

**Illinois Adoption Advisory Council Meeting**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**February 06, 2015 ~ 10am – 10:50am**  
**Conference Call**

<b>IAAC MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>IAAC MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>DCFS STAFF</b>
Clemmie Banks	Laura Dillard	Joyce Bryan
Karla Blake	Ashley Lapse	Gwenn Eyer
Brice Bloom-Ellis	Sandra McGee	Brian Goodwin
Kathleen Bush	Michelle Price	Michelle Grove
Rosa Dust	Mark Werner	Vanessa James
Karen Faber		Cheryl McIntyre
Heather Feltman		Terry McGlothlin
Nancy Golden		Veronica Resa
Kelly Green		
Ruth Jajko		
James Jones		
Jeanette Kurth		
Holly Loy		
Maripat Oliver		
Sarah Phillips		
Elizabeth Richmond		
Dawn Saphir		
Karen Taylor		
Julie Yelverton		

**Welcome & Introductions** – Elizabeth Richmond, IAAC Co- Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

**Approval of Minutes from November 21 Meeting**

*Maripat made the motion to approve the minutes of the joint SWFCAC/AAC meeting held November 21<sup>st</sup>. Nancy Golden seconded. The minutes were approved as written.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Introduction of New Professional Development Administrator – Joyce Bryan**

Joyce is the Acting Deputy Director, taking over for Craig Missel at the end of December. She shared her values that influence the work within the Office of Professional Development, both in the office and out in the field.

- Integrity – honesty and strong moral principles
- Treating everyone with respect
- Transparency, full disclosure
- Assume the best – assume that everyone is doing the best they can
- Striving for excellence

Joyce has been with the Department for 25 years, starting as a caseworker and moving into supervision. She welcomes phone contact and emails from council members. Joyce noted that the

Department is currently in a holding pattern as the Governor makes plans, with Cynthia Tate as our Acting Director.

Joyce introduced Michelle Grove, the new Foster Parent Support Services Administrator in the Office of Professional Development. Michelle stated that she is responsible for foster parent support, SWFCAC, IAAC, PRIDE training, FPSS's, Partnering with Parents, etc. Michelle has been in child welfare for more than 20 years, beginning as a caseworker. Michelle has worked in cooperation with the Department as the director of the GSU contract for training.

Elizabeth noted that the new PRIDE training program was supposed to start in January but the TOT is now pushed back to March, with pilots in late spring and the roll-out in the fall.

### **Adoptions – Cheryl McIntyre**

Cheryl reported that several things have happened recently. She said that unfortunately, we have lost Christine Feldman as the Statewide Contract and Program Manager, noting that Christine has done a tremendous job. They have shifted her responsibilities to Pam Mills, an administrator in Cook County, at least for now. They will continue to do the program monitoring and contract monitoring that Pam has done. Don Vasich, the Northern Region Supervisor, retired and Eileen Runte will be the Adoption Supervisor as of March 1<sup>st</sup>. Cheryl reported on the “Embrace Adoption” initiative through Metropolitan, looking at the newly adoptive families and doing outreach to them as soon as the adoption occurs. They invite families in for dinner and offer fun Theraplay activities to help families learn something new and make connections with Adoption Preservation from the very beginning. BabyFold has now looked at doing the same thing. They're also going to be using that concept with LSSI. This removes the stigma from asking for help, and efforts will be geared toward growing that program and making it statewide. Elizabeth commended Cheryl re: the 512 adoptions that were consummated in late 2014, as part of the former Director's initiative. Cheryl stated that we did some really nice teamwork in regards to looking at the process. She noted that working together with APT has helped to move adoptions more quickly. There is new leadership at AICI and Cheryl has met with them. They have four new recruiters with regional representation. They are now sending Cheryl a Friday Report, a report showing new listings and status updates, including waivers. They are making it a priority to share the waiver information with everyone in the field. They just finished a round of permanency reviews just focusing on reviewing the children who have the goal of 25 and 26. Who do we have with those goals? Who did we hear about at the permanency meeting? What is being done to support the field to make sure those listing documents get to AICI? Julie reported that there has historically been limited response/follow up when prospective parents submit their home studies for potential adoptions. She suggested that we develop a good system for considering these families for other children if their initial inquiry doesn't work out. Cheryl reported that they follow up to be sure that home studies are forwarded to workers and are working to follow up with tracking a child all the way through. Julie noted that other states seem to be using registries of parents that are “home study ready” that workers can access for homes. It was noted that AICI listings are also cross-listed on the AdoptUSKids web site and AICI is really encouraging concurrent planning. Cooperation with other states through Interstate Compact is working effectively. Julie noted that ICPC denials seem to be a frequent barrier when parents attempt to adopt from other states. Cheryl said that the issue was brought to her attention and it has been addressed noting that we want those matches to occur through the nationwide system and we're making progress. Vanessa referenced a document that was developed in past years for use by workers in preparing children and youth for moving forward toward adoption. ACTION: Vanessa was asked to share her materials. Karen Taylor was commended for her work in Adoptions. She noted that Cheryl is very conscientious in supervising the pathway

through the process. Workers are to list children within three days of legal screening. With regard to adoption preservation, the statistics show that families often contact us when it is way too late. The early contact through the Embrace Adoption Project will enable families to better utilize support. Cheryl noted that it will “normalize” the post-adoption services.

**Medicaid Update – Brian Goodwin**

Brian has recently taken Vince Champaign’s role. He said there is an agency that DCFS works with for our wards to enroll in SSI. Brian and Elizabeth will get together with their contact and will compile materials for distribution to adoptive parents. We have our own (small) Medicaid unit at DCFS. Brian recently spoke with HFS regarding our 18-21 year old wards in an effort to make the process more seamless with Medicaid coverage and the need to reapply when wards leave DCFS care. Brian will be in touch with Cheryl regarding issues that involve adoption.

**Communications – Veronica Resa**

Veronica noted that the Department is developing a strong presence in social networking and that they would like to support the council in promoting their work.

**Agenda Items**

- Budget information
- Adoption Celebration
- DCFS International Adoption Coordinator, Susan Nelson

**Adjourn**

*Sarah Phillips made the motion to adjourn. Julie seconded and the motion carried.*

*Next Meeting – April 10, 2015*