

Meeting Summary/Minutes
Family First | Fiscal and Revenue Enhancement Workgroup
February 4, 2021 | 2:00 - 4:00 pm | Zoom Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

- The co-leads for the workgroup, Cindy Butterfield and Allison Blake, introduced themselves to the group.
- They reviewed Family First with the group and reminded everyone that this is an opportunity for Title IV-E reimbursement, not new money coming into the state.
- Family First will be layered into a broader prevention strategy to distribute services to help families differently than we currently do.
- There are eight workgroups to date:
 - **Candidacy:** The Candidacy workgroup created a broad and inclusive definition of candidates that would serve families upstream so that they do not need to interface with the Child welfare system.
 - **Youth and Family Engagement:** This workgroup provided community feedback to the plan components; it has been sunsetted and members were asked to join other workgroups to inform the plan as it's being developed rather than after a portion has been drafted.
 - **Kinship and Foster Care:** The recommendations from this workgroup have been taken on by the Bureau of Child Welfare, who is working with Chapin Hall to develop a Kinship Navigator Program and a Care Practice Model.
 - **24/7 Intensive Treatment (QRTP):** There is a requirement for states who use congregate care - it will only be reimbursed after 14 days of stay if it is a QRTP, and if the Judicial branch reviews and approves of the placement. QRTPs are to be utilized for treatment purposes only, not for placement. This workgroup met to discuss implementing these requirements and recently presented their findings to the Governance Committee.
 - **Infrastructure Practice and Policy:** This workgroup builds on the Candidacy workgroup's efforts to imagine what the system and front door should look like. Their work is still in progress, but they want a community-based approach that does not require families to go through DCF for service access.
 - **Fiscal:** This workgroup, which will consider funding mechanisms for DCF's Prevention Plan.
 - **Governance:** This is an umbrella committee that will review the findings of the other workgroup and make recommendations for the Commissioner.
 - **Programs and Service Array:** PSAWG (Programs and Service Array Workgroup) has put forth their initial recommendations for services to be included in Connecticut's plan. Since this group's recommendations will serve as the foundation for Fiscal, the co-leads (Elizabeth Duryea and Elisabeth Cannata) are joining to discuss their work to date in more depth.

Programs and Service Array

- Elizabeth Duryea introduced herself and the Systems Division of DCF, which will help allow for an established prevention continuum. Elisabeth Cannata, the Vice President of Community-Based Family Services and Practice Innovation at Wheeler Clinic, also introduced herself. They discussed PSAWG's process and work to date.

Initial Recommendations and Tier 1 and 2 Models

- Desired Results:
 - Review/validate the process
 - Address gaps
 - Discuss fluidity of the Clearinghouse (15 models have been added since December - these are under review)
- PSAWG Overview:
 - Before COVID, PSAWG had longer, interactive meetings. Since COVID, they have had 90-minute virtual meetings every other week, with some small groups doing offline work.
 - Members represent a cross-section of partners, including providers, model developers, advocates, and other state agencies and consumers. There are currently 100+ members.
 - The workgroup's timeline was reviewed, from their kick-off meeting to their December meeting of their initial recommendations.
- Candidacy Definitions: Approved January 2020
 - Families with accepted Careline calls
 - Families who have been accepted for Voluntary Services
 - Pregnant and parenting youth in foster care
 - Siblings of children in foster care
 - Youth exiting to permanency or youth aging out of DCF foster care
 - Families identified through a community or neighborhood pathway:
 - Children who are chronically absent or truant from preschool/school
 - Children of incarcerated parents
 - Trafficked youth
 - Unstably housed/homeless youth
 - Families experiencing interpersonal violence
 - Youth who have been referred to the juvenile review board or who have been arrested
 - Caregivers who have, or have a child with, a substance use disorder, mental health condition, or disability that impacts parenting
 - Infants born substance-exposed (as defined by the state CAPTA notification protocol)

- The Candidacy definition is purposely broad and diverse, with many different needs. Needs range from specific/narrow to broad. Before the Candidacy definition, PSAWG had spent time gathering detailed information about all the services offered in Connecticut and developed a booklet that summarized this information. This was done so they would be ready to match services and be primed when developing the broader Prevention Plan to be aware of current services.
- PSAWG broke down the needs and desired outcomes for each Candidacy workgroup to help match them to EBPs. They then narrowed their focus to FFPSAA-eligible EBPs, with the knowledge that other services may not fall into this category and should be funded as well, but through other streams.
- PSAWG evaluated the EBPs in terms of fit (whether EBPs met 3 or more populations and had evidence of research with communities of color) and feasibility (level of evidence for the Title IV-E Clearinghouse and availability in CT). Tier 1 and 2 services had outstanding evidence, although Tier 2 services are associated with an extra cost due to the evaluation requirements. This evaluation was used to place services somewhere on a Fit and Feasibility Matrix.
- The workgroup used the Matrix to prioritize services that add value, but it is not necessarily feasible to evaluate every single program. The group also grappled with the fact that the criteria for the FFPSA Clearinghouse sometimes aligns with the California Clearinghouse, but not always, meaning that some models on the California Clearinghouse are not yet on the FFPSA Clearinghouse.
- The group paused for any questions, but there were none. The co-leads highlighted the fact that it took a year to consider models with folks with full expertise and grapple with the gaps in the system. So far, 15 models have been reviewed. There is a technical opportunity to use Family First as a funding lever and an adaptive challenge to create a broader prevention system.
- 13 models were approved, which are shown by where they fit in the matrix. As they come out, new models will be reviewed and potentially approved. Some models are not necessarily interventions as much as strategies (such as Motivational Interviewing).
- Studies on the models were reviewed to ensure they had included diverse populations, but these studies did not necessarily show the outcomes by race - PSAWG may look at CT data to address this gap in data.
- One person asked to clarify whether the "fit" section of the matrix had to do with the effectiveness of the model or its fit of Family First candidacy populations. The "fit" evaluation considered whether it had been studied with diverse populations and matched multiple candidacy groups - it did not look specifically at efficacy.
- The group looked over the criteria summary for the initial EBP recommendations and the age continuum of the services. There is a lot of overlap for adolescent and younger child populations and low in latency (7-12) age groups and adults, as well as some gatekeeping criteria.

- The recommended EBPs cover mental health, substance abuse, and in-home parenting.
- The workgroup paused for questions and the co-leads provided some details and clarification.
- As models are added, we will consider them and any existing footprint they may have in CT. If it is not included in the initial plan, we can always consider it later and revise the plan.
- There may also be models that have a benefit that Family First has not identified - there are gaps and limitations.
- One person asked, on a practical level, how does the funding interact with Family First? Especially when it comes to youth who are not involved with DCF? Elisabeth replied that a challenge for the workgroup was that there are many models that will be beneficial for families, but which have not been reviewed from a fiscal perspective. Some models meet narrow populations and others are available widely and meet many needs. The Fiscal workgroup could decide that a model is very available and should be added, whereas others may not be and could have start-up costs that would be too expensive for the value they may add. PSAWG focused on the clinical needs, not fiscal. Elisabeth added that this is the benefit of Fiscal's input. Title IV-E is also the payer of last resort.
- Another person asked whether there will be a universal assessment or screening throughout the state to determine the program of best fit. JoShonda explained that IPP (Infrastructure Practice and Policy) is considering the balance between leveraging what we have and establishing something that will create more ease for our families. Elisabeth highlighted the goal of strengthening families before they need to interact with DCF - making the Careline the last call and creating methods of access, screening, and assessment outside DCF.
- The workgroup reviewed the remaining gaps, which are still evolving due to COVID. Some gaps (e.g. housing) need to be filled outside Family First because there may not be a model on the Clearinghouse that will address that specific issue, although many models may be helpful. The shortcomings in the system are those that have been repeatedly ID'd.
- Addressing the gaps may be an opportunity to partner with Fiscal. Some models will require an independent review, which may be possible to support for some models but not necessarily all.
- The 13 models being pushed forward are not being recommended for the plan itself; they are models that have been identified as worth considering pending fiscal analysis. The implication is that blending funding may be needed. PSAWG knows there is nuance and wants to have cross-group discussion to consider models fully.
- A member asked how gaps will be addressed before the initial submission. Elisabeth reiterated that we will need to look outside Title IV-E for some gaps. There are many initiatives happening in CT, and we do not want to harm their work. We will need to draw from some of these other initiatives too.

- The summary documents that include synthesized information about the models that PSAWG has reviewed can be sent out to the group.
- It was asked whether we can find out if there is an RCT in process and possible funding already in existence among Tier 2 models. We have discussed that Tier 2 models may incur additional cost, but if there is already an ongoing RCT, we may be able to use this data and avoid CT paying for the evaluation. The co-leads agreed this may be helpful to know - we do need a plan for evaluation for those models, but we can look at whether there are evaluations already happening.
- Similarly, it was asked whether there is a list that would show whether a review has been done by another state. Olivia Wilks from Chapin Hall answered that there is a pending list, but they may be able to find more information on this.
- It is important to look at what is outside of CT and may be important to bring in.
- Another question was whether there is a document that summarizes the location, capacity, and cost of supporting these models. Yes, due to technical assistance from Elizabeth, Elisabeth, and Chapin Hall, there is one that includes much of this information. We do not have one that includes the cost of supporting, but there is also one from a national organization with the cost-out. These materials can be shared with the Fiscal workgroup.
- One person asked, given the list of programs presented today, how will PSAWG prioritize certain programs? There are definite challenges in answering this because it is necessary to have the fiscal analysis and an elaborate discussion. We also do not want to move away from the intention of the Candidacy workgroup.

Next Steps

- The workgroup had run out of time, but there would be more opportunities to ask questions on Monday at their next meeting. Elizabeth Duryea explained that there is still a lot of work ahead for PSAWG, including considering what is outside the Clearinghouse, the new models, and racial justice considerations.
- The next Fiscal meeting will be **Monday, February 8 from 3:30 - 5 pm**, and the workgroup will discuss Maintenance of Effort and the plan for cost-benefit analyses.