

Region 3 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2017

In Attendance:

Banton, Kym
DiMauro, Nancy
DiPietro, Terri
Forbes, Samantha
Gardner, Chris
Grivois, Lorna
Jacaruso, Jon

Kalisher, Allon
Kyle, Lindsay
Moller, Regina
Parkinson, Kyle
Rein, Wendy
Reyes, Loida
Rose, Sean

Russo, Robin
Seagraves, Kelly
Sedlock-Reider, Lisa
Stebbins, Christine
Stevens, Kristina

Welcome and Introductions

Review of January Minutes

Motion made and seconded to accept the March 2, 2017 minutes with the following two changes: change the last paragraph on page 1 to read Myke Halpin shared some concerns from the FAB and the fourth paragraph on page 2 FAST should be CST.

FAB Updates and/Family Concerns

Lorna discussed problems that families are having with limitations on services and insurance issues.

Nancy Gentes announced a free summer part time program to prevent summer slide on academics which is open to all children ages 5-12 and their siblings. This is 4 days a week in the afternoon. They will bring in youth mentors and people from the community. The program lasts about 8 weeks.

Susan spoke about TEEG's All-Star Adventure program for children ages 6-18. They will meet individually with families and kids who struggle with behavior issues; this is a clinical fun setting. On 5/20/17 they are having a Wheels for Meals bike race to raise money for the summer lunch program.

Jill spoke about the CONNECT free technical assistance for the Health Equity Place for agencies that want to participate; they are looking for 42 agencies across the state. If anyone is interested Jill has further information.

Noank Community Support Services over the next couple of weeks will begin a pilot program to provide emergency safe home mobile outreach for young adults. Mystic is holding a Kentucky Derby event this Saturday.

Legislative Update - Josh Howroyd

The legislative session ends on Wednesday June 7th or Thursday June 8th, it is likely there will be a special session until budget difficulties are resolved. They have had a steady stream of bad fiscal news. There are a lot of issues within the state budget. Dynamics have changed as income tax collections did not meet expectations and failed miserably. If the budget is not in place by the end of June, there will be a special session which does not end until resolution. The Lieutenant Governor can break ties. Josh will forward the list of bills that got through the committee process, most will probably not go much further.

Some bills of interest on Josh's radar are:

- Senate Bill 397 to establish an Independent Ombudsmen that will deal with client issues. It remains to be seen if this will be separate from the OCA.
- Senate Bill 894 to reconstitute the SAC into a state oversight council which is based on the model of the Juvenile Justice oversight and policy council. This will have a child welfare component into it. Josh feels that somethings within this will pass as there is not a huge fiscal impact to beef up the SAC but not to radically change its membership. Regina asked about how will this affect getting family voices through the RAC to the new SAC. Josh said right now the bill reads that each RAC member that sits on this new oversight council would make RAC members ex officio however RAC should be standing members.
- Senate Bill 893, this is a housekeeping bill of technical revisions, tweaking confidentiality
- Senate Bill 1025 concerning the closure of CJTS and transfer of Juvenile Justice to the CSS judicial branch. The Governor recommended that it close by July 1, 2018. An issue is we need an alternative in place. The youth are at CJTS because there are no other options for them within the State. The Department is asking providers to give ideas for a competitive procurement.
- House Bill 7286 which has recommendations from the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee to expand community based diversion programs.

Josh said other aspects of the budget are state employee union negotiations.

CFSR and PIP update Susan Smith

The purpose of the Child and Family Services Reviews enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families as they rarely engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes.

The reviews are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement within their agencies and programs. Ultimately the goal of the reviews is to help states improve child welfare services and achieve the seven outcomes for families and children who receive services

In development of the PIP they are looking for input from a variety stakeholders. Child and family services reviews which are promulgated through the government occur every 5 or so years. We are now at our third round.

This time states were allowed to do their own process. We laid out a comprehensive plan and were authorized to do our own review. Staff from all backgrounds in the Department participated. They created infrastructure to do a CFSR routinely. Following a CFST the Feds historically have given performance improvement plans, no state has ever not gotten a PIP.

Looking to change the whole LINK system that will occur over the next couple of years.

Susan provided this address, Dcfpip@dcf.gov to submit ideas. They also have a PIP consultant working with them.

Susan suggested to maybe have this as a standing agenda item for the RAC to provide feedback.

Regina recognized tremendous burden on social workers, sometimes a hesitancy to see that they don't have to bear all the weight on cases and could benefit from utilizing providers that are going into the home anyone to count that as a visit.

Allon indicated that caseloads rising due to servicing families longer, what could we be doing collectively to reduce the departments time involved?

Jill asked why are most foster homes blue collar? Could there be a focus to recruit middle and high income homes.

Update on Foster Care & Network of Care

The criteria for becoming a foster parent is you have to be at least 21 years of age, have a source of income that can meet needs prior to placement, can't have certain criminal history, can't be on the central registry, cannot be involved in any other case with the Department and you have to have enough bedroom space to afford a child privacy. If on central registry there is a process to get off, if you cannot get off you cannot be licensed. You must cooperate with the Department and participate in pre license training. You must agree not to use physical discipline on any child in the home including biological kids. Weapons must be properly stored and pools must be gated.

Lorna suggested support for kids already in the home being part of pre licensing training. Help parents to recognize that the kids need to be prepared.

Jon asked all to post the schedule of recruiting events in their offices.

Pam offered to go to providers to give a presentation on what is involved in fostering.

Lorna asked what FAB members could focus on to help with this. Jon indicated that maybe they can provide thoughts or ideas on how to better use what services are in place or where to maybe enhance programs.

Allon shared that this has been referred to as an audit, it is not an audit.

It was suggested for recruitment have DCF staff attend Story nights at libraries, there is one at United Church of Christ in Bolton.

Lisa suggested looking at the disturbing amount of times that children are moved from placement to placement, the critical lack of foster homes is a contributor.

Allon suggested looking at other ways to recruit for host homes and respite.

Pam asked members of the RAC to help create the 2017/2018 Recruitment and Retention Plan. They will start working on it at the end of May. Pam will get Robin an invite to send out to all.

Regina suggested Pam make the rounds to providers for recruitment as well.

Numerous recruitment events are planned for the year. Pam will send robin the list to send out.

Chris spoke about statewide recruitment efforts commercials, radio ads etc... Ads on bags at grocery stores.

Junes meeting will be network analysis review. The RAC/FAB will attend as well then participate in a discussion on what to do with this information.