

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

January 12, 2009

MINUTES

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Virginia Del Monaco, Co-Chair; Dr. Irv. Jennings, Co-Chair; Molly Cole; Ivy Farinella, Pamela Ferguson; Lorna Grivois, Catherine Holahan, Laurie Landry; Patricia Lorenson; Joseph Marino; Maureen Price-Boreland, Valentin Rosario, Barbara Sheldon; and Commissioner Susan Hamilton

MEMBERS

ABSENT: Dr. Michael Lustick and Pamela Trotman

INVITED

QUESTS: Fernando Muniz, DCF; Sen. Ed Meyer, Josh Howroyd, DCF, and Brian Mattiello, DCF.

OTHERS: Joan Law

Legislative Update

Josh Howroyd and Brian Mattiello were invited to give an update on the Department's legislative proposals for 2009. A summary of those proposals was disseminated to members (attached). The Department is working with the Select Committee on Children on 5 proposals and the Human Services Committee with 2 proposals. Some of these proposals have been submitted in previous years with no movement. This will be the long session which began January 7th and will run through June 3rd. The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee may or may not resubmit their full recommendation again. DCF has already implemented a number of those recommendations. DCF disagreed on 4 of the 37 recommendations. Mr. Mattiello will forward to the SAC the tracking chart that DCF has prepared that explain the agency's movements on the recommendations.

Differential Response System (DRS) was the number one priority option for the Department. How much funding we get will depend on whether we implement this statewide, phase in gradually or look to other accounts for funding for an effective implementation date of 7/1/2010.

The Department is preparing for implementation of the 16/17 year old legislation approved last year. In order to implement the legislative change properly, a significant amount of resources would be needed. Meetings continue to take place to discuss implementation effective 1/20/10 but it will definitely be contingent on the budget process.

Other projects/programs pending the budget process include the plan to redesign CJTS to meet the needs of the Raise the Age legislation

Funding is available for the girls program which is moving forward with the development of an 18 bed facility in Bridgeport with plans to open in late 2010.

Conversation with Senator Ed Meyer

Sen. Meyer discussed the recent hearings by the Select Committee on Children and Human Services Committee. These hearings were held as a result of legislators' concerns regarding DCF management as well as a series of tragedies that have occurred recently. During the hearings, the Attorney General recommended breaking up the Department into smaller agencies. The Office

of the Child Advocate recommended a management review similar to that which occurred at the Department of Transportation but did not recommend the dismantling of the Department. He explained that there has been much criticism of the Department and recommendations will be made as to what goals they feel would advance the cause of the agency.

Because of the budget crisis, legislators are looking at the cost of Riverview. Currently, the rate is approximately \$865,000 per child per year compared to \$200,000 - \$300,000 at other state's acute facilities. Legislators want to know if the treatment program is working; there is concern of incidences of injury to staff and worker's comp. claims. Although the legislators feel CJTS still has substantial problems, the facility will remain open to meet the needs of the Raise the Age legislation. The cost for CJTS is approximately \$550,000 per youth. Legislators are also concerned about permanent placements for the youth who come into care. He attended the Departments CFSR meetings and learned that the DCF fares the same in permanency as other states.

Sen. Meyer explained that he was approached by some SAC members who expressed their desire to be more involved with the Department and discussed changing the status of the SAC from advisory to oversight committee. The Commissioner emphasized the progress the Department has made in sharing information with the SAC when possible. A few members expressed their feeling that the SAC itself is not organized within itself and needs to identify exactly what they feel they should be involved in and move forward from there. It was suggested that the Department's strategic plan and goals be connected to the SAC so there is the same focus. It was also suggested that there be a stronger connection between the Area Advisory Councils and the State Advisory Council. The Commissioner commented that she did give the SAC the opportunity to comment on the draft Strategic Plan and that that document is still in draft form.

Specific issues raised with Senator Meyer related to Department RFP policies to lack of information sharing. Most of the concerns raised were based on individual experiences SAC members have had with the Department. Commissioner Hamilton explained that we cannot have individual conversations with perspective providers in order to maintain a fair and balanced RFP process.

Citizen Review Panel

The SAC hopes to focus on dispute resolution as next year's Citizen Review Panel topic. A work group planned to meet immediately following this meeting.

Meeting Recap

1. Commissioner will bring to the next meeting the Strategic Plan for final review and that can be used to provide framework for the SAC's goals and objectives.
2. Bert Plant will be invited to attend the Feb. SAC meeting and address FAVOR/CBHAC issues
3. For the March SAC meeting: Findings from CFSR and DCF general plan to address issues raised.
4. CBHAC will be holding their February monthly meeting at the LOB immediately following the Governor's budget address and will be inviting SAC to attend that forum.
5. Commissioner Hamilton will finalize her response to the CRP Report
6. Kim Nilson will be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss the 3 DCF CRPs.

Next Meeting: **February 2, 2008**
9:00-11:00 a.m.
CAFAP Offices