and Fariborz wanted the OHA and DHS to be able to say that they agree on these core issues and want to come to solutions together.

Right now, the work is in the partner engagement phase. Through April and May we have been meeting with groups like this, advisories, individuals, CASA providers and other state agencies to see what they think of the ideas. We will collect that feedback and take it to the directors to review. Have been aligning this work with other groups across the children's system.

Q/C: When do you get to the grassroots? What is the plan on how you are going to get this information to the people who are doing the direct services?

A: We have been meeting with providers and asking for this to be distributed widely. We've been invited out to communities. We have focused a lot on the local system of care bodies that are built up across the state. If you have any ideas or you need anyone to come out and engage further, we would love to do that.

This is a macro look at the system. It isn't going to be able to tackle every individual placement or residential or foster care home . . . that work is happening and there is focus across the board. This project has identified that, in recent years we had had a lack of collaboration and coordination across state agencies, which was then resulting in barriers at the local level for services and supports to be delivered to children and youth.

Q/C: On July 10th DHS is going to be meeting with the Tribes. I would recommend seeing if you can get on that agenda with Fariborz. I think it is important to have the Tribal input.

You will see a letter at the end of the proposal. That is some clarification that needed to be made from the IDD system following up on some earlier feedback and concerns about the proposal.

Q/C: Is there data that shows how long it takes for a child coming into care to get (CANS?) and then the services? Is there any statewide information that tells us what it looks like?

A: Yes, we can pull that from (database). We can follow-up with you about that. From the point of coming into care to getting their (CANS?) screening?

Q/C: And then actually getting engaged in services. Because sometimes it is 6-9 months because of waiting lists. We have little ones who are self-harming or threatening self-harm. I understand this is macro level, but on the ground we are in extreme crisis for our children in foster care.

Q/C: What is the plan with receiving centers, regional crisis assessment centers with Family First (inaudible) congregate care?

A: A couple of those ideas are being looked at by the Youth with Specialized Needs Workgroup as well. I was reading through Family First and I think the good news is that this is just going to raise the standard. I don't know that it would get in the way of having regional crisis assessment centers. That model is a little bit more on the behavioral health side for youth who need a comprehensive mental health assessment and are unsafe in the community at that moment.

Q/C: I know it is the macro level as the others have said, and you are looking at where the gaps are, but going back to what Kari said about the waiting lists, we sort of all know that. Are you just going to be reiterating that there are waiting lists or are you going to be figuring out some ways to send in some tag teams to shorten the waiting list on an as needed basis? In Douglas Co. the psych evals have a huge wait and it has already caused a couple of tragedies in our community.

A: I wish that this project was tackling every bit of that, but it is not. Those efforts are occurring. CW is acting as fast as possible to create safe capacity for youth. The behavioral health team is looking at what they need to do to build up statewide capacity in those areas. In terms of those bricks and mortar conversations and the actual service capacity on the ground right now, those conversations are occurring, it's both and.

Bill Wagner to Nathan Rix: I think going forward, now that the Unified Plan effort is in full swing and can actually see some finish lines coming up, that it is my hope that at every Commission meeting going forward we have an update on a piece of the plan or in general the whole plan.

Nathan Rix: The document lists out milestones that we have achieved in the UCYSIP and outlines future milestones through July 2019.

Before the most recent Secretary of State audit was released, the team was hired in order to make radical improvements to the child safety system. Not just looking at CW, but all parts of the enterprise. We weren't focusing on emergency situations. We were trying to step back from the crisis and design a system that was really centered on kids and families.

Sharing what system wide work is being done under each of the recommendations in the SOS audit.

Q/C: Is this available online?

A: Yes.

Can see that this work started before the SOS audit. It started with the initiation of the PK, which came out in the fall of 2016.

The first big recommendation in the SOS audit was to address the four foundational recommendations outlined in the PK report. The SOS audit reinforced, that they were not finding conflicting things, but supporting things, so stay on course to improve the projects you have identified. The two areas that the system work is touching is improving culture within the agency, and focusing the whole agency (DHS) on safety. What we have accomplished to improve culture and focus on safety is leading a statewide district tour. We have met with 26 different groups, staff and community across the state, and have invited internal and other state agency stakeholders – judicial department, juvenile justice folks, members of the community, foster parents, etc. That was important to us to show that our leadership has changed, and with that, the vision for child safety has changed. It was the first time that a lot of our community members had had one-on-one time with DHS and CW directors. We doubled down on our commitment to crosswalk the report with work that is underway. When this report is finished, in the June timeframe, you will be able to see recommendations and how they are being worked on. Or, if there isn't any work where the gap is. It will be on our website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ABOUTDHS/Child-Safety-Plan/Pages/index.aspx>

The second SOS recommendation talks about cultivating a culture of transparency, responsibility, respectful communication and professionalism using an array of leadership tools. The statewide engagement starts to work on that. We originally planned this engagement for fall of 2017, and intentionally delayed it until the winter of this year so that our new CW director could join. We knew that having leadership in the field makes a big difference rather than hearing it through the chain. Some of the results from our surveys that we did afterwards for staff, 77% of staff, and 79% of the members who attended one of these listening sessions agreed or strongly agreed that they have a better understanding of the future of DHS. 85% of staff who attended the sessions agreed or strongly agreed that they feel respected as part of the CW leadership team. 86% of the community members who attended listening sessions either agreed or strongly agreed that they feel as a trusted partner of the DHS CW program. 86% of staff who attended agreed or strongly agreed that they had an opportunity to provide direct feedback to central office leadership. 94% of community members that attended agreed or strongly agreed that they had opportunity to provide direct feedback to CW.

The biggest areas of growth, if we were to do this next time, was to have more focus time specifically for foster families. We did have a separate meeting for them but the timing is always tricky with these things. So, we could do more with that.

We weren't able to visit every region in the state. We went with 8 or 9 regions and next time we'd like to do every region so that we don't leave one with the impression that we are leaving folks out.

The third recommendation from the SOS report has to do with reviewing the structure and organization of the agency so they can identify long standing issues and system weaknesses. There is a lot of work in CW around that. There are three of our projects dedicated to it at the system level. The first is the project to centralize our abuse hotline. We are in the process of

creating that plan and executing it to bring into one place, all of our screeners. The hotline will work 24-7, 7 days a week. That is something that only Multnomah County has right now. We will be moving the hotline to a location in the Portland area and will have that completed by the end of July.

The second project that is looking at those structural and organizational elements is our Continuum of Care project which you just heard about from Angela Leet. There are about 14-20 groups having the same conversation about how we help kids that are in multiple systems. One of our goals with this project is to propose solutions to OHA and DHS director. To empower one of those groups, the system of care group, to be able to solve the problems. We want to move from analysis to action.

The third project that looks at structural issues is how we respond to abuse. In the PK report and the analysis of Give Us This Day, showed a lot of miscommunication between the licensing division and the folks that look at finances, the people who do placement. We have quite a few accomplishments there. You can see the accomplishments on the timeline. That is when we cracked open the rules and did some alignment between CW and the Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations (OAAPI) that previously wasn't there. We were implementing (inaudible) which was sponsored by the legislature and signed by the Governor. Currently, we are working on some tasks to close that project out by the fall, some service sharing agreements and more documentation that says when there is an allegation of abuse, how it works its way through the system.

Q/C: Is that against foster parents, bio parents, all?

A: It answers the question of what happens after it leaves the hotline. Sometimes that is bio parents, sometimes it's in a foster home or child care agency.

The 5th recommendation talks about implementing a thorough, ongoing evaluation process for agency programs. The report directed us to review Oregon Safety Model and make sure that we can apply those key concepts to child safety. The two projects already mentioned that are addressing that recommendation at a systems level is the centralized hotline project and coordinating response to abuse. The true impact of moving to a centralized hotline screening system is being developed as part of a staffing plan. We will have at least 100 individuals staffed there. Within that, we will have a process for continuous improvement. You will get the same service statewide.

Q/C: On the centralizing, in a way, in my head it says OK, well it didn't work to have a whole bunch of different places to call, so we are going to try to centralize it. But then on the other hand, somebody from Klamath Falls calling in to Portland area seems awkward. I bet you . . . did you look at other states and find that oh, this system does seem to work someplace else, or did you just think we need to try something else. How did that come about?

A: The idea of centralizing the hotline has been around for about 10 years. What we did to bring consensus around the project was develop a comprehensive business case. That involved looking at other states. We worked closely with Casey Family Programs to connect us with those from the front line all the way to the executive level. We also looked at efforts to centralize that failed

like Washington State. One of the biggest things we learned in that process was that if you don't resource the centralized hotline effectively, it will fall apart quickly. From Hawaii and Indiana, we learned that if you have sustained commitment to common supervision, common training, that you get the results of better safety. We also read some research on implicit and explicit bias. There were traces of that in some of the past lawsuits, some of which are online. For example, we know that communities of color typically stream in more in the Portland/Metro area. Also in other districts where there are tribal communities in Oregon who bring a lot of kids into care. We haven't done a full analysis on the specifics for Oregon, but we know that nationwide, in urban areas that is a problem so we want to correct that. In rural areas we have seen cases where people have been screened out when they should have been screened in because of community connections. Our task for this in moving forward beyond other state's research, is how do we preserve the community connections, but make sure that we aren't have explicit bias.

Q/C: In your research did you discover differences with the centralized between treatment in metropolitan and rural call-ins? Second, with regard to implicit bias with folks of color and perhaps tribal, I am wondering about the poverty bias? We see that in Southern Oregon a lot.

A: I don't know the answer but am happy to look them up for you.

Q/C: Is there going to be a process for reporting back to the hotline so that we aren't having those bias issues in our local communities?

A: I will have to look and see what type of feedback loops are being planned and how they deal with bias. I know that there are notifications that need to go out to folks that make allegation of abuse. If they are in the system, we have community partners that we notify.

Q/C: One of the things we typically hear, and I've heard it through other counties around the state, is that it has to do with the language that the caller/reporter is giving. If they don't use certain trigger words, there is not a deep enough dive into trying to figure out what truly the issue is. I know that CASA has made calls. The question is, what do you think the safety is? (Inaudible) I'm calling because I believe there is a safety risk. Even doctors have called our office saying, well, call this in. I don't know what to say. It's the wording that is being used. Do you train the community or train the screeners to actually dive into what the caller/reporter is trying to say. Has there been a look at that?

A: There has been and there is going to be more of that. We are in the process of doing some case reviews. Center for Child Protection is looking at how the impact of the data collected on the front end plays itself out throughout the rest of the case. I am not sure specifically about trigger words, but there will be much more training in general for a screener. Right now there is a module in every caseworker's new caseworker training that deals with screening. What we are looking at doing is creating a whole curriculum for people whose full time job will be screening. The way most people learn now is on the job, so it may be the case that they've had a mentor that has done it at the local level, supervisor that has trained on trigger words. But that might not be the case in the whole state. That is part of the fidelity work we have to do.

Q/C: Is there any conversation about having a CRB type of panel for both screening and CPS?

A: I don't know.

Q/C: I've always thought that that would be a good idea because there are so many eyes on the legal part, and there are no eyes on the screening and investigative.

Q/C: I if Kirsten (Kolb) may have any thoughts about bias research that is happening. Any thoughts around this topic?

A: Kirsten Kolb - Yes, our department is working on several different models to help support screening to identify children and families that have a probability of safety and looking at placement within two years of a call. Within those models, we are also creating bias correction. Naturally, when we have decision making bias in our system, then we also have bias in our data. By addressing that, we are working on bias correction or fairness correction model for our equations that will address some of that bias that exists in the system. In looking at various populations such as the native designation and some of our ethnic and racial disparities as well. It does not address the poverty issue that you brought up, but it does look at correction some of the ethnic and racial disparities that exist. Those should be coming out about the same time as the centralized hotline so we are working on some pilots to exist in the wintertime. When the centralized hotline is implemented, those equations will be implemented at the same time.

Nathan Rix: The six recommendations in the SOS audit report has to do with establishing safe mechanisms for staff to provide input and to develop more transparent process for reporting and tracking concerns. One systems piece of the puzzle that we have was first our engagement tour so we could have an open posture for taking input from staff. We didn't go to a community where we didn't also meet with their staff. In most cases, we met twice with staff. We made sure to make it focused on the field, and that there ideas, whether they be immediate fixes, short term or long term could come up to DHS leadership.

The piece that is enduring throughout the rest of our projects on the system side, is that we used project management and put our project management documents online. We look daily at our Child Safety email box where a lot of staff and community members have submitted comments there.

Q/C: That's probably one of the hardest things to do is convince staff that the culture is changing and that they are safe. Were there any surprises or trends that you saw in the comments?

A: One trend we saw across the board was appreciation. As those listening tours progressed, word started to spread that the leadership at DHS, Marilyn and Fariborz were being open and that it was a safe space. That was the first time I started to see appreciation come through. There were acknowledgement that they felt heard or it was the first time that they were able to take back something to their stakeholder group. We saw this in the survey. You will be able to look in depth at what those responses were when it is out.

For recommendation 7, which has to do with developing a statewide strategic plan to increase foster care. The one piece of that we've partnered with CW on was the DHS foster parent

website. Pamela and the foster care manager developed that immediately. Several surveys have gone out to caregivers in an attempt to identify what sorts of supports and training they need. There have been foster parent support groups in a few branches. We have a lot of data. Our task now is to fit that into what the future looks like.

The next recommendation was around #10, building a robust support system to retain foster parents and reduce placement instability. This is being done by CW.

For recommendation 11, creating and maintaining a culture of respectful communication between foster parents and DHS caseworkers. The one project that intersects here was the statewide listening tour. We recreated a time and space for folks to interact with the Governor's Advocacy Office. Foster parents can go directly to them. Some were familiar with the office and how it works, others were just getting to know the office.

In terms of recommendation 13, commit to building foster parent capacity across the whole system. We see our role in that as looking at the whole system from the big picture. Particularly in the Continuum of Care project.

In closing, I grouped recommendations 18-20 together because they all deal with caseworker's caseloads. Strategies to reduce the caseloads, training. The bulk of these isn't within the focus of our set of projects, it is being led by CW and some by the research office. We do have one project that looks at the recruitment and retention of caseworkers. Cause and analysis of why caseworkers leave DHS. They are in the process of doing a lot of front end work. For example, they are developing some realistic job preview videos. We know that when people come to DHS, some of the feedback has been that we don't really know what we are getting ourselves into. We want to be able to support that on the front end because it is very expensive to train caseworkers. The sooner we can figure out who is the best fit for the job, the better. We are working with DAS on some standardized position descriptions which will help supervisors and program managers in posting and making sure we can fill vacancies faster as an agency. Some of the feedback we have received from caseworkers is that they stay with the job because they appreciate meeting and helping families. If they don't feel like they are supported at the supervisor level, that is when they want to exit the agency. To that end, we have a partnership with CW on supervisor training. The focus of the rest of the project work is going to be figuring out what we need to change in the current supervisor curriculum and who will provide that training.

What is tricky about reporting out on the SOS audit is that most of this work started before that audit was delivered so I hope the overview shows where our connection points are. I can't stress enough that we are really trying to look at that systems level and the bulk of the work is being done with Marilyn's team in CW. Our partnership with their team affords us structure to be able to report out transparently on where we are making progress. I don't think any of the answers I gave today were comprehensive.

Q/C: One of the things that has struck me in learning data, especially about the caseworker situation is the latest number I heard, I'm going to see if it is still correct, is the average tenure is 18 months for a caseworker. I believe it was much longer, at least 3 times longer in the past and with supervisors I heard the average tenure is 3 years vs 12 not too long ago. That probably has a

huge impact on training and the fact that the average caseload for a caseworker is 15-20 children, which means that peer caseworkers, those that have more experience, don't have any time to be a peer trainer. That probably has also impacted heavily on how you train caseworkers. Is that something that you have seen and have said, oh gosh, we can't depend on peers training new caseworkers, etc.? Is that part of that curriculum change you are talking about?

A: I'd have to look at the newly revised caseworker training to give you a fully accurate answer. What we have heard from caseworkers and from the PK report, is that it is really the supervisor that makes the decisive difference, and that we need to support our supervisors so that they can have those clinical conversations.

Q/C: The information that you gave as responses from the caseworkers on them finding meaning with the cases but feeling like they are lacking support. You could wrap that back up to # 10 for foster parents because that's why foster parents who stay, stay. The minute the meaning for doing the work with the children is outweighed by the lack of support, they are gone. Unfortunately, there has been a very unequal scale for the last couple of years, and seems to be increasing. What you said about caseworkers is true about foster parents. A caseworker in a case with a foster parent can absolutely make the difference between the foster parent staying or going. Incorporating actual foster parents, in your training for caseworkers is critical. I'm wondering if that is a piece that has been considered. Because, there are some fabulous foster parents out there who can definitely share in a non-berating way, how to be effective in supporting foster parents and fit it in with the 20 million things they have to do in a day.

A: We had two moments with some of the foster parent round-table groups when we did the district tours. There was discussion of forming a foster parent mentoring association. If they didn't feel like they were getting peer support from DHS, there was talk of starting an organization locally.

Pamela Heisler: Overview of Project Milestones – See attached handout.

My focus has been public engagement first, project stuff later. Foster parent focus groups held in October in 7 different branches in Eastern Oregon.

Last legislative session some money was set aside specifically for foster parent support. They said come back to us with something developed that had foster parent feedback in it. Three buckets that the money was prioritized for: 1. Foster parent mentoring by paid, trained foster parent mentors, 2. High level respite, 3. (Inaudible) fund.

Q/C: Is there a system to track the skills, training and abilities of the foster parents that we have statewide?

A: Right now we have the areas of skills and knowledge that will be vetted, and the workgroup is going to have to start to deal with what we do around measurement.

Q/C: Have you also looked at other state's training and support? And what did you see if you did look, that boy, we should do this here?

A: That project in particular is supported by Portland State University. As we have gone through each step of this, they have pulled in research from other states and other countries about what they are doing to train their caregivers, what curriculum they are using, what competencies they may or may not have. As far as the support goes, that workgroup is still in its early stages. They are developing their vision first, then will dig more deeply into other models.

Q/C: Relatives are much different than non-relative foster homes. If there is a relative who has a history that goes up to central office, and it is taking an extraordinary amount of time to get approval. Is there any work in that area that will lead to quicker response to relatives who are having to go up to central office for approval?

A: Guessing this is around the exception process? This product doesn't contain that at all, but that is a question that we could put to leadership who will be here later.

Q/C: Do you know the number of children who are placed with relative's vs non-relative foster homes?

A: For Douglas County, it is 63% are family homes.

A: I don't know the numbers off the top of my head, but it is high.

Q/C: The training does the foster parent/caregiver have to go through training first before being certified or is it after certification, this is a required training?

A: Part of the reason why this even came about was fidelity across the state to any kind of training. It is all over the place. Everyone is doing their own thing on their own timeline with their own curriculum. The goal is to get something that everyone is getting so we can say that all of our foster parents have this basic (training). The catch is we do do emergency certifications and people get placements before they have any opportunity to access training. This group is going to have to deal with what we offer those families in addition to general applicants. Emergency placements have up to a year to complete their training and sometimes longer.

Q/C: Is the training going to include a legal component of understanding the dependency system and what their role is?

A: Yes

Audit findings regarding foster parent retention, recruitment, support and training

Jamie Ralls – Secretary of State's Office

Findings

DHS management has not prioritized foster care recruitment and retention which led to a steep decline in non-relative foster homes.

Non relative foster homes had declined by 55% between 2011-2016 from 3800 homes to 1727. Relative foster homes increased by 158% during this time from 862 to 2227.

Management failures and high caseloads that led to inadequate staffing resources.

In all, there were not enough homes to sustain the number of children who needed served.

Many of the children transitioning into FC have high needs related to trauma, behavioral mental health issues and drug addiction. These often require a high level of care and supervision that many foster homes cannot provide.

DHS lost 33% of the contractors (inaudible) residential capacity since 2007 due to the closure of many facilities. 671 in 2007 to 446 in 2016.

30-40% reduction in bed capacity of the OHA mental health services program for high level psychiatric conditions.

Overall, the conclusion was there is not enough capacity of foster homes to meet the need.

Found underrepresentation of culturally appropriate foster homes. Underrepresentation of black, Hispanic and Native American homes. Recruitment of LGBTQ foster homes was also limited.

At the time of the audit, DHS did not have adequate data to study. This critical data would have included: 1. tracking perspective foster parent inquiries statewide, not just in selected districts. 2. Monitoring how long the process takes from initial inquiry to certification. 3. Calculating foster parent turn-over throughout the districts and field offices in the state. 4. Understanding the gap of foster children to foster parents throughout the state. 5. Identifying and documenting the level of assessed need for each child in custody. 6. Identifying and documenting the level of care and training that each family has qualified for – Whether kinship or not, or whether they are able to take a placement in a way that can be easily searched and compared to the assessed needs of children in custody. 7. Tracking foster parent training overall, and including the percent of all foster parents who complete the training. 8. Documenting the true capacity of current homes. 9. Conducting surveys for current foster families who identify and address problems and concerns up front, rather than reactive. 10. Conducting surveys once foster families leave the system to determine why they are leaving.

Some of the root causes for the lack of foster homes SOS found included: Strained system, underprepared foster parents, burdensome costs and limited respite care.

DHS has been asking foster parents to take on more as the workload increases for case workers and overworked case workers have limited time to build the relationships that are needed with foster families.

A slow certification process discourages potential foster parents who could help relieve the system.

Foster parents reported not getting enough information from DHS about the mental or behavioral needs of the children that are being placed with them.

Reimbursement rates don't cover the need. Rates only cover 74% of the cost to raise a child according to USDA. Means foster families have to cover the remaining costs which include day care.

Foster parents lack access to respite care. In Oregon, foster parents have to pay for respite care on their own without help from DHS. DHS doesn't track respite providers and Oregon does not have a pool of approved respite providers or a list to share with foster families.

To start addressing the problems, SOS said that DHS needed a statewide strategy for FC recruitment and retention. Current foster home recruitment and retention efforts are isolated. They were piecemeal and inconsistent. Recruitment and retention was often a secondary task for DHS certifiers, and we found that each district approached recruitment and retention differently.

While the current contract with GRACE, Embrace and Every Child are doing great work, they only serve part of Oregon. The GRACE program is set to expire in 2018. Every Child and Embrace only track inquiries in areas that they are serving, and did not know how many inquiries led to actual certifications.

DHS conducts limited targeted recruitment. Ideally, targeted recruitment would cover 60% of all outreach efforts, yet DHS only spends 10% of their time on this effort.

The effect of all of this has led to placement shortages and hoteling children, which started as a rare emergency and continued to become a more frequent occurrence and accepted practice.

The audit was a point in time. We know things have changed at DHS and they are working on things continuously.

Promising Practices

Other states use data and targeted strategies to enhance their recruitment and retention efforts. Those efforts include: Establishing networks, encouraging supportive relationships between foster parents, provide ongoing training and support of foster parents before they burn out.

In a lot of states have started their action after huge lawsuits. Something that Oregon is at risk for.

Utah created a non-profit in 1994. The Governor took the foster care recruitment, retention and training out of the state agency's hands and charged the foundation with meeting recruitment and retention goals to build a capacity. Foundation was authorized by the Utah State Legislature and operates under a performance based contract. They mandated that the foundation achieve the goal of recruiting 500 non-relative placements every year. They achieve that goal plus some every year that they have been established. They used metric, such as measuring the ratio of inquiries to certifications of foster parent. They administer semi-annual foster parent satisfaction

and exit surveys in order to stay abreast of their needs and concerns. They became a role model as one of the best foster care practices and quality of foster parents in the nation. They target neighbourhoods in two months of focused recruitment. During that time they contact newspapers to issue press releases and articles about the need for foster parents. Foster families help the foundation by hosting panel discussions. Partner with local schools in the community. Schools agree to distribute flyers announcing open houses and other community recruitment efforts. Utah also uses social media for targeted outreach and tracking. They have Spanish language radio ads, statewide media ads and mobile friendly websites. The foundation has staff in every region of the state who can hold recruitment events. They include a full-time Native American tribal specialist who works with federally recognized tribes to recruit foster parents. They also hold foster parent panels for LGBTQ foster parents to share their experiences with other perspective LGBTQ foster parents. Use social media to support current foster families and help them connect with one another quickly and easily if they have questions or need support.

Utah also supports a development department not paid for by the contracted funds. It brings in 300-400 thousand dollars annually to assist in caring for the needs of children in foster care.

The quality of foster parents in Utah has increased significantly because the foundation pre-screens every single parent inquiry in an in-home consultation before they even get invited to come through the application process.

Utah directly involves experienced foster families in the recruitment of new foster families. Current foster families can be your best recruiting tool.

Florida has taken that model, and created paid mentoring positions for current foster families to help with the recruitment and retention. They also created a user-friendly website to highlight success stories, and included a video page that show current foster parents sharing in their own words what it means to be a foster parent. This helps to counteract the negative perception of foster parenting.

Casey Foundation operates Family to Family which promotes neighbourhood based system of foster care that finds and maintains foster and kinship homes that can support the children in their own neighborhoods. Where is the gap between foster children in Oregon's system and where are the parents needed, and what does that look like throughout the state? Once you have that information, you can start developing a targeted approach – something we weren't able to get our hands on during the audit.

Foster Parent College is an online training venue for general and relative foster parents and adoptive parents. Interactive, multimedia courses are offered for foster parents with in-service training on clinical aspects of interventions for their child's behavioral problems. There are currently 23 courses, 14 of which address specific child behavioral and emotional problems. Currently, CW knows that PSU has purchased the license, and have been working on this with the online training.

Capturing and reporting out on metrics for foster care recruitment and retention is key to any effort going forward. You have to collect the information so you have the facts and figures of what the problem is and then develop a plan to address it.

Many states we interviewed capture detailed information on foster parents, including the demographic information on race, primary language, number of biological children in the home, preferences, specific training and qualifications they have. Also knew what the shortage of foster homes was in each area. The number of foster children vs the number of foster homes. And, the demographic of foster homes vs the foster children to make the best placement matches. We found that Oregon does not have a robust model on.

States also track the number of foster parent inquiries across the state, the number of applications submitted, the number of foster parent who attended training, and the number of foster parents who follow through and get certified. They also knew the amount of time it took from a parent's first inquiry to actual certification. They track that statewide so they can determine where things are going quickly and where they weren't. They engage foster parents throughout the entire process. For those who drop out or who were not certified, they contact them and figure out why. They send an annual satisfaction survey to current parents and send an exit survey to those who quit.

After years of collecting this information, in some states they can see trends. They can find parts of the state that are doing well and parts that weren't. They could then address the problems.

Oregon's recruitment plan for 2015-2019 - Oregon is unable to provide data that specifically identifies the race of the foster parent population compared to the race of the children entering care. In part, because of the nature of the data capture and the inability to capture multiple race families and multi-racial children in a way that can demonstrate appropriate matching. Other states are able to collect this information and act on it.

In Kentucky, they include a separate data point on foster home characteristics vs foster children. They are tracking the gaps in the plan, collect foster child characteristics vs foster home characteristics and show the gap of the state as a whole, and by each area. They track the number of prospective foster parents – how many withdraw, how many receive training and how many or approved. They also track the length of time from inquiry to approval across the whole state.

North Carolina is also collecting data and measuring that data for success. They have statewide goals, strategies and measurements to determine the success. Include developing goals and strategies inside each district in the whole state and then they follow-up on it. One strategy is to build capacity to track and report demographic characteristics of licensed foster homes and all levels of service provision. They developed a foster parent orientation video. They provide a foster parent newsletter featuring children that need families.

In Washington, they took a look at home studies on perspective parents and then reviewed case files to determine that specific issues that were noted on the application or within the background check were handled appropriately and followed up with the district and the caseworker. In 2016 they started tracking racial and ethnic information from prospective foster parents. The data now

allows them to determine how specific recruitment efforts are working, and how individuals heard about the program and how they can make that effort better.

In other states, we also found the use of mapping and GIS to assist in appropriate placements of children. In these examples, the caseworker could search on the child's address and find all of the placement options that were available, looking first at those are closest to the child's community. DHS has a pretty robust GIS process that they do for a lot of their things in forecasting. They have the ability to make this happen too.

Q/C: Did you look at the number of working foster parents vs non-working?

A: We didn't have access to that data but it is probably a good data point to collect.

Q/C: Is there enough information on the children to be able to make a determination on a good match?

A: We didn't dive deep in to any of but had some concerns on the adequacy of the data overall.

DHS planning for foster parent retention, recruitment, support and training

Lauri Price, DHS Child Welfare Deputy Director, and Billy Cordero, Director of GRACE Grant

Oregon has come from a place, where in the 13-15 biennium we were staffed at 67% of what was necessary to do 100% of our work. What you have seen through this audit, as that there were no true surprises to us.

We focus primarily on placing children with someone who is known to them. We prefer relatives, but we look at others. We want to keep connections for kids so we are not adding to their trauma. Why there was an uptick in the relative foster care.

DD foster home system lost 60 beds which had a strong impact on CW and foster parents. Our foster parents are not trained to care for children with extraordinary mental health needs or IDD issues. CW is responsible for these children no matter what avenue they come (inaudible).

Regarding CANS – we may need to take a look at the balance of the questions that we are asking.

We have tracked training of foster parents, but that has been done at the local level. That has been a frustration for us at the central level of not being able to articulate from the central office, how many foster homes we need in a specific area today. The certification specialist at each location is responsible for assuring that they know the training that has taken place with each foster parent in order to continue their certification.

We just go approval from the legislature in March to move forward with a childcare stipend program for children 0-5 to help offset the cost of childcare for foster parents who work out of the home. We do not currently have a robust respite program but we did get approval in March for \$750,000 to start 3 pilots. One is on respite for high CANS scoring kids, to develop and test

foster parent mentoring programs, and provide a small pot of emergency funding for each district.

We do child specific recruitment for every child that comes into care. We recognize that there is a lack of training and we have implemented a mobile certification and training team that takes a poll of every district across the state to see how many general applicants are waiting in their local district. Where we have the most waiting, we send the team out to do the certification piece. They also have a training component where they can provide the training to get foster parents on boarded more quickly.

We entered into an agreement with a media company to do specialized recruitment for therapeutic foster parents to get at a reduction of the behavioral rehabilitation services piece. That media campaign is up and running and just getting off the ground.

Foster Parent College is something that we have done. It is licensed through PSU who is our contracted training arm. Each district has so many credits that their foster parents can tap into.

We do have mapping GIS. We are starting to look at the demographics in a different way.

We have a health and well-being unit within our department. There is a program where nurses go out and visit children shortly after their initial placement in care, to help foster parents better understand the needs of that child, make sure the child has medication and other things that are supposed to come with the child. We are expanding that program to so we are sending the same nurses into the home when we are sending children home on reunification to try to improve our success of keeping children at home.

Some prioritization of work in central office. Have brought on an additional foster care coordinator which has allowed us to free one up to take the lead on training.

GRACE Grant

Did work to develop a diligent recruitment model in consultation with the National Resource Center on Diligent Recruitment and developed a data tracking tool called The Oregon Foster Family Retention Recruitment Support Plan.

Tool gives districts the opportunity to take a look at the characteristics and composition of children in care, and compare it to the characteristics of foster families that are currently certified, then develop a data informed approach to targeted recruitment.

In response to the audit, we are taking this metric tool and fashioning it in a way that we can develop a statewide improvement plan. Have consulted with Utah and other states.

Goal is to also look at areas that need improvement. We need to have integrity in our data and be able to capture it in a user friendly way and provide reports in a way that people can understand the interpretation of that data.

Q/C: Did I hear that just recently there has been an exit survey for foster parents?

A: There have been a few counties that have been utilizing an exit survey. It wasn't established in our statewide policy, but we have taken that through the course of our statewide foster care steering committee and consultation with OFPA as well for the questions. That has now been finalized and there is an online link for it. It will soon be instituted as a statewide requirement.

Q/C: How are you working with the tribes?

A: GRACE was intended to be able to speak to each individual community in which it was intervening. We have had conversations with the Warm Springs recruiter at a lot of the local GRACE events.

Q/C: To Nathan Rix – If you could have anything you want, how much more money would it take to run the CW system in Oregon than we are spending now?

A: I would have to defer to Marilyn Jones (CW Director) on that.

A: (Lauri Price) Governor and Legislature just approved staff – \$14.5 million for 186 positions. We are staging the implementation and hiring of those staff through next January. We are bringing them on 25 at a time. It takes almost a year to get a caseworker up and running. It isn't a quick fix. People see the money being invested in CW, and they get impatient quickly. We have already had reporters calling and asking "what have you done with those 186 positions?" We have hired 25. And we will hire 25 more in July and 25 more in October and so on.

Commission member discussion

Action to approve committee legislative concepts

Bill Wagner recommends that the Commission is not ready to vote to go forward with this, and that the group does not need to vote on it today. We can do this in July, given what I've heard if this is moving forward as a budget piece rather than having statute written.

I was asked by Rosa to talk to Cynthia Stinson. Cynthia said that in terms of a specific LC for foster parent retention, recruitment and training, she said they have been working on that for two years at DHS and haven't come up with a clear plan, so there is no way that she and I are going to come up with in an hour, a LC. So we agreed to tell Rosa that we are not going to an LC at this time.

Close of Meeting