

Illinois Children's Justice Task Force

May 11, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Chicago Children's Advocacy Center

With phone conference available to other areas

9:40 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Char Rivette, Chair. She asked task force members, DCFS staff and guests to introduce themselves.

Members attending: Charlie Reynard, Jill Glick, Patrick Dempsey, Don Rose, Tammy Bates, Paul Hamann, Virginia Zic-Schlomas, Donya Adkerson, Steve Sawyer, Laurie Riehm, Annette Milleville, Billie Larkin, Mary Dobbins, Char Rivette, Julie Cummings, Judy Brucker, and Mary Dobbins

Participating by phone: Judy Bukowski, Petrak Channing, and Evan Owens.

Members not in attendance: Terry Carmichael, Kathy McNamara, Jamie Friye, James Radcliffe, Richard Russo

DCFS Staff: Mary Dreiser, task force administrator, Shirley Davis-Barsh, Meryl Paniak, Regina Young and Theresa Hughes

Guests: Steve Budde & Akadia Kacha-Ochana from Juvenile Protection Association and Tracy Weaver from ICASA.

Review of minutes from February 10, 2016. Chicago meeting: Motion to approve minutes made and seconded.

Opportunity for public comment by the Open Meetings Act: no public comment

Announcements:

This is Laurie Riehm's last task force meeting as she is relocating to Texas. Char Rivette thanked her for her service and for recommending potential new members, which will be taken into consideration this summer.

Director Sheldon will not be attending today as he has a previous commitment in Springfield. The option of calling in was declined as a face-to-face meeting is preferred. The director will be asked to attend the August 17 quarterly meeting. In his email to the task force, the director stated that he would be setting up a meeting with the core group that worked on the MDT recommendations within the next few weeks.

Illinois General Assembly MDT Report Update: Char Rivette

Char provided an update concerning the MDT Report recommendations, and a final bound copy of the Illinois General Assembly Report booklet was provided to everyone. The final reports were submitted to the DCFS Director, Senator Morrison, and to all members of the Illinois General Assembly. Senator Morrison immediately responded to the request to meet with Dr. Glick, Billie Larkin, and Char Rivette along with Joe Piaseki, Senator Morrison's Chief of Staff. At this meeting, the document was explained to the Senator, along with the core concepts, and the proposed next steps to be taken. Senator Morrison suggested that a meeting be set up directly with the Governor office to enlist his support.

There was a meeting with Director Sheldon, his legal staff and Senator Morrison in Springfield to further the discussion. At that meeting it was determined that a meeting would be scheduled with the Governor's office where the concept of a commissioner who would report directly to the Governor and a commission would be discussed. The main goals are the establishment of Commissioner, commission and pilot site.

At the Governor's meeting, the Governor's staff had inadvertently not received a copy of the report beforehand, so there was a lot of education on the report that was provided in the 3rd meeting. The Governor's office questioned the wisdom of the establishment of another commission and asked the task force members to rethink this concept more creatively. Char Rivette reinforced the idea that a paid commissioner is important to make this happened, and that she had spoken to the Director about it. There was a discussion concerning using the Children's Justice Task Force as the commission.

The task force discussed ways to provide information regarding the MDT Report recommendations and how implementation would occur. Paul Hamann suggested the Illinois Collaboration on Youth could be a vehicle for support and dissemination since they meet with various representatives across the state. Dr. Glick stated it is important to get Director Sheldon on board as he is ultimately responsible for the safety of children and identifying issues with conducting investigation. It was agreed that all disciplines that are involved need to get their respective community partners on board. Billie Larkin informed the group that Senator Morrison will convene a July public hearing on the report in Chicago. Theresa Hughes, who monitors the the advisory boards for the director, stated that she will report back to the Director on all this information.

Char Rivette summarized this morning's discussion and next steps with input from task force members:

- Identification of a consistent point person from DCFS to participate
- The scheduling of another meeting with DCFS Director Sheldon
- The need for more law enforcement representation statewide to continue with this report
- The enlistment of a representative from the Illinois Attorney General's Office

- Outreach to agencies to support the report such as the Illinois Hospital Association, Child Care Association, Pediatric Doctors Association, ICOY, Illinois Appellate Judges Association, the State's Attorney's Association, Michael Reese Foundation, Frye Foundation, Polk Brothers, Illinois Children's health Care Organization, and the Family Violence Coordinating Council.
- The incorporation of the MDT concept into DCFS' core vision statement.

In conclusion, Char Rivette asked the members to send additional names and organizations to be included to Mary Dreiser.

Task Force Administrator Update: Mary Dreiser

Mary Dreiser announced that she was returning from a total knee replacement and doing very well. She will be working part time – Monday – Wednesdays, some weeks longer due to deadlines.

Member update:

- Our Vice-Chair, Kathy McNamara, is still on medical leave pending her winter fall on the ice: she is scheduled for her second ankle surgery soon and then hopes to be able to return to work.
- Our Chair, Char Rivette, was featured on Chicago Tonight to discuss the Denis Hastert allegations and child abuse.

Upcoming projects:

- **Children's Justice Annual Report and Application** is due June 30, 2016. We received a one month extension due to Mary Dreiser's March medical leave. The federal report will include a detailing of all activities of this year and the proposed activities for next year – including a budget. Once approved by the federal project officer in the fall, the report will be discussed with the task force. Paul Hamann's suggestion to include an executive summary for the report will be considered.
- The task force has completed three major projects in the last two years: MDT report to the Illinois General Assembly, statewide needs assessment survey and analysis and three year required federal recommendations. Now it is time to get back to a few pending projects. The recommendations were approved in 2015, and new recommendations will need to be finalized in 2018. Today, we will be working and in subsequent meetings, if need be, on defining action steps for the implementation of these recommendations. Second, we have new federal requirements to link and to be familiar with the **DCFS Strategic Plan and the Annual Progress and Services Report, and the Illinois Court Improvement Project**. At future meetings we will have someone representing these projects to give us an overview and to see how we can link with them.
- Annually all task force members must complete the Open Meetings Act and Ethics training. Judges are exempt from completing the ethic training. According to Theresa Hughes, because members task force have already completed the OMA training once, we can appoint a task force member to be our designee to take the training annually and to report back to the group on any new updates/changes. Right now according to our bylaws Kathy McNamara as vice-chair serves as the Open Meetings Act officer, but a designee may be appointed.

The ethics test is due October 28, but there is a request to comply earlier. That information will be resent to all members in the near future.

- Over the summer Char Rivette and Mary Dreiser will be examining the task force membership for compliance with the federal requirements, looking at new categories to add, replacing retiring members, etc. As we have discussed before, we need to increase our ethnic diversity of members. The geographic diversity is fairly good now and not heavily weighted towards Chicago/Northern Illinois.
- It was also reiterated that the status report updates during our meetings are all in response to federal requirements; these reports serve a purpose. For example, in the annual federal report, all DCFS pending and enacted legislation for the year is included as is a report on DCFS/DCP initiatives/advances; and we are asked to collaborate with other federal grants – especially CAPTA, the legislation which allows us to exist.
- **Annual Calendar:** the following quarterly meeting dates have been established per the Open Meetings Act Requirement.

Meeting are scheduled for the Second Wednesday of May, August, November and February:

1. August 10, 2016 in Springfield
2. November 9, 2016 in Chicago
3. February 8, 2017 in Bloomington
4. May 10, 2017 in Chicago

Needs Assessment Subcommittee Report: Don Rose

Don Rose reiterated the designated task for the Needs Assessment Committee as planning and implantation of training for law enforcement, attorneys, prosecutors, Judges and GALs. There was a discussion of training needs and methods to handle logistics. Mary Dobbins stated that Southern Illinois University is enthusiastic about training. However, the project needs to be better defined, discussed further, and there needs to be strategies to engage the judicial audience. Mary Dobbins has spoken to others about what has been done and what worked or did not work. The idea of conducting a pilot was discussed, along with building upon existing training and not creating a new training. Web-based training is an option, but there needs to have an avenue to ask questions. Traditional way to educate judges is by the prosecutor. The needs assessment committee will establish future teleconferences to plan this training.

DCP Update: Meryl Paniak

Meryl Paniak provided an update on DCP, in Nora Harms-Pavelski's absence. Due to the large number of DCP Staff vacancies there will be recruitment, interviewing and hiring of Child Protection Investigator vacancies by region as designated below.

- Central Region - 38 staff
- Cook Region - 26 staff
- Northern Region - 59 staff
- Southern Region – 12 staff

Due to the large number of vacancies, there will be overtime, detailing of existing staff from other units to DCP and 75-day contracts approved to get staff onboard quickly.

The degree requirement for staff has been changed in regards accepting criminal justice degrees.

The Eckerd Rapid Safety Response System is ready to go and QI's are getting ready to go. This program will identify 9 risk factors regarding the families when a report is made to the hotline.

Training on egregious acts/harsh punishment is ready to roll out. The JA court can make a finding on certain cases that there no longer needs to make reasonable efforts. The clinical division has created a chart, along with input from the OIG's office and will work with the states attorney and DCFS to file petitions to terminate parental rights.

There is a new DCFS allegation #86 in ANCRA, and it will be included in SACWIS after becoming law on June 1, 2016. This new allegation comes out of legislation from last year to have agencies be indicated for neglect. It will include a definition of "blatant disregard" as failure to implement practice that ensures the physical well-being of a child. It will apply to foster parents, group homes, and residential child care homes. It will include conditions at an agency that expose the clients to risk of harm such as lack of supervision, limited food, clothing or shelter and/or an injurious environment that cause staff culpability to be mitigated by lack of staff and agency protocol.

Legislative updates: Meryl Paniak provided a detailed handout for the current legislation

Highlights:

- **House Bill 4425:** requires DCFS to determine the military status of parents or guardian who are the perpetrator in a child abuse or neglect report. Department is required to notify the Department of Defense in all allegations of abuse/neglect in an open investigation
- **House Floor Amendment Number 1:** provides that the preliminary application for a foster home must include quality of care concerns. This is a new category of foster homes with quality care concerns with a prequalification process for foster care home applicants.
- **House Bill 5656** grants non-custodial grandparents visitation rights.
- **Senate Bill 3034** enacts a pilot program beginning January 1, 2017 and ending December 31, 2018 allowing any jury member in Lake county to donate their fees to the Children's Advocacy Center in Lake county
- **Fictive Kin Bill** states if you have been a traditional foster parent for a year or more, you have developed a family like connection and thereby are considered fictive kin. This bill opens up a small pool of wards who are not returning home or adopted but can move them into a SG arrangement.
- **Senate Bill 2380** amends ANCRA to allow a school employee who is the subject of a child abuse or neglect investigation the right to confront their witnesses.
- DCFS proposed Normalcy law allowing DCFS foster parents to consent to day to day activities that normal parents would do using the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

- **Senate Bill 2512:** Amends the Juvenile Court Act requiring parents to provide the names, addresses, etc. of relatives at the shelter care hearing.
- **Rule 300** was discussed. These are statutory rules and have the full force of the law.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:15pm. The next quarterly task force meeting is August 17, 2016 in Springfield, Illinois.

Respectfully submitted by Julie Cummings, task force member, in Secretary Jamie Friye's absence.