

Region 3 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2015

In Attendance:

Banton, Kym
Brenker, April
DeWitt, Lisa
DiPietro, Terri
Forbes, Sam
Gardner, Chris
Gentes, Nancy
Grant, Donna

Grivois, Lorna
Hart, Ava
Jacaruso, Jon
Kalisher, Allon
Lavallee, Andrew
Parkinson, Kyle
Patota, Michael
Peterson-Aresco, Michelle

Rein, Wendy
Reyes, Loida
Russo, Robin
Shulman, Liz
Stebbins, Christine
Westcott, Cara

Welcome and introductions

Lorna Grivois

Review of November 6, 2014 minutes

A motion was made and accepted for the 11/06/14 minutes.

Chair Report

CONNECT Update – Lorna

Lorna is looking for a broader group to participate on the regional CONNECT Network of Care. They are currently in the process of scheduling their next meeting as well as waiting to hear from both the department and CHDI regarding regional materials developed by Troy Monroe, marketer.

Family Advisory Board (FAB)

The group was asked to look at Region 3's Strategic Plan and provide feedback to the Department. Lorna and nine family members reviewed it and responded to Allon. At the last RAC meeting the question was posed to the FAB "When a family member that sits at DCF/community meetings is being investigated what does the family advisory board think the protocol should be". Some responses were what are the rules of the table, should the chair have a supportive conversation with the family member, what happens if a DCF employee is getting investigate? Jon said he will meet with Lorna to explain the DCF process. Lorna said that one family member questioned social worker case loads. Allon explained that Social Workers are currently at 100% with case loads, the Commissioner would like our workers to be at 75%. Jon explained the amount of paperwork involved in a case and the completion time. Another factor is overturn in staff and staff transferring to other offices which affects case loads.

Donna described mobility mentoring from the Kritendon Group in Boston which helps family's find and access services.

DCF funding to Connecticut Youth Services Association for Juvenile Review Boards – Potential for Partnerships (Presentation by Erica Bromley)

Erica Bromley is a Juvenile Justice liaison who offers support for the Juvenile Justice system and the JRB's. Erica discussed the JRB boards and the fact that they have few resources or supports. The first JRB started 40 years ago. Right now there are about 70 across the state, some serve multiple communities. New JRB's have been popping up every few months, They have three brand new ones right now that are starting. The majority of JRB's are run by YSB's, six or so are not. The YSB's are funded through the State Department of Education. YSB's are the only statute based youth services in ct.

CYSA has been around since the early 70's. They have recently moved into the phase of getting funding. There is currently grant funding for Region 6 and Region 3 JRB's, they must apply for the funding and they are able to determine what services they need the dollars for. Current applications were recently reviewed, some have requested case management services, direct services requested are youth development activities, drug and alcohol assessments and treatment, mental health services, assistance with co-pays that family's struggle with having to pay, youth employment, mentoring and tutoring,

Six months is the time frame for the funding.

They are working with DCF on outcome measures and how to report.

Liz asked if transportation was requested by any JRB applying and Erica responded that some did in fact requests assistance with transportation. Duration of the contracts are through the end of the fiscal year and then they will have another process to apply in the spring for the next funding cycle.

Donna felt that now that there is funding that maybe communities that have wanted JRB's but did not have resources will apply for funding and perhaps those that already exist can expand their staffing. Erica explained that the criterion is that the JRB must currently be in existence and be active before they can apply.

There will be mandatory trainings for board members. Lorna asked if families could take part in the trainings and if family members are sitting on the JRB's, Erica said that the make-up varies however most often they have a community member as a part of the board. They also usually have representation from schools, probation, DCF, mental health agencies and faith based organizations.

Cara asked if funding would cover a full time case manager, Erica indicated that it will not and is not necessarily needed for all boards, funding was decided on populations, communities, how many hours are currently being spent on cases and caseloads.

SAC Update

The SAC will meet again in February and would then move to a quarterly meeting structure to be hosted by the RAC's, part of the meeting would be open to the public and members will outreach to the community to let them know about the meeting. There is an opportunity for RAC

recommendations as a standing item on the SAC agenda which could create an opportunity to discuss the work going on in the individual RAC's. Donna also asked that the SAC consider one case presentation at each meeting which would not be an open case but a case that was significant enough to warrant media attention to enable the group to discuss as a learning experience similar to the way hospitals do. They would ask DCF to bring those cases.

Updates from the Departments central office will be presented as well.

DCF Update

2015 Strategic Plan and Key Elements

Region 3 has developed a means for the 2015 Strategic Plan. They have not yet spoken with the Commissioner's team to finalize. Although this is a new plan for 2015 some of the elements from 2014 are included. Allon explained that this is a lengthy ratification process and they need to keep their focus narrow. Cara asked if there will be a report on what has been accomplished in 2014 and Allon shared that some of those objectives were covered in the Governor's report.

There is a high priority to achieve what we need to achieve of the federal oversight to meet the exit plan. Quality case plans to meet kids' needs is a major focus. There are 22 measures in the exit plan. The focus is on strategies and on areas that are still under standard, they will continue to focus on case plans and needs met. They have developed more robust court monitoring and are also looking at dedicated capacity to support QIT work. Region 3 has been the high performing region in the state around case planning. Once the plan is complete, it will be disseminated to the group for feedback.

Cara asked about the other items on the 2014 Strategic Plan, specifically mental health. Donna explained that mental health has been embedded in other areas as in APPLA, and kinship placements.

Allon shared that Region 3 staff attended a senior administrator's meeting at central office yesterday and presented on "Exceptional Case Planning". This overwhelmed the participants and people were very impressed with the work that is happening in our region, this strategy will probably have to be adopted by the rest of the state.

Infant Mental Health

Allon shared information about the Infant Mental Health Workshop Series which has been completed in four of the six regions. The dates currently being considered for this series for region 3 is 03/05/15, 03/06/15, 04/09/15, 04/10/15, 05/07/15, 05/08/15, 06/04/15 and 06/05/15.

Allon described recent conversations with the ECSU Early Childhood Center who offered to host this learning series which is 8 full days.

Allon invited anyone who is interested in attending to contact Nancy DiMauro from DCF Region 3 who is coordinating this series. There are limited slots, there is not a lot of capacity and they need to be very selective on who should participate

Five Ways to Well Being – Framework / Juvenile Justice Focus

Allon attended a meeting this past Monday about this grant. The group looks at kids who end up on the parole side of juvenile justice. They are working on how to leverage partnerships where adolescence experience a team that is actively working to get them out of the corrections system, keep them out and make them better off in normative ways.

The “Five Ways to Wellbeing” are:

Connect
Be Active
Take Notice
Keep Learning
Give

This might not just be for kids in the juvenile justice system. A lot of this grant has to do with freeing up dollars that are structured for certain things to be able to use them more flexibly for disconnected youth.

Allon also discussed the workforce as a region, how a current survey given to staff looks at how well staff feels supported and how satisfied they are in doing their job. The surveys have been reviewed to look at themes. The lack of workforce trauma processes was discussed.

Donna reported that QVCC is providing a program for the workforce “Developing Positive Psychology”. Donna also reported that there is a new head of the Psychology Department; his name is Keith Hightower.

RAC Governance - How should RAC be organized for 2015 in light of Performance Expectations of the 2015 strategic plan for the region and obvious priorities?

Donna asked to discuss the current structure of this group and the sub-committees, some of the workgroups have stopped meeting. Donna asked what people would like to do. Allon suggested changing workgroups that would be directly related to the 2015 Strategic Plan. Chris suggested having a workgroup that focuses on membership to make sure we continue to reach out to people that should be at the table.

Donna suggested keeping the education sub-committee.

Chris indicated that the adolescent sub-committee should continue.

Cara feels that the early childhood committee should be continued to align with the infant mental health portion of the 2015 Strategic Plan. Allon suggested renaming this group “Early Childhood Prevention”.

It was suggested that OPM be brought to the table to talk about their work with chronic absenteeism.

Jon has offered a slot to the RAC to one of our racial justice workgroup members to share and update on their regional work.

Jon asked that there be a standing agenda item addressing juvenile justice issues and racial just work.

Loida suggested a "Communication Committee" to report back how the community feels the Department is doing. Donna felt that the individual committees should report out on this.

Jon suggested having a foster parent participate.

Donna hopes to have this structure confirmed by March.

RAC Subcommittee Updates

Adolescent Workgroup

Chris reported that they continue to work on their survey. They are currently working out consent forms which have been a lengthy process. They have submitted the survey to the Institutional Review Board to look at language. Chris will speak with the Willimantic and Middletown DCF offices in the region about a roll out date. The idea is to have the adolescents fill it out six months before they leave and six months after.

Christine suggested that a survey also be given to youth when they age out.

Education Workgroup

Donna reported that the work of the out-posted Putnam worker has changed. The work is now more community based and she works with faculty to problem solve. They will develop a rubric for data points to be able to get the numbers for this work. They have had great feedback on how it is changing the schools relationship with DCF staff. Loida and Leslie Roy are also working on getting data.

Loida reported that the current liaison is transferring; the Department will work on an easy transition of a new out-posted worker to Putnam. Allon asked Kyle to invite Dave Silva to the next RAC to discuss how out-posting work in Norwich is going.

Kyle discussed an issue with state cars and out-posted workers. They are not using state cars which then affect the utilization rates.

Allon also shared that the department is actively looking at the transportation issues for clients in our region.

Donna announced that TEEG will be delivering credentialed service for transportation.

Other Updates (as needed)

YAS in Southeast

Cara spoke of a presentation she saw on young adult services on the AXS program that are on Montauk Ave in New London. The program offers a lot and the youth do not have to have a diagnosis. Jason Hyatt is the Program Director, they are funded through the Sandy Hook Commission.

Area Advisory Councils

Liz resigned as co-chair of the Middletown area advisory council.

SOC Collaboratives

SEMHSOC

Cara and Michelle Drake have both completed their terms as co-chairs of SEMHSOC and have resigned, they are looking for replacements. Next Thursday from 9:00-11:00 they will have a strategic plan meeting at UCFS. On January 15, 2015 from 8:00-9:00 all are invited to a reception at UCFS as well.

NEST

Donna reported that the NEST is still forming; they now have a website, logo and phone number. They will be meeting to set up a referral process and are also talking about family need and what is the imminent need on SRT's and who needs to be present.

Middletown Collaborative

They are starting an SRT process again. They have met with the Board of Education and have identified a school to begin with. They will slowly reach out to community providers. They are hopeful that everyone will use the same referral form and process and use uniformity to obtain data.

Providers

TEEG

They have landed a significant grant to begin adolescent work. They are hosting supper clubs and inviting kids from area high schools who are involved with JRB's to network with local businesses to discuss job, school and work ethic and employment options to be able to think about their own business interests and think about academic pathways.

They also got a small grant to fund a Healthy Girls Healthy Women program. They will be bringing staff from Quest Martial Arts for 6th, 7th and 8th graders for self-defense lessons. They will also provide training on empowerment, cyber use and social media bullying.

TEEG will host their annual fundraiser on February 6, 2015 at Thompson Speedway.

Loida announced an upcoming presentation at the DCF Willimantic staff meeting on the permanency teaming model that gives a youths story of a girl that came from congregate care and landed in a forever home.

Allon announced a regional project on crossover youth with court support services add DCF. They will meet with Georgetown and Waterford court to focus on the way we work on kids that have history with both child welfare and the juvenile justice side.

There will also be an in depth technical assistance around children born on substances to develop a collaborative strategy around the state on addressing these children. If anyone is interested in

participating they are welcome. They are currently working on deciding who the target people should be to participate.

Next RAC Meeting – March 5, 2015