

**Illinois Adoption Advisory Council**  
**September 11, 2015**  
**9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>GUESTS</b>
Bloom-Ellis, Brice	Banks, Clemmie	Bakunas, Kem
Bush, Kathleen	Blake, Karla	Cleveland, Emily
Faber, Karen	Dillard, Laura	
Feltman, Heather	Golden, Nancy	<b>STAFF</b>
Green, Kelly	Kurth, Jeanette	Dyer-Webster, Debra
Jajko, Ruth	Loy, Holly	Grove, Michelle
Lepse, Ashley	Oliver, Maripat	James, Vanessa
Richmond, Elizabeth	Phillips, Sarah	King, Kelly
Saphir, Dawn	Price, Michelle	McGlothlin, Terry
Werner, Mark	Yelverton, Julie	Mills, Pamela
		Seward, Jennifer
		Wolf, Tracy

**Welcome and Introductions**

Elizabeth opened the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Elizabeth said that Jim Jones, Co-Chair, has announced his retirement from ChildServ, and from the council.

Approval of June 15, 2015 Minutes

*Mark Werner made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Karen Faber seconded. The minutes were approved as written.*

Update from DCFS Guardian

Debra said that the recommendation from council members at their July meeting was approved. The new name of the Adoption Preservation program is Adoption Support and Preservation Services.

There are not a lot of changes in the Guardian’s Office because of the changes in administration and budget issues. Most is on hold and she will share more when there are more definite plans.

It is not known when a budget will be in place. Health Works is being told they don’t have funding through the end of September so they will be cutting positions. We cannot provide contracts without budgets. There were one month budgets approved but what is being paid is changing every day. Notification can be sent any day to cancel payments. Due to BH state workers are still being paid. Other state agencies also went to court to continue payment to staff.

Update from Statewide Adoption Administrator

Pam Mills introduced Kelly King, Statewide Program Monitor for Adoption Support and Preservation.

Contracts have gone out to agencies providing Adoption Preservation services. They were decreased by 10% across the board. The MAC agencies also have their contracts. We have not issued a payment for the first quarter yet. In the past they were provided prior to the end of the first quarter but now we have to wait until the reconciliation reports are submitted. Currently she does not know if contracts will be decreased. Kankakee/Bourbonnais area – right now she is looking and trying to find dollars because LSSI

closed their office and the area is not covered. She is trying to put families with providers in near proximity. We are looking to cover that area and will make sure the families are serviced.

Elizabeth asked how the preservation services are handling the 10%. Kathleen Bush said they are hopeful that the funds will be recovered. They have some vacancies that have not yet been filled. If we end up with the cut they will try to adjust funds. Pam said some of the agencies are not filling vacancies. It is in legislation that we have to provide adoption preservation services and search and reunion so that is why we were able to proceed with the adoption preservation contracts as well as the contract with Midwest Adoption Center.

One change being made is that we are tracking billing for our private providers through a database to make sure everyone stays within their obligated amount. The bills are all checked centrally to make sure agencies are in compliance, the bills are being calculated at the correct rate and in the correct unit. They are then sent back to the regions for payment.

Question: How do families seek therapy? Contact your post adoption worker. They will make a recommendation of where the child should go. They will make sure the authorization is in place and funds are available. Kelly will review to make sure the goals in the treatment plan are appropriate for the child. The goals need to be written. The department is focused on outcome goals.

Icebreakers – meetings where the foster parent and bio parent meet and talk, with help of the Permanency Achievement Specialists. Sometimes if the bio parent meets the person who has their child they are more cooperative. They will work with them to get the Lifebook started. This is a pilot in Cook and Northern Region. Linda Conti is in charge of the one in the Rockford area. We are working with the birth parent council. The supervisors of the PAS staff are attending those meetings on a regular basis in each region. They will also go to some of the foster parent meetings.

Adult guardianship – that pilot can continue. Pam met with the Center for Law & Social Work. It is going well and they have had a lot of successes. Pam would like to expand if the budget allows. It is offered in Cook and Peoria now. A mailing went out to families with youth sixteen and over with special needs coding. There was a good response. When children turn 17 ½ and they are being recoded, we are giving the parent information to the Center for Law and Social Work. First the parents have to give us permission to share their information with the Center for Law and Social Work. Otherwise we give the parents the Center information. Subsidy continues to age 21 and they assist with filing for social security when the child is eligible. Pam had some flyers made for the older teens to let the families know we are here and giving them some resources. She will send some to Terry to share with council members.

## **Committee Reports:**

### Membership

Mark reported that the committee **is are** nominating Pat Kelly from Metropolitan Family Services who has a great deal of experience with adoption preservation; and Karen Wardlaw to represent Northern Region adoptive parents. We are looking for an adoptive parent in Cook North, 2 adoptive parents in Cook Central, 1 adoptive parent in Southern Region and 1 adoption professional.

### Adoption Celebration

Elizabeth said we do not yet have the date of the Embracing Adoption event that will be held in Wheaton either 11/11 or 11/12. The joint meeting with the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be held on November 13<sup>th</sup> at the Sheraton Lisle. Karen Faber volunteered to help at the event but will need to check her calendar. Kelly Green and Kathy Bush also offered to help.

Vanessa said DCFS is looking into doing an adoption month event. They have reached out to a Judge to do an event on Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. The ultimate goal would be to have media presence to record proceedings. Veronica Resa wants to connect with Jeanette and the council and Pam Mills. Is there a way to identify families who are ready to finalize adoptions and use it as a media event, or look statewide to have events downstate as well – she was considering Will County and Peoria. There needs to be a concentration of devoted individuals to pull something like that together and the council might be able to provide that. They would like to replicate what they do in Rockford.

Ashley said at Hephzibah they are having 7-8 being adopted this fall so they want to do a celebration around adoption day.

Pam's database will identify all children with approved subsidies and court dates.

If there is a committee we could have representation. We could use the Embracing Adoption parties throughout the state.

#### Legislative/Public Policy

Nancy was not present to give a report. Terry provided a written update that had recently been posted on the DNET on recent legislation.

#### Newsletter

Maripat was not present to give a report; however, Vanessa said she just had a conversation with Maripat this week. The latest volume talked about Back to School issues. Foster parents can now sign off for children to participate in sporting events, using "reasonable judgment" consistent with the age, emotional and physical abilities of the child. This is due to the Normalcy Act. The custodial parent should make the decision rather than the Guardian. Kelly Green suggested that information be sent to the schools regarding this.

#### Training & Support Groups

PRIDE – Michelle Grove said they met with the Deputy to review and he liked what he has seen so far.

Jennifer Seward suggested Dr. Leone Legan be consulted regarding the trauma portion.

Kelly said the NCSTM trauma training is available online and foster parents are very receptive to it.

For the adoption curriculum someone from this council is typically involved.

#### Work Plan – Follow-Up / Form Committees

There was discussion about the ideas/topics that came up at the last council meeting.

##### *1. Educational support for adoptive families*

- What does it cost to provide the service to adoptive families? Terry will check with Angela Barron-Jeffrey.
- We need to remind people that training is open to adoptive families and how to access training. Vanessa will put it on the adoption page.

##### *2. Support for adoptive families during a traumatic crisis*

- If you are not connected to adoption preservation there is no connection.
- There is a frequent overturn of SASS workers.

- The adoption worker should be notified and SASS should service them for 6 months. If the child is being served by adoption preservation they are stepping back because the child is receiving services, but there should be collaboration.

3. *Develop list of resources for trauma situations*

- DHS handles the SASS screening tools.
- Vanessa is doing an article about placement stabilization having a new name.
- Vanessa will ask Jennifer Marret. If she needs more information she can contact Kathleen Bush, Pat Kelly, and Elizabeth. The question is if SASS is connecting families to resources.
- Could there be a courtesy call?
- SASS screening – they would need a consent for their information to be released.
- Procedures – gently ask the question without the youth present.
- They can call the adoption preservation services directly.
- Pam is looking at establishing an adoption link to get information.
- They are discussing doing a mailing to all adoptive parents stuffed with their subsidy check. Would like to get that done twice a year as a reminder to reach out to families to give them updated information.
- Welcome letters started in 2000. When the case is opened to the adoption unit every adoptive parent should receive a welcome letter that includes the temporary medical card and give the workers number and contact information.
- Recertification – there is a very high return on those. It's a federal requirement.
- Pam will do some research and report back at the next meeting.
- Jennifer Seward - They can call the hotline and request child welfare services intake.

4. *Trauma-centered interventions for the caregivers/families of children.*

(see #3)

5. *Supporting youth with disabilities who engage in harmful behaviors*

- Involve parents sooner to avoid residential care and make residential visits as short as possible.
- Article V of the JCA – you can ask the States Attorney to intervene.
- Elizabeth referred this to the Post Adopt Committee

6. *Framing Adoption Preservation services*

- This should be a committee to determine how to brand the new Adoption/Guardianship Support and Preservation Services (ASAP) label.
- Ashley will help.
- Elizabeth, marketing intern, unit has a new name, new letterhead.
- Rachel said it fits into how they are trying to market permanency in general.
- Ashley, Michelle, Kelly and Rachel volunteered for the committee.
- There will be a new web link off DNET that will be inter-active. This could be worked into it.

7. *Extend support services statewide*

- Managed care providers want DCFS to pay them rather than Medicaid because the rate is higher.
- There needs to be some sort of connection to other groups so everyone is on the same page. Pam said once the managed care goes statewide a lot will work itself out.
- If they don't have the opportunity to establish contracts and get the higher rate for the same service, some of the issues will be non-existent.

- There will still be issues in rural areas where there are no services. Those require contracts. (Tied in 6, 7, 8, 11 & 19)

8. *Need a link between the agency and adoption preservation*

- Put together a list of all adoption preservation services and the areas they serve. Kelly will do. Tie it to the marketing idea of what exists.
- Have adoption preservation staff talk at the adoption classes. Currently brochures are provided and info is in the Post Adoption & Guardianship Services booklet. The booklet needs to be updated and mailed out. It was last updated in 2011 and Pam is working on an update now.
- Heather suggested an App for smart phones. Americorp volunteer would be perfect. Foster care workers or anyone could show them how to use the app.
- Rachel said Rauner's campaign had an innovations team. The website is inward facing for staff but looking at outward facing for everyone.

9. *Evaluative info on how the preservation programs rate*

- Pam is training Kelly. They are doing quality assurance tests with parents on how the services are going. Everyone has a program plan specific to the agency and they are all being held to those plans.
- Adoption preservation services are global; however, there are some that will have specialties included in their program plan.
- Elizabeth asked for a copy of the generic program plan for adoption pres.
- What kind of trends, issues and ages of kids are the agencies seeing? They do quarterly reports and end of year reports.

10. *Education Advocacy/Support for adoptive population*

- There are a lot of services but adoptive families do not know how to access them – Adoption Preservation, CCBYS, SASS, community based counseling, health with psych services, etc.
- These systems are hard to navigate and no one is tracking where to get them.
- The DCFS Statewide Provider Database cannot be accessed by anyone unless they are DCFS or private agency staff.
- We need part time Master Adoptive Parents who can help parents.
- There are a lot of hung-up adoptions. Caseworkers do not know how to explain.
- There needs to be more information for the FPSS and the caseworkers.
- It is confusing to know what happens if there is trauma after adoption.
- Adoption Pres can come to Child and Family Team meetings and explain it. They will meet with families to educate them.
- Adoptive families can go to any provider that accepts a medical card, unless it is a contracted agency.
- We need to improve the communication
- Foster care workers do not know about adoption preservation services.
- Pam said all DCFS adoptions and POS adoption subsidies are approved by adoption staff. Adoption Specialists process the DCFS adoptions. Permanency workers no longer do this. Once TPR has taken place, they send the permanency commitment form. Adoption Specialists does the home study, conversion, subsidy, etc. Permanency worker goes to court. They know what to tell the families and what is available.
- Do a “Things You Should Know” to leave with the families. There is a paper that is signed that has certain things on it that have been discussed. Pam will review it.

- With private agencies this could be different because they do the communications. We just read the subsidy paperwork to make sure it is written correctly and will pass federal funding. We do not have direct conversations with them.
- Training classes have started for new staff in adoption, provided by Karen Taylor. We are trying to find ways to better education the private agency staff.
- Clinical staff also get involved in post adopt. All pre-existing conditions need to be documented in the subsidy paperwork.
- There used to be a quarterly adoption meeting through adoption preservation and it was very informational.

*11. Call for Web-based resource portal*  
(see #7)

*12. Social Network for adoption community*

- Vanessa spoke with Veronica Resa.
- There are questions about who would manage and confidentiality.
- Heather - Communication/IT on national website – Adopt US Kids- public/private partnership. Have grown where if a parent has an issue they get a response within a few minutes.
- DCFS has a twitter account.
- Add Ashley, Heather and Vanessa to this committee.

*13. Insurance gap for 18-19 year olds*

- Kids age 18-19 are not covered. Kathleen said Kevin Houser said it as simple as calling the caseworker to change something in the system. When the subsidy stops the medical card stops. Pam will look into this.

*14. Affordable Care Act inclusion for adoption population*

- Elizabeth will follow up with Mark on this. He had to leave the meeting early.

*15. Back-up planning and stand-by adoption*

- Pam said the funds are only available if an adoption is going to be done. 4901 funds only last 12-18 months so they give you that long to finalize the adoption.
- Some families choose to get the survivor benefits. We close the case out and they get survivor benefits.
- Elizabeth said this and medical card info should go into the flyer.
- We should invite someone to talk about this at a future meeting, or call and ask for information. There is one person who handles death and incapacitation. Kelly Shannon works directly with the Center for Law and Social Work. Pam will invite them to speak.

*16. Medicaid and adoption*

- Using the medical card along with private insurance. Medical card is your secondary. Invite Karen Moredock or the new person that took Brian's place.

*17. Daycare eligibility*

- DCFS pays until the child is age 3.

*18. Develop training opportunities for adoptive families on autism and mental health topics.*

- Georgia has something on line.
- We will get an update on Susan Smith's training.

19. *Change the name of Adoption and Guardianship Preservation Services to ASAP/Illinois,*

- Per Debra Dyer-Webster, the name change is official.
- This information should be in the newsletter.
- We need to find a way to brand ASAP.
- Information should be in check stuffers, newsletters, offices for FPSS to hand out to connect that we are here to support you.

**National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption/Guardianship Support & Preservation Study (QIC-AG) - Rachel Kerrick**

Rachel distributed a handout of PowerPoint slides with information on the study. Illinois was one of seven jurisdictions chosen for a five-year study to improve permanency and post-permanency support and to keep families intact.

Rachel will serve as the site implementation manager for Illinois. The focus will be on the post-permanency population of kids but we need to improve pre-permanency also.

The goal is to determine what are our services and continuum of care that experience the adoption and guardianship journey. They are in the exploration stage, developing evidence-based models and talking to lots of people. They are now prepared to present their continuum of care in DC next week. The team will partner with Utah and they have a lot of innovate things going on with their staff development for permanency.

There are two targeted groups – children with challenging mental health, emotional or behavioral issues who are awaiting an adoptive or guardianship placement as well as children in an identified adoptive or guardianship home but the placement has not resulted in finalization for a significant period of time; and children and families who have already finalized the adoption or guardianship. This will include children who have achieved permanency through private guardianship and domestic private or international adoptions. We no longer oversee international adoptions but will look at our past practices.

The second year of the study begins October 2015. They will develop a work plan with the QIC-AG team for the second year of the cooperative agreement. The work plan will guide the work done in the site.

They need to establish a stakeholder advisory group. A leader will serve as the liaison between the different support groups and different places where adoptive parents mingle throughout the length of this project. There will be a need for stakeholders to come in for certain areas. There will be Parent cafes for foster parents who have adopted. Elizabeth said we do have adoptive parent cafes developed and piloted in southern region.

More information will be coming out soon.

The next site visit with teams coming from all over is November.

Rachel's email address is [Rachael.kerrick@illinois.gov](mailto:Rachael.kerrick@illinois.gov).

**Future Agenda Items:**

October 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference Call

- Mark Werner wants to talk about the new Pay for Success Model that DCFS will be using for kids entering delinquency

- Adoption celebration

#### November – joint meeting

- Social Media
- New Permanency Goals
- Juvenile Court
- APLA - Alternative Permanency Placement (Meryl Paniak)
- Update from Director
- Social Media – Brett Angelos (Mark follow up with him first)
- AP 20 for social media. Just redid it for casework use
- Human Trafficking – Stacy Sloan
- Shared parenting
- Budget

#### Adjourn

Ruth made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Next Meeting – Friday, October 2, 2105 – Conference Call