

# State Advisory Council Minutes

## May 5, 2014

**Members:** Kelly Cronin, Jacquelyn Farrell, Donna Grant, Patricia Lorenson, Regina Moller, Samantha Pahde

**Also in Attendance:** Susan Smith

**Absent:** Janice Andersen, Claudia Carbonari, MD, Dino Depina, Regina Roundtree, Susan Sherrick

### Welcome & Introductions

Patricia Lorenson

Samantha Pahde, new youth member of SAC was welcomed.  
All in attendance introduced themselves.

### Community Report

#### Donna Grant- Region 3 RAC

- Region 3 has a very active RAC/FAB (Family Advisory Board). Although they do not have lot of parent voice at the regular RAC meeting, they do have parent voice to the RAC meeting through the ongoing FAB meetings and a parent rep who presents their work at the RAC meeting.
- The RAC FAB is meeting in all parts of the region on a regular basis led by Lorna Curvoy.
- As far as the RAC itself, working on having an agenda that really is focusing on some of the bigger issue and bringing presenters on a topic that is being presented at every meeting.
- Have had Martha Jones Taylor to address early childhood connection to the DCF work and community provider work. The next is the presentation we had from Dr. Tracy in July.
- Also connecting to the Commissioner's priority on racial disparities and the focus on that and bringing the justice alliance and their call of justice/ or colored justice presentation to our RAC in the fall.
- Also making more time in the RAC meeting to talk about what is happening at the local levels in all of the various the three different offices of the region-including the systems of care, any other local collaborative efforts that are happening.
- There is a lot of encouragement from the RAC and this has started to take root to connect the list work and the system of care work so that is starting of happen-where our list group is meeting on the same day, one your prior to our systems of care. So there is an hour of list, half an hour overlap and then an hour system of care meeting. So those folks are leveraging their time better and connecting those programs.
  - We are really trying to use the RAC as an opportunity to have information from the greater work that is going on through presentations as well as information exchange about the work that is happening at the community level.
  - That is how our meetings have been focused.
  - At another time during the month where system of care meets around the state at this point Middletown and the northeast are connecting their List meetings to those meetings to leverage the time and connect those programs. There is a lot that is happening with JRB's (Juvenile Review Boards). The focus is on getting more JRB in the NE and more opportunity for youth diversion and data around what is happening there because there is a whole lot that work that's happening again unfunded and we are looking at how we can generate some sustainability there through some funding. Connecting that work to systems of care seeing even where there

is system overlap with families and families accessing both the JJ system and the care coordination system. So that is why some communities have decided to put together a meeting model that makes that connection happen- but that is not the RAC meeting.

#### Jacquelyn Farrell-Region 2 RAC

- Our region continues to struggle with a greater purpose.
- Have been spending a lot of time on issues that have been right on our stats-how many intakes, how many children are in congregate care. The region seems to be overwhelmed by referrals lately and down staff members. They have had very high caseloads so that has been a problem. Another focus has been racial justice that is going to consume the greater part of the year.

#### Kelly Cronin-Region 5 RAC

- Current focus is on adolescents in the system. The co-chair is a David Oyola, 21 year old that has been in the system since age 10. He is very vocal, very professional and the administrative aspects of RAC. Does all the emails, sits on all sub-groups to get them prepared for what they need to do.
- The RAC meeting schedule is structured so that the RAC voting members meet every other month and the sub-groups meet on the off months. The sub-groups bring back information to the RAC. The sub-groups are comprised of about 50 persons who are focusing on different categories, i.e., as education, social workers, recruitment, mental health and one or two others.
- The youth are passionate and very vocal about what works and what doesn't
- More than 50% of the RAC members are youth and are tackling one category at a time.
- There are ten youths from the Life Skills Program (not all voting members that are located in the same building.
- We asked the fit the work these youth would be doing at the RAC into their curriculum. So Life Skills is now attending the meetings with them.
- They are voicing their opinions on how the system has helped or hurt them. They are looking at case specifics without the use of any names. One of the issues they are targeting is the situation of a young man who wanted to go to state college, was not prepared for what it entailed. He received no preparation and flunked out the first and second semesters. He is eighteen and does not know what to do. Some of the DCF staff around the table are not open to hear what is being said.
- The RAC is youth run and we are happy with the results.

#### Regina Moller- formerly region 6 RAC

- Presented a brief history of the development of the Region 6 RAC.
- It has taken about one year and one half to construct one.
- Worked with DCF, Elizabeth Cannata from Wheeler to get a core group of people. It included family and young adults/adolescents from the youth bureau in the area.
- The RAC held a large retreat last year, attended by DCF and co-facilitated by Sue Reilly (Casey).  
-The focus was on membership and sustaining the membership. Elizabeth Cannata and Regina Moller volunteered to co-chair.
- RAC has completed the by-laws, elected 21 members and established sub-committees.
- They now have strong family participation. One of the challenges was attendance of the families during times of work. They have tried evening meetings and have provided dinner to encourage family attendance. The 6pm time has proven very favorable for families and has given them great results. They are also trying to get representation from education and the youth service bureau, which are starting to trickle in.

- Regina Moller stepping down as Region 6 co-chair and Elizabeth Cannata will continue co-chair. They are now seeking a family/member to add as co-chair.
- Asked how she could continue to participate on SAC. The topic to be covered in the SAC membership section.

### Samantha Pahde

Attended one region 6 meeting about one month ago. There were only a couple of parents who were very vocal and had a lot of things to say to youth.

### Pat Lorenson –Region 1 RAC

- Two months ago received information on the Department's new runaway policy and the Safe Sleep policy. As well as hearing about some of the IFP service and some of the changes expected with that. The FAR evaluation was also covered noting some of the changes to expect in the near future.
- Have focused on substantive DCF oriented matters. From that perspective we have difficulties in the sense of geographic location of our meetings. We were meeting in Norwalk and there was a sense that attendance would be better if it was in Bridgeport – made the switch and attendance is going down a little bit.
- The next meeting is going to be at the new Norwalk office.
- The collaborative (composed of the former area advisory council and the CRC) has had a variety of presentations, including, a justice department initiative around gang violence and identifying within Bridgeport and bringing people in and changing their lives. The state Child Advocate has also presented at length the Safe Sleep initiative

### RAC Region 4 no report

### **September Retreat**

- Discussion was carried about the best day in the week to hold the retreat. The preference is Friday.
- To allow time for planning, the retreat will be held in the fall. The date agreed to is Friday, September 12 @ 9 – 3:30p (breakfast and registration 8:00a – 9am).
- Maria Obregon will contact Middletown Inn to change the reservation from June 2014 to September 12, 2014.
- Some of the CRP funds will be used to cover the retreat.
- Janice Andersen will be contacted to determine if there are any funds remaining from last year.
- The cost of the 2013 retreat was approximately \$3,000.

### **CRP Funds**

Patricia Lorenson

- Janice Andersen, the chair, has submitted an invoice to FAVOR who is the fiduciary of the funds. The funds will go to her to be disbursed to SAC/RAC.
- Discussions were carried regarding the amount of allocation to each RAC and the retreat expenses. The total amount of CRP funds expected is \$12,000.
- Discussions regarding the guidelines RACs should use to spend their allocation.
- In general RACs can spend them on activities that support broad attendance and general work of the RACs under the CRP rubric, i.e., providing recommendations, giving voice and providing feedback to the system proper.
- Region 1 is considering contracting an out of state speaker to address kinship care. The same speaker, Dr. Cromley will be making a presentation to Region 5. His fee is about \$3000.

- Discussions were carried regarding restrictions to the use of funds for speakers. Are the restrictions related to the funding or some parameters set forth internally, by the RAC themselves?
- Funds from a federal source restrict planning expenses, giving people cash benefits and or anything that is not in line with the general work or purpose of this body.
- Reviewed the Family Stipend Form and the request for funds letter from Region 1 for 2013 allocations. (Attached to these minutes). These are submitted as a model that can be used by RACs for the 2014 allocations.
- Some RACs use the funds as gift certificates and gas cards. Stipend can also be given- \$25 per household per meeting. RACs will track the reimbursement to families and that will be included in the final report to SAC.
- Recommendation- that the word *Youth* be added to the title to read- *Family/Youth Stipend Form*, since youth are also eligible.
- Discussions were carried to raise the stipend amount to \$50. Ms. Smith recommended that to bring this topic back the RACs because it can also impact stipend expectation for other meetings such as CBHAC. Stipends need to be consistent.
- The membership reviewed the RAC meeting schedule to determine the deadline to submit request for CRP funds.

Region 6- 6pm evenings every other month

Region 5- 3pm fourth Thursday every other month

Region 2- 9am fourth Friday monthly

Region 3- 9:30 -12N first Thursday every other month

Region 1 - 10a- 12N fourth Friday every month

Region 4 – was missing

- RACs will receive a notice regarding the receipt of the CRP fund.
- The deadline to submit the request is September 1 to meet the RACs meeting schedule and give them enough time for consideration and discussion.
- A rolling date to accept requests is up to September 1
- RACs need to name the fiduciary when they apply. It should be a non-profit.
- The process of the RAC request review was discussed. Once the application is received and meets the criteria the SAC chair will issue the funds to the RAC.

-Kelly Cronnin recommended asking DCF to make funding available for DCF youth employment across the state as part of the EWIPS program run by Brett Rayford. In the current program, DCF kids work 20 hours per week during the summer and it carries over into the school year. It would be beneficial if one of the youth slots could be to serve as a voting member of a RAC and it would be part of their job.

-Susan Smith- is not sure of the funding source and will find out more information about the program.

### SAC Re-appointments & Membership

Patricia Lorenson, Susan Smith

Maria reported that she was in communication with William Welz (Governor's Office of Board and Commissions) last Thursday. He said if there were no more applications pending, the re-appointment letters should go out in the next three weeks.

- Members reviewed the SAC membership roster.
- Of concern is that there are 10 vacancies on the SAC Board and lack of parent representation was raised again.
- -Attendance needs to be looked at carefully to assure attendance requirements are followed. It is understood that a proxy can be sent to attend the SAC meeting in order to give the updates but would pose a problem when voting was required.
- Recommendations were given to facilitate the application process.
- The SAC website should include a description of the process for application seeking SAC Board membership.
- Discussed the preference of not including the application for on the website but to have a cover letter outlining the categories of membership, the vacancies, and the process for filing an application.
- Use the SAC website to post vacancy categories and solicit applications.
- Direct them to contact the DCF Commissioner's office to obtain an application.
- Discussions were held regarding recruitment.
- Recruitment can be done through the RACs with a focus on parents and family members. RACs need to be made aware vacancies exist in the State Advisory Council.
- Donna Grant- (regarding the attorney category) works closely with a local probate judge in children's court. The judge is very interested to be more involved in system conversations and she will ask the judge to consider applying for SAC.
- Request that all completed applications for membership to SAC be submitted to the Commissioner's office.
- The minutes should be included on the site.
- An update on the activities of SAC- such as, grant support to individual RACs, the September 12 retreat, and a list of future presentations.
- Post agendas for each month.
- Post handouts that are received at the SAC meetings
- For those RACs that have a web presence –they can create a link to each of the RACs. The regional administrator is the person in charge of all the material on the Region websites.
- Need to think about how we relate to each other, as a combination of regional representatives and psychiatrist, attorney and parent members –etc.
- How does SAC relate to DCF –through staff, the Commissioner, and what SAC's approach is as an advisory group to the Commissioner, and
- What is SAC's relationship with the RACs to nurture and help develop them?

In preparation for the retreat:

- Determine if it will be on the day of the regular SAC meeting in September.
- Following discussion of availability and preference, Friday, September 12 was decided. The retreat will replace the September SAC meeting.

At the June meeting will be asking for a group to help plan the September retreat.

Possible focus for the retreat:

-Depending on where the CONNECT grant work is at the time of the retreat, it would be great –if this is about community collaboratives who come together to form these advisory council- if the focus of that could be developing those strong community connections and a facilitator who is steeped in community collaborative work- that would be great timing and meaningful for this audience.

-The department's strategic plan goes until 2015 and they department is poised to develop their next planning process.

-Regina Moller- suggested strategic planning for SAC. Have some identified focus areas. SAC have not been developing statements or advice to anyone.

-Donna Grant- it would be great to spend some time with folks from other regions and look at things like juvenile review boards, and decide if we all hold that as a priority that we'd like the department to invest time and attention and potentially funding into. Resounding yes from members present.

-As we worked with the current strategic plan to move kids out of residential- we considered what it has meant for community providers and what are the big gaps in local service? Where would we want the department to focus?

-Recently the Systems Manager, John Jacaruso canvassed the region and found we have 21 JRB's. Two of which have DCF funding, six or seven received funding through Juvenile Justice (CSSD) and many of which have no funding at all and are working as a voluntary-unsustainable model that the leadership is keeping alive. Should that leadership go, so will the resource for these kids. That is what is needed in the regions right.

-Recommendation is to have each RAC do a profile on itself in certain identified areas – and then compile the information as a snapshot of services across the state. Look at gaps and regional strengths and weaknesses.

-Topics are needed in advance in order to get feedback from the regions and that would drive some of our recommendations. The reps from regions can bring that with them to the retreat.

-Regina Moller mentioned she had attended presentation at CCP and it included a regional gap analysis – what services were wished or needed. Question arose if it is done at the regional offices.

-Susan Smith responded that it is related to RICOH permits and redesign of services. As services are up for re-permit- because there is an ongoing schedule-that is part of the work that is happening is figuring out what the allocations are going to be and where the dollars will reside. Know there had been a lot of work related to the JRBs but as a potential future presentation having, Dr. Rayford or someone from his shop come and speak with us about the adolescent services and employment piece that Kelly Cronnin spoke about and JRBs can be one of the components of his presentation with some of the post-education services. It may make sense for us to get kind of grounded rather than going at this and finding out certain things have happened. The JRBs have been at the table and there have been a variety of discussions about the JRBs-trying to figure out how to get greater equity. Understood that some decisions had been made related that. This may be a priority topic area. Maybe this could be presented at the retreat.

-Donna Grant –submitted two other topics, ***trauma informed practice*** and Triple P. She is currently finishing up a trauma certification program that includes three staff, courtesy of Justice Resource Institute. (They have a facility near Thompson and were able to do a telecommunication addition to their certification program making it possible for them to participate). Over the course of the nine months of the certification program, the Justice Resource Institute gave Ms. Grant some of the most useful information she has received anywhere about working with the populations that we work with. If the department were able to work with this organization that has an amazing resource (their Boston Trauma Center)-it would be a great opportunity. Ms. Grant proposed if through DCFs facilitation, JRI could offer a certification course to a teacher in each of the school districts in a certain area or to get this info to people who are working with our kids that could really make a difference in the way they are dealing with our kids and the behaviors our kids have which ultimately lands in our system. Ms. Grant sees this as a partnership opportunity that SAC has been talking about to form alliances with education. The focus is to bring this information to more people serving the community and kids in the community more broadly -that could ultimately interrupt their entrance into the system, or for the ones that are already there, to support them better.

-The other program topic is Triple P- The department has embraced it at the level 4 training and brought it into the family services – (the in-home work that they are doing). Two communities are launching the full 5-tier model Triple Ps in May- the northeast and Hartford. We should look at those launches in terms of what it means to have a trained community, a robust approach to parenting and tremendous positive messaging for all parents, and however we can bring more layers of Triple P into DCFs work as well. The discussion could belong in a statewide conversation that we would have at the retreat.

-For a lot of areas in the state, their only understanding of Triple P is at the very high interventive level 4 and 5, which is just a piece of what that program is and in fact it is the piece you don't want to get to because if it works well, it works from the public health approach to parenting which is broad community messaging and really getting people to understand a whole different approach to seeking support and intervention in parenting. As we think of an afternoon to have statewide conversation, these are just topics that feels are important and want to bring attention to them.

### **Agenda Setting**

-Are there other things besides the JRB, Triple P that SAC should be thinking about in the next three months?

-Whether it meshes into the retreat or not SAC should identify some of those topics.

-Donna Grant mentioned the relationship of 13-178 and CONNECT and waiting to hear the announcement of funding for implementation on CONNECT. What that means to us as RACs is our work is based on where that work is and asked that SAC be engaged in that conversation.

-Discussion was carried out regarding CONNECT REGIONS not corresponding to the DCF regions.

-Susan Smith- recommended that the importance is to determine how SAC will prioritize these topics in order to schedule the experts in these areas to present at the meeting and how much time you want to dedicate at the meetings. This would be helpful as she schedules the experts.

### **Future Presentations**

For June, Elizabeth Duryea, Chief of Staff and Director of Development, will speak about our Three Branch Institute- an initiative that the Department has been engaging for about year. It includes partnerships with judicial and legislative branches of the state (hence the three branch moniker) to work on particular areas of potential mutual intersection-housing, behavioral health and permanency. She will give us an update on that.

The Social Impact Bonds –the pay for performance-potential opportunity on type of funding mechanisms that we launched in partnership with Harvard who is giving us technical guidance on that to fund substance abuse service through that type of a model. Also she has been spear heading the work that the department has been doing related to Safe Sleep and reducing violence to young children- shaken baby, who you leave your child with type of initiatives. Those are the kind three general areas that she will be presenting to SAC.

Mary Painter, Director of Substance Abuse, is slated to present Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence in June. She took over for Peter Panzarella and oversees our domestic violence services.

-For future agenda planning SAC needs to determine how much time will be allocated to such presentations. Having the community updates will also be important.

-Susan Smith stated the need to talk about CRP funding because now that we are accepting those dollars, the legislation requires that we engage in certain activities. They are not antithetical to what SAC is supposed to do but we need to close the loop in terms of activities and if SAC has recommendations. We are using these presentations as facilitating some dialog in terms of evaluation of the system but there are couple of things that should be set on our agenda. No matter what, SAC's focus should always be dedicated to closing the loop and not fall short in terms of the report for CRP funding. SAC must assure time is allocated for the RAC presentation. So this brings up the question as to how much time or how many presentations can we potentially load during a meeting. It has been the practice in recent years that SAC meetings shut down during the summer because the attendance problems. These are the things that SAC must sort out to figure out how best to use the 9:30a to 11a meeting time.

-Discussion- taking the above statement into consideration and the preparations required for the September retreat, the consensus was that SAC meet in July.

-When speakers are scheduled, the presentation will be for half hour.

-The SAC meetings will be two-hours and extend to 11:30a. One hour will be dedicated to the presentations and one hour to the business of SAC which will include those bulleted agenda items that will comply with being a CRP (recognizing that is another important piece of the work).

-Donna Grant stated that joining SAC, she hoped that there would be a place on the agenda to talk about what is happening at the local level. As an example, she noted that Region 3 just had two deaths in their community. One town in six weeks- 2 babies 2 ½ yr. old one 6 or 7 week old. The six week old will be ruled an accident because he was sleeping in bed with his mom. So, in this case, the Safe Sleep piece is important.

-The 2 ½ yr. old was left alone while mom went to receive her methadone treatments. There are gaping holes of child care issues. This is a woman working on being clean and sober and yet making poor choices about managing her child care needs. Where are these gaps? Neither of these were DCF involved cases at the time the incident happened, which means the community needs to do more. How is this forum able to facilitate looking at those needs? Can local level reporting fit into the SAC agenda. Can it be part of the community report?

-Consensus was to add local level issues to the Community Report as part of the ongoing structure.

-Pat Lorenson commented that if SAC members have recommendations that they be voiced – to do it on an ongoing basis.

-Region 3 RAC was very vocal about wanting a statement in a letter to be sent requesting funding for capacity to address all this community/collaborative building. It is not direct care it is about capacity. How do we fund capacity? If this is something every other RAC chair felt mattered, then Region 3 would refrain from sending that message. In turn it would become a statewide request.

-Donna Grant recommended the next presenter for the October to be about CONNECT, either Tim Marshall or someone from his unit. There is a lot of work to be done at the local level.

-July meeting will be held Monday, July 7 and all future meetings are extended to 11:30am.

-Josh Howroyd is invited to give a legislative report at the July meeting.

-There will be no August 2014 meeting

-September (meeting will be replaced by the retreat)

-Return to regular session in October

Meeting adjourned 11:30am.

- Complaints regarding the room acoustics were voiced. For subsequent meetings, it was decided that when the group is small, the meeting will be held on the smaller "A" side to facilitate being able to hear each other.