

**OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE CHILD WELFARE TRANSFORMATION DESIGN COMMITTEE**

MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 27, 2009 MEETING

Advisory Committee Members Present: Marian Harris, co-chair; Jeanine Livingston; Mark Courtney; Maureen McGrath; Mary Meinig; Gwendolyn Townsend.

Staff Present: Julie Dunnington, Partners for Our Children (POC); Sydney Forrester, House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee.

Others Present: Fred Wulczyn, Chapin Hall (by phone); Jann Hoppler, Children's Administration, DSHS.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Membership

The Advisory Committee (Committee) selected a foster parent, a former foster youth, and a social worker to join the membership of the advisory committee.

Foster Parent:

Dr. Harris proposed Debra Ellsworth or Misty Kemp be selected. The Committee discussed potential benefits of foster parent perspectives reflecting geographic diversity as well as long-term and short-term foster parent service; and the ability of the foster parent to gather input from other foster parents in the state. By unanimous vote of the members present, the Committee selected Debra Ellsworth.

Former Foster Youth:

Dr. Harris proposed Onalee Stewart or Samantha Evans be selected. The Committee discussed potential benefits of perspectives reflecting geographic diversity and long-term placement in foster care as well as short stays in foster care. By unanimous vote of members present, the Committee selected Onalee Stewart.

Social Worker:

Dr. Harris proposed Roy Hogan or Tasha Prichett be selected. The Committee discussed potential benefits of perspectives reflecting geographic diversity; working knowledge of FamLink; worker rapport with regional leadership/management; and experience as a foster parent. By majority of members present, the Committee selected Roy Hogan.

Staff clarified for the Committee the option of inviting additional foster parents, former foster youth, or foster youth, social workers, or others to provide information and perspectives to the Committee as needed or desired.

Timeline Discussion

Timeline and Demonstration Sites:

Jann Hoppler, Children's Administration (CA), reported on the work underway by the CA to consult with contracting experts and adjust timeframes for soliciting and selecting the demonstration sites in order to allow more time for the start-up and transition in the demonstration sites. The CA would want to receive recommendations by spring 2010 (April/May/June timeframe) regarding outcomes.

The CA will continue to refine the timeframe with more precision as additional work is done with experts and with community-based partners.

Performance-Based Contracting Conversion:

The CA still is working through the implementation approach and timeframes. The current assumption is that the foundation of the contracts will be the same statewide as in the demonstration sites -- safety, permanency, and well-being -- in order to drive more closely aligned performance measures in both the demonstration sites and statewide. The CA is interested in information gained by researching other states who have implemented similar efforts. The Committee discussed and noted the importance of paying attention to the research to be conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) under the bill as well as the various other outcome measures defined by the reporting requirements in the Braam Settlement Agreement and Implementation Plan.

Priorities Discussion

The Committee examined and discussed the previously developed list of focus areas for its work. The Committee acknowledged that it may be appropriate to shift some of the focus elements/tasks to another entity, possibly the CA, or to another 2106 Advisory Committee. Staff will redesign the document and send to the Committee members for further review and comment.

Outcomes Discussion

Mark Courtney presented and the Committee examined and discussed a preliminary list of suggestions/proposals for what an array of outcome measures might look like. Mark discussed the major domains of performance (safety, permanency, and well-being) and how they may be measured differently within a demonstration site for a child coming into care for the first time versus a child who has been in care for a period and whose case is being transferred to a supervising agency under a performance-based contract. Primary prevention is not within the scope of the Committee's focus on performance outcomes because the children and families served are those who already have come to the attention of CPS. Mark emphasized dynamism and case mix as being very important to keep in mind when identifying desired outcome measures.

The Committee shared and discussed the following comments relating to outcomes on the list and the Committee's work.

- One option for thinking about the focus areas/tasks is to think about money, practice, and outcomes, recognizing that all three have to work together. Past contracting has focused on paying for process, asking "Did you make the monthly visits?" This Committee needs to address which processes will fall within a performance-based contract focused on outcomes and which processes will fall outside such a contract.
- The Committee and the full TDC must be sure outcomes in the demonstration sites are consistent with what the CA is doing in its statewide shift to performance-based contracting. It also will be essential to describe which outcomes are under which contract, for example - a performance-based contract to assist youth transitioning from foster care to independence will look different from a family preservation-focused contract or a contract for full case management.

- If the CA is moving toward measuring certain elements, the Committee will want to consider those elements in developing the outcomes in the demonstration sites.
- The Committee should be considering outcomes in the context of how they will impact child safety, permanency, and well-being in order to be sure contracts do not create unintended incentives for the wrong things.
- Measures relating to placement changes should include some information about why a child's placement was changed. Placement changes may be desirable if they are based on a change in the level of care a child requires and if they ultimately result in meeting the child's needs better.
- Data on maltreatment while a child is in out-of-home care should reflect rates of maltreatment by other children in out-of-home care.
- It will be important to clearly define all permanency options and consider nuances of each when developing the performance outcomes to be used in contracting.
- The well-being indicators should be expanded further.
- The Committee also will need to analyze whether and how to hold the child welfare system accountable for measures controlled in whole or in part by other systems (educational, health, etc.). Outcomes in these areas are best focused on duties of the child welfare system relating to the child's outcomes in these areas -- for example, enrollment in school is a child welfare system responsibility, but the child's educational progress is a multi-system responsibility, with primary responsibility resting with the K-12 system.

- Desirable outcomes relating to multiple systems raise cross-system issues as well as practice issues. It would be helpful to keep track of why educational or other health assessments aren't done in a timely manner in order to determine whether the CA or a supervising agency simply is not following through or whether another system is not available to willing to complete timely assessments. An appropriate standard of care for a child in the system should be to request assessments and follow-up until the information is obtained. While this is not an outcome, per se, it still is important to focus on this standard as a best practice and to make it a regular requirement.
- The Committee also should be cognizant that the CA has some resources, though limited, to allocate toward efforts to impact a child's performance in other systems, such as educational advocates, and we should be looking at improvements overall to see if the interventions are achieving the improvements intended.
- The Committee should declare educational attainment as an outcome to pay attention to, but for purposes of performance-based contracting, the focus should be on the role the child welfare system plays.
- The Committee should be mindful of what is measured and how those measurements are linked to accountability under a contract. This Committee should be focused on the outcomes to be measured under a performance-based contract.
- The interrelationships and complexities are extensive for cross-system areas like education, mental health, health care, and judicial orders.
- Finding data on model practices and outcomes in order to establish a baseline will be challenging.
- Well-established protocols should be followed but should not be the basis of payment under a performance-based contract because the

protocols are imperfect; there is unknown information; there are unknown events; and there is variability relating to resources available.

- Aggregate level outcomes still are important even when individual results can't be guaranteed.
- The state currently is not using/measuring many outcomes relating to child well-being but because the CA may be moving that direction in its statewide shift to performance-based contracting, the Committee should request the CA to share what it learns when collecting data to see if the Committee may want to incorporate those outcomes into the contracts in the demonstration sites. Also, the Committee may want to add and subtract or modify outcomes over time.
- This Committee should consider using the term "outcomes" to refer to some elements that are specific, and still allow for discussion of additional outcomes based on what other advisory committees are recommending.
- The issue of standards for assessments should go to the Legal and Practice Advisory Committee.
- Baseline data on barriers, including infrastructure, need to be gathered to understand variability in performance.
- Data gathering and reporting should be disaggregated for all outcomes to the greatest extent possible.
- Data should include case worker turnover rates and the degree to which service providers are delivering culturally competent or culturally relevant services.

- This Committee should keep a focus on an ideal model and allow for removing some elements if no baseline data is available or if the barriers are not within the control of the child welfare system.

Next Steps:

The Committee agreed on the following NEXT Steps:

- The Committee members will further analyze the draft outcomes provided by mark and discussed at today's meeting and bring comments back for further discussion at the next meeting.
- Fred will send to Julie a draft of working definitions for the terms "process", "practice standards", and "outcomes".
- The co-chairs of the Legal and practice Advisory Committee will be invited to the Committee's next meeting.
- Proposed dates for the Committee's meetings will be sent by email, including the following tentative proposed 2010 dates: Feb 2, April 6, May 4.

Public Comment:

The draft list of possible outcomes measures provided for today's discussion is one of the most comprehensive lists seen.