

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

October 6, 2008

MINUTES

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Virginia DelMonaco, Co-Chair; Molly Cole; Laurie Landry; Pamela Ferguson; Barbara Ellison; Patricia Lorenson; Joseph Marino; Barbara Sheldon; Pamela Trotman and Commissioner Susan Hamilton

MEMBERS

ABSENT: Dr. Irv Jennings, Co-Chair; Catherine Holahan; Genevieve Stuart; Lorna Grivois; Dr. Michael Lustick; Maureen Price-Boreland;

INVITED

QUESTS: Fernando Muniz, DCF; Anne Louise Blanchard (on behalf of Catherine Holahan)

Meeting Operations:

A. Minutes Recorded:

- a. It was agreed that minutes would be recorded at each meeting and then sent to members via regular post and e-mail. It was noted that only members who are absent from the meeting will be sent handouts in order to conserve costs. Please note: not all handouts or attachments are available in electronic form.
- b. At the end of each meeting the following will be reviewed and recorded in the minutes:
 - i. Follow up steps
 - ii. Items continued
 - iii. Recommendations
 - iv. Additional Information and speaker requests

B. Membership update:

- a. Barbara Ellison announced she is resigning from the Council.
- b. At present there are 14 members of the SAC and 3 openings for parents/family members.
- c. Fernando will check with Dr. Rayford to see if there are any interested Youth Advisory Board (YAB) members who may wish to join the SAC.

C. Gas Stipends:

- a. The procedure for mileage reimbursement for travel to SAC meetings is as follows:
 - i. The stipend is for parent/family members who are appointed to the SAC.
 - ii. The parent/family member must be registered CT Vendor (forms available on request)
 - iii. A memo or form (Molly Cole will provide a form prototype) must be submitted to the Commissioner's Office requesting the stipend. The memo/form must include the date of travel, purpose of travel, point of departure and point of return. Documentation of the exact mileage amount; odometer reading or a printout from MapQuest reflecting the amount of miles traveled.

- iv. Once the memo/form is signed by the Commissioner or designee it will be sent to the fiscal department. The fiscal department will then process the request and send out a payment to the parent/family member.

D. CBHAC nominations:

The SAC members reviewed 2 applications, George McDonald and Mary Martinez, for nomination to the CBHAC. A motion was called to vote on the applications. Both applications were approved unanimously.

E. SAC Budget:

- a. A budget for the SAC was submitted to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will review and respond at a later date.
- b. CRP - There are 3 Citizen Review Panels formed by DCF. 2 Reports are assigned to FAVOR and they are given a budget of \$35, 000. The SAC has been charged with producing 1 report and has no budget allotment.

Mental Health Block Grant

- A. A letter from SAC Co-Chairs "Comments on the Mental Health Block Grant Children's Services Proposal for FY2009 was handed out to the SAC. There were concerns that funding was being reduced, however the Commissioner explained that there is no reduction, the funding is being drawn from a different source. Commissioner Hamilton will review and respond at a later date in greater detail.
- B. The SAC would like accountability from the CBHAC and the Commissioner suggested that be discussed directly with the CBHAC. The Commissioner also suggested that Dr. Robert Plant be invited to the next meeting to continue the discussion concerning the CBHAC and the Mental Health Block Grant.

Building a Collaborative Partnership with DCF/SAC

A. DCF updates:

- a. The Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) interviews were held with DCF management, staff and involved families in September and a courtesy report has been given to the Department of their findings. The final report should be out in 60 days. The SAC requested a copy of the courtesy report. Fernando explained that this "draft" is for DCF feedback. The SAC will be given the final report once it is available.
- b. The SAC would like to be given information concerning the DCF budget in advance of the budget hearings to get a better understanding of where the budget cuts may come from. The Commissioner agreed to engage in general discussions surrounding the budget but there are areas that must remain confidential until after the appropriations process is completed.

B. Upcoming issues for SAC

- a. Barbara Sheldon would like the SAC to look into the problem of area offices that are "notorious" for having communication problems with clients and other issues such as fear of retribution for seeking help from Central Office.

The Commissioner said that DCF looks for data to support those "theories". This data would be captured through the Ombudsman's office. It was agreed that the SAC may wish to have the Ombudsman's role within DCF as a CRP subject.

- b. Anne Blanchard requested information on Voluntary Services and number of requests that DCF receives for Voluntary Services. The Commissioner stated that DCF is proposing a change in the intake process for Voluntary Services. One proposed change would be to have a central intake telephone number just Voluntary Services instead of families having to call the Hot Line.
- c. DCF Staff for Next SAC Meeting.
 - a. The SAC would like Bert Plant invited to the November meeting to discuss the CBHAC and the relationship between the two committees. However, it was noted that the next meeting will be held in the Norwich area. The purpose of the November meeting being held in a different location was to have Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members present to discuss their concerns with the SAC. These discussions would provide input for the CRP. The meeting will be extended from 9:00-11:00 to 9:00-12:00. Fernando will send an invitational flyer out to the Area Office's Director so she can pass on to interested parties. This will not be a general public meeting and will focus on DCF systems issues, areas of challenges and recommendations, not individual cases. It will also be utilized as a way to inform other committees of "Who is the SAC and what do we do". There is another meeting scheduled in February at the Bridgeport area for the same purpose, more details to follow.

CRP Topics:

- a. This year's CRP report is being reviewed by the Commissioner and her Executive Team. The Commissioner has 6 months to respond to the recommendations.
- b. A sub-committee will be formed in order to begin working on the CRP report. Ginny Del Monaco, Molly Cole, Laurie Landry, Pam Ferguson, Barbara Sheldon and Joe Marino volunteered to be on the sub-committee.
- c. The University of Kentucky's website has all CRP's reports on line.
<http://www.uky.edu/>
- d. Proposed topics for this upcoming year's CRP report: The Ombudsman Office and Voluntary Services

Announcements from SAC members:

- a. Molly Cole - UCONN has been awarded a grant to work with Children with Autism.
- b. Pat Lorenson - As a member of the Bridgeport RAC she will be working on a response to the DCF Re-org and strategic plan.
- c. Anne Blanchard - The Legal Services Offices has been awarded a grant which will be used to help youth stay out of the court system for school related charges.
- d. Pam Ferguson - Recommends "No Matter How Loud I Shout", stories of youth involved in the juvenile court system.
- e. Laurie Landry - She has expanded her practice.

Review:

- a. Follow up steps - Fernando to provide flyer for upcoming Norwich meeting. Fernando to provide copies of the CFSR report when it is released.
- b. Items continued - SAC Budget, Response from Commissioner on the CBHAC letter and Response to CRP Report
- c. Additional Information and speaker requests - Bert Plant and Rudy Brooks to be invited to future meetings.

Next Meeting: **November 3, 2008**

9:00-12:00 a.m.

United Way of Southeastern Connecticut

283 Stoddards Wharf Road

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