

**JOIN HANDS FOR CHILDREN**  
**MINUTES FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL ISSUES**  
**March 26, 2010**

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**Members Present:** Carole Holland; Sharon Osborne (On Phone); Catherine Lanham (On Phone)

**Staff Present:** Julie Dunnington, Melissa Takade, and Benjamin Berres, Partners for Our Children; Jennifer Strus, Washington State Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee; Jann Hoppler, Molly Elliot, Nick Fuchs, and Stephanie Sarber, DSHS Children's Administration;

**Others:** Marna Miller and Stephanie Lee, Washington State Institute of Public Policy; Laurie Lippold and Rommel Buenafe, Children's Home Society of Washington; Trudy Soucoup, Community Youth Services; Melissa Palmer, Washington State House of Representatives, Ways and Means; Roberta Nestaas, Lutheran Community Services; Wendy Tanner, Community Youth Services; Sheila Huber, Attorney General's Office; Charlotte Booth, Institute for Family Development

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**Introductions:** Carole Holland welcomed the committee members and called the meeting to order. The committee members and the audience introduced themselves.

**FamLink Demonstration:** Nick Fuchs and Stephanie Sarber of the Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration (DSHS CA) gave a demonstration on the new FamLink data management system. Some FamLink characteristics and features include:

- Web-based
- Internet Explorer 7 and Office 2007 certified
- Anyone with Secure Access Washington authorization can have access
- System is being implemented in Washington State tribal organizations – training begins in April 2010
- Reports to Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)
- Washington State purchased the base system from the State of Wisconsin
- Based around a user desktop with drop-down menus
- Offers a variety of "ticklers" that provide notification to users when they need to complete assigned reports or tasks
- Produces 25 operational and informational reports in the first release of FamLink, some of which are accessible by area managers
- There are a wide range of security features
- Capable of tying individual child cases together into family-based cases
- Every user action leaves a "fingerprint." This allows supervisors to easily audit workers.
- Capable of viewing and documenting components of educational history

Sharon Osborne asked whether DSHS CA would be entering the case data into FamLink. Nick Fuchs replied that this system is being set up for *all* case managers. Case managers would enter case management data directly, regardless of their organizational affiliation.

Carole Holland asked whether the system is currently populated with CAMIS data. Stephanie Sarber said that DSHS CA converted approximately 20 years of CAMIS data, although there

were a number of pieces of information that didn't fit. These data are retrievable in a "readable, usable" format by anyone with the appropriate authorization.

Wendy Tanner of Community Youth Services was curious if master contractors in Phase I will still have to construct potentially expensive data management systems if in Phase II, they become Supervising Agencies with full FamLink access. Jan Hoppler said they are worried about confidentiality issues that could arise when people other than case-carrying social workers have access to FamLink. She continued on to say that a discussion should take place to address data management issues in Phase I. Wendy Tanner asked if subcontractors would be able to input case notes into the system. Stephanie Sarber said that it is possible for people to input information, but they will not be able to view the information once it has been entered into the system.

The advisory committee asked a number of questions about whether other agencies might have access to case notes, and vice versa. DSHS CA is very concerned about confidentiality and security breaches. Statutory changes might be required for some agencies to gain access to this system.

Carole Holland asked if there would be an opportunity for a subgroup of members from the Advisory Committee on Financial Issues to meet with Nick Fuchs to go over some of the committee's questions in greater detail. If this happens, Nick Fuchs requested that he be delivered the questions in advance. Julie Dunnington said she would help coordinate a group to convene and formulate questions and issues to submit to Nick Fuchs.

Marna Miller asked whether supervising agencies would be able to extract aggregate data to monitor their own performance. Nick Fuchs said this is possible.

Nick Fuchs said that he would be willing to answer questions over email.

EMAIL: [nick.fuchs@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:nick.fuchs@dshs.wa.gov)

After the presentation the committee took a short break.

### ***Discussion on Start-up Costs:***

The committee began this discussion by revisiting the issue of start-up costs for information technology. Committee members and audience members brainstormed a variety of costs that derive from designing and integrating the FamLink system into supervising agencies.

Jann Hoppler asked about caseload volume and flow. Marna Miller estimated that there would be approximately 400 placement cases per year, per demonstration site. She guessed that there is approximately the same number of new cases that receive in-home services per year, per demonstration site. She said that she knows there are many more children that are investigated that are designated high-level, but who do not enter out-of-home care. She said the bottom line is that there will be an approximate minimum of 900 new cases per demonstration site, per year. Jann Hoppler suggested that the advisory committee might want to make a recommendation about whether DSHS CA should contract for a single supervising agency in a demonstration site or whether they should contract for two or more supervising agencies.

Sharon Osborne brought up the issue of contract management and quality assurance requirements. She said that agencies might already be doing this, but that might not be the case.

Wendy Tanner of Community Youth services suggested the committee think about training costs for social workers. Carole Holland asked about how DSHS CA social worker "Academy" will be used and if supervising agencies would have access.

Jann Hopper said there are costs that arise from working with the Attorney General's Office as well as costs that stem from family training.

Wendy Tanner added that there would be increased HR costs. She also was curious whether the new supervising agency social workers would bring the union with them when they transfer to supervising agencies. There is nothing regarding union membership that is set in stone. Jennifer Strus said there is an argument that if a whole unit transfers from DSHS CA, and they are hired by the agency, they could bring their union membership with them.

Carole Holland suggested that a group of private providers meet to discuss some of these issues. Julie Dunnington added that there are other states with non-profits that have gone through this process. She volunteered to bring forward some information from these non-profits that addresses some of these questions. Roberta Nestaas of Lutheran Community Services asked if the non-profits could originate from a state that implemented a PBC model similar to Washington State.

**Discussion of the Draft Phase II Timeline:** Jann Hoppler described the timeline she crafted for Phase II. She said the purpose of the timeline is to "provide a basis for start-up costs calculations." Referring to the timeline, she said, this is all "fluid and is based on a bill that isn't signed yet." She also said that DSHS CA is open to input.

Carole Holland said that she wanted to get together with Marna Miller to talk about case flow information as well as case transfers. Marna Miller has begun to think about the natural points in the life cycle of existing cases would be transferred.

**Closing:** The committee summed up plans for future meetings and confirmed the date for the next Advisory Committee on Financial Issues.