

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE
165 CAPITOL AVENUE, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106**



**Sarah Healy Eagan, J.D.
Child Advocate**

OCA Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes – August 22, 2023

OCA Staff: Sarah Eagan, Child Advocate; Christina D. Ghio, Associate Child Advocate

Members Present: Jeanne Milstein, Jennifer Collins, and Edwin Colon

Members Not Present: Shelley Geballe, Rudolph Brooks, Toni Boucher (joined during executive session)

1. Minutes

Minutes for the June and July meeting still need approval. Due to the fact that only three members are present, review and approval will occur at the September meeting.

2. OCA Staffing Updates

OCA is revising the Assistant Child Advocate job description to broaden qualifications and will then post for the open ACA position. The revision process is expected to add approximately one month to the hiring process.

OCA received a grant and is working on additional grant funding. OCA is planning to use grant funds to hire data experts to help streamline the data analysis needed for completing the conditions of confinement reports.

OCA is collaborating with the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors to bring in an intern to support the work. This will be a masters level student.

3. Project Updates

The Infant Toddler Report was issued last month. Dr. Kirsten Bechtel presented to the Alcohol and Drug Policy Council (ADPC) on the issue of fentanyl deaths in young children. This is an ongoing concern. OCA recommended a sub-committee of ADPC to look at intersection of harm reduction and child welfare. It is not yet know if ADPC will follow the recommendation. There was legislation passed last session to require the agencies to analyze service gaps in relation to fentanyl and services to

caregivers. The state needs to respond to this as a two-generational problem. OCA met with the DMHAS Commissioner recently on these issues and will continue to follow up.

4. Investigation Updates

OCA has sent out a draft report related to our investigation of a critical incident in a Community Living Arrangement, licensed by DPH. Our review led to analysis of state's framework for ensuring safe and high quality care in DDS licensed community placements for persons with intellectual/developmental disability. It included an examination of the representation of the child. The draft report has been provided to DSS, DDS, and DCF for their review and feedback. As a backdrop to that report, the state was audited by the federal Inspector General in 2016 in relation to the state's home and community based care waiver. They found that Connecticut did not fulfill our obligations under Medicaid law and made findings and recommendations. To date, Connecticut has not been cleared and the Inspector General is re-auditing Connecticut. OCA looked at the framework for monitoring the implementation of the Inspector General's recommendations.

Jeanne Milstein raised the concern that New London is seeing more and more homeless families. In particular, New London is seeing undocumented families. There are waiting lists everywhere. Families with children are homeless. Jeanne asked that folks put some thought into solutions and emphasized the need for a statewide strategy.

Sarah Eagan noted that this issue dovetails with another issue already on OCA's radar. As kids go back to school, OCA continues to be concerned that schools publish registration criteria that is not consistent with federal law. It is onerous and has a chilling effect on the right of homeless or undocumented youth to enroll. SDE has reissued guidance on it. OCA filed an OCR complaint on one district quite some time ago but it is still under review. A model policy is anticipated from SDE, but OCA is not aware of that model policy being issued yet. Schools must have policies that are consistent with the federal law. There was discussion about the McKinney-Vento Act and the importance of local education agency compliance with the law.

Motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing confidential investigative information, made by Jeanne Milstein. Seconded by Jennifer Collins. All voted in favor

Executive Session

Motion to end executive session by Edwin Colon. Seconded by Jennifer Collins. All voted in favor.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next meeting: October 26, 2023

5. Executive Session

Discussion regarding confidential information related to ongoing fatality investigations.

Following confidential discussion, a motion to leave executive session was made by Edwin Colon. It was seconded by Jennifer Collins. All voted in favor.

6. Return to Regular Session

Next meeting will be August 22, 2023 at 5:30. Meetings will be schedule for the fourth Thursday of the month going forward.