

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

May 11, 2009

MINUTES

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Virginia Del Monaco, Co-Chair; Dr. Irv. Jennings, Co-Chair; Molly Cole, Ivy Farinella, Pamela Ferguson, Laurie Landry, Patricia Lorenson, Joseph Marino, Maureen Price-Boreland, Barbara Sheldon; Pamela Trotman, and Fernando Muniz

MEMBERS

ABSENT: Commissioner Susan Hamilton, Catherine Holahan and Valentin Rosario

DESIGNEE: Karl Kemper on behalf of Commissioner Hamilton

GUESTS: Brian Mattiello

OTHERS: Pamela Trotman, OPM; and Cristy Jones

Discussion regarding approval of minutes

The minutes from the April 6th meeting were voted on and approved by the Council.

The Co-Chairs handed out copies of the original minutes from the February 2nd meeting and also copies of the revised version so a discrepancy could be discussed. Fernando explained that the minutes are always given to him by the recorder, Cindy Conklin, for review before they are sent to the council. He approved the February minutes; they were sent to the SAC members and then posted to the internet. The following week Dr. Plant, who had present at the February meeting for the discussion involving FAVOR, e-mailed Fernando and Cindy to ask that a paragraph concerning an upcoming RFP be changed because it did not reflect his intended comments. The minutes were revised with Fernando's approval and once again sent to the members and posted on the internet. At today's meeting Mr. Kemper said that the minutes should reflect what took place in the room at that time not the intention of the speaker. The guest should be invited to next meeting to discuss proposed revisions. The SAC members discussed and agreed that in the future the minutes will be sent to the members as a draft and at the next meeting they will be voted on. If approved they can only be amended or revised by the committee's vote. The original February minutes were then voted on and approved, they will be reposted on the internet ASAP. The council then voted on the revisions and they too were approved, once this action is noted in today's minutes and today's minutes are approved at the June meeting, the revised February minutes will then be posted as revised.

Differential Response System Update (DRS)

Brian Mattiello gave a presentation on the progress of the Differential Response System (DRS) in Connecticut. The printed version of his presentation contains detailed information, highlights are below:

- DRS is a promising practice in child welfare with 30 jurisdictions involved throughout the United States.
- Connecticut is involved in peer to peer relations with North Carolina to aid in our implementation as they have been operating a DRS system since 2006.
- 2010 is the target date to begin this initiative.

- DRS is a different approach guided by the same principle of the Behavioral Health Partnership: to tailor services e.g, - right kid- right place - right length of time.
- Within the first 5 days after the initial intake a face to face meeting must take place.
- Within 15 days a family conference will be held.
- Family Assessment response is voluntary, if the family refuses DCF involvement, the agency will not pursue. Studies have shown a 3%-4% of families have refused services through DRS.
- Commissioner Hamilton is very committed to the implementation of DRS.

There was a period of questions and answers:

Will there need to be a whole new set of workers hired? No, existing personnel can be committed and trained.

How is DCF planning to build the infrastructure in the community? A new Request for Proposal (RFP) will be issued for planning in the community.

Is DRS part of the Social Worker Pre-Service training? Family engagement is part of the pre-service curriculum. Training is being developed and should be ready by the fall.

Will the agency be ready for 2010? The Commissioner will review the status once the new budget is finalized but at this point we are working toward a staged implementation beginning in the first quarter of, 2010.

Riverview Letter

Ginny Del Monaco handed out a copy of a letter that was given to her and was addressed to Joyce Welch, Superintendent of Riverview Hospital. The letter was from a parent whose child had been a patient. The family wanted Ms. Welch to know how much Riverview had helped not only the child but the whole family. There was concern that Riverview might be closed due to budget issues and the family wanted to ensure that their good work was noted. Ginny wanted feedback on how to handle this type of public input. Dr. Jennings voiced his concern with endorsing correspondence from the public when there is no actual action needed. Ginny will respond to the person on her own who gave her the letter. Molly Cole added that she feels information that comes to individual SAC members should be used as information only. Barbara Sheldon said that if this type of correspondence is brought to the SAC's attention then it may make sense to track it to see if there are trends and if so then the SAC can decide if they want to take action.

DCF Strategic Plan

The SAC requested more time to review the plan before giving feedback to the Commissioner's office. Karl Kemper stated that DCF is moving toward a narrative structure and will make that draft piece available to the SAC members. He also reminded the committee that DCF has received feedback from various community and non-profit groups and are now looking for specific feedback from the SAC as a separate entity. Maureen Price-Boreland would like to see more focus on Prevention in the Plan. Karl suggested that the SAC may want to invite Rudy Brooks, Bureau Chief of Prevention and External Affairs to give an update on Prevention.

Michael Brown Jr. Report

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) has been engaged to give their findings and recommendations to the department in cases involving a fatality. The department will formally respond to the various findings and may or may not agree with recommendations. It was brought to the table that the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (LPRIC) noted that DCF does not have a system to handle fatality reports. Mr. Kemper responded that DCF did accept the LPRIC recommendation. He went on to explain that all reports that come into the

agency are logged in and brought to the Executive Team. A lead is then assigned to respond to the report and then the Executive Team discusses the validity of the response.

Maureen Price-Boreland stated that it appears a lower level of investigation was a factor in this situation due to the fact that a DCF employee was involved. Mr. Kemper disagreed that DCF employees are held to lesser degree of investigation but he did agree that the investigations were lacking. He also stated that disciplinary actions were begun immediately including management level. A number of corrective steps have already occurred and a higher level of management is now involved.

DCF Draft Policy feedback

The SAC requested more time to review the policies before they provide their collective feedback. Molly Cole will send to the members her comments and requested that the members send their feedback to her within 2 weeks so that she can combine everyone's thoughts and prepare a response to the Commissioner. Mr. Kemper noted that amount of policies given to the SAC was quite large and that will not be the usual case.

Other Business

Molly Cole requested that Fernando research the possibility of the SAC having access to the DCF webpage since there seems to be problems with the list server that she is using now. Fernando will contact DCF's Information Systems unit and get back to her.

Next Meeting: June 2, 2009 - Please note change in date from June 1, 2009
8:30-11:30 a.m. Please note change in time
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