

**Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting**  
**June 17, 2016**  
**9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>DCFS STAFF PRESENT</b>	<b>GUESTS</b>
Barlow, Pauline	Burris, Charlene	Dyer-Webster, Debra	Ardon, Juan
Boyd, Gladys	Carbonaro, Hope	Colyer, Jacqui	Barber, Angela
Cruz, Edith	Dixon, Irma	Erno, Carlene	Darrough, Jeanette
Dreska, Cheryl	Gregory, Donna	Grove, Michelle	Freke, Debbie
Hannon, Gordon	Jones, Stephanie	Hughes, Theresa	Harrison, Ivan
Holt, Darrin	Sheley, Carol	James, Vanessa	Jajko, Ruth
Hoyt, Rachel	Simpson, Michael	Mateos, Alejandro	Jones, Cathy
Kalas, Kurt	Webb, Pamela	McGlothlin, Terry	Jones, Jeff
Keefe, Ken		Rollins, Jataun	Kinast, Melissa
McCoy, Cathy		Sheldon, George	Krieger, Cathy
McDaniel, Mark		Vose, Heather	Loughn, Jane
Norris, Kellye			Orlove, Jeanette
Olson, Sarah			Orlove, Marty
			Rizzo, Trina
			Taylor-Lewis, Samella
			Woods, Jennifer

**Welcome and Introductions – Sarah Olson, Chair**

Sarah welcomed council members and guests to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**Approval of Minutes from May 6, 2016 Meeting**

*Kellye made a motion to approve. Gladys seconded. The Minutes were approved as written.*

**Final Reports to Director - Sarah Olson**

There were no final reports to the Director. The monthly report was sent out at the beginning of the month and council members were copied.

**Update from the DCFS Guardian - Debra Dyer-Webster**

Town Hall Meetings

Debra reported on the Town Hall meetings regarding the Health and Human Services Transformation team. The Director and Regional Administrator from each area will attend.

Flyers for each of these sites were available:

Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup> – 3:30 – 5:00 – 8 E. Galena, Aurora

Thursday, July 7 – 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. – Greater St. Mark Church, 432 S. State Street, E. St. Louis

Friday, July 8<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. – Southtown Apostolic Church, 1108 S. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon

Tuesday, July 12<sup>th</sup> – 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. – Kennedy King, 740 W. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Chicago

Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup> – 10:30 – noon – State Fairgrounds, 801 S. Sangamon Avenue, Springfield

#### Foster & Adopt Our Children Seminar

There will be a seminar on July 9<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 – 1:00 at the University of Illinois Chicago Student Center, 750 Halstead Street, Chicago, Illinois 60607. Ten Illinois agencies will present their adoption and foster care programs. Speakers will include representatives from each agency as well as some of the children who are available for adoption. There will be information tables and staffed resource tables to talk to prospective foster parents. There will be LGBTQ youth there to talk about what it is like to be in foster care. Also single LGBTQ foster parents will tell their experience, and they will talk about how rewarding it is to be foster parents. There will also be a display from the Illinois Heart Gallery – a photo exhibit of children available for adoption. This is the first of four seminars.

Debra asked council members to share this information within their communities. The information is on the DCFS website and also the Let It Be Us Website. It is for current and potential foster parents.

#### **Remarks by Director**

Director Sheldon and Alejandro Mateos, Deputy Chief of Staff, introduced themselves. Director Sheldon made the following remarks: One of the advantages of having an advisory council is to bring some sense to the department. We sometimes create solutions for problems that don't exist. I'm very pleased with the input from Rule 402. It will not be implemented in its current form. We were able to get the normalcy legislation through to make foster parents prudent parents with the ability to make decisions parents make, and to start treating foster youth like normal kids. When a foster child wants to do a sleep over we shouldn't have to do a home study and background check. There is risk but we don't want to put the children in cocoons. A month or so ago we took about 30 youth to Springfield. They shadowed legislators and then spent some time with the Governor. The first 15 minutes the kids were intimidated. The Governor came out effected by the conversation. One 19 year old woman said her boyfriend had been shot and killed. Another young woman said you take us from our parents and then when we are killed you return our bodies to our parents to bury us. Why do we have to be called wards of the state? They prefer youth in care. He met with people and articulated that these kids have gone through unimaginable things and experienced things we don't want anyone to experience and then said we will stop calling them wards. In the near future he will issue an executive order. It is in the statute "ward court" in the Child & Family Care Act. Words matter. We use a lot of not normal words.

Recognize that you are being heard. We have a long way to go to change child care in IL. Foster parents are the backbone of the system. This is not a meaningless advisory council. I don't worry about the things I know about, I worry about the things I don't know about.

Last Friday legislation was introduced that will dramatically change the way we do child welfare. It is a significant step forward in providing normal living arrangements. It was

introduced Friday by the house ways and means committee and a ranking democrat. Wednesday of this week it passed unanimously with one amendment which added additional funding for foster parent recruitment and will go on the house floor next week to be followed by senate action. This legislation is on such a fast track that by late July it will take effect. It does several things. The effective date is October 2016 but it will be phased in over the next three years. It will allow states to receive x \$ for each child in care. No money to deal with the issues that brought the child into care. There is almost a disincentive to reunification. Some parents struggle with substance abuse and mental health issues and don't have the basic parenting skills they need. This will provide federal match at 50% rate to provide services in the home if a child is brought into care and to serve the child in the home. It is a significant expansion of intact family services. It provides significant benefits to adoption/guardianship and for relative caregivers. They put severe limitations on group care living and basically said we are still in the process of analyzing it but a child can be in a qualified residential treatment facility or a therapeutic intervention for no longer than 12 months or 18 consecutive months. That is also a significant shift. For non-therapeutic it limits federal dollars to two weeks. It caps youth in a foster setting to no more than 6 unless a sibling group. There are new provisions around licensing with the underlying sentiment that states have overregulated licensing to the point it has discouraged recruitment. It will help develop model licensing standards. States are not bound to those standards but there will be significant pressure to move in that direction. There will be restrictions on group and residential care that agencies will not be bound to but will need to if using federal money.

### Questions

Q: Does the legislation include lowering the age for sg from 15 to anything under 15.

A: That is one section he has not looked at. He will check.

Q: They will not expand capacity beyond 6 with the exception of siblings?

A: Correct

Q: What brought this about nationally?

A: A lot of discussion dating back to at least 2013. A lot on the group living has been driven by Senator Hatch. A lot of his views were inspired by meeting foster youth in the capitol. This was the first time we did the youth day at the capitol. They also have a foster youth internship program and work in a member of congress' office. There is a woman on Senator Hatch's staff and this has been her passion. They have worked with the Children's Bureau.

Q: What about when the foster parent is not a relative?

A: There is a significant amount of interest on legal guardianship. There are some financial incentives in there. Also recognize we are still analyzing the legislation. They have a reference for guardianship. There is a relative interest but not to the exclusion of non-relative guardians. About 51% of relative caregivers are licensed. That non-licensed relative is a loss of federal dollars for us. There might be undocumented individuals who are good parents but cannot pass the background checks. On the relative caregivers side they are trying to move as much as they can to licensed care while talking about bringing rationale to the licensing standards. That has been explored in IL before and there has been a legislative reluctance to require licensing of relatives. The federal standard is you cannot have two tiers of licensing yet in reality we do.

The phase in for most of the provisions is October 2019. It is a recognition that children should be in homes with parents. It coincides with where I think is the responsible thing to do in child welfare. He will get the legislation and some of the summaries. He would like some formal input on this new rule.

### **Implementation Plan Award Presentations - Director Sheldon**

Sarah Olson, SWFCAC Chair, read the nominations and Director Sheldon presented the certificates to each agency. The following awards were presented:

LSSI – Foster Parent Involvement

Arden Shore – Foster Parent Involvement

Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016 – Dignity & Respect

### **Emergency Foster Homes - Jataun Rollins**

Jataun was asked last year to start the process. She pulled together a group, including people who had worked with the Emergency Foster Homes (EFH) of the past, to talk about what worked well and what didn't.

The EFH will be a temporary alternative placement for youth. Permanency staff and foster parents are integral in working with the birth parent. Initially we are planning for 25 homes from DCFS and 25 from POS. We want good case management practices where we fold in relatives and kinship caregivers whenever possible. There is a list of criteria to rule out or in of the EFH. Children who are not appropriate for foster homes will be deferred. A team decision making approach will be used to work out a plan before placement is even made. Marcy White, BH Panel, suggested making an assessment of that youth, the parent, siblings, etc. and making a decision before moving to the next placement. We will continue to recruit EFH parents and train them with the fundamental skills that are necessary. Yesterday they had an orientation conference call for EFHs. There were over 200 on the phone.

QPI is being done in Northern Region, Southern Region and at an agency in Cook. We are trying to integrate some of the QPI work into the EFH program.

We don't currently have a matching system in place. An RFP went out a month ago requesting just that. We have over 10,000 licensed foster homes. Over 4,500 don't have placements. We have some that just do respite, some only foster a small age range, and circumstances change.

We need to assure that the youth and the foster parent are actually present for the entire Child and Family Team meeting. Foster parents are to be considered professionals just as much as the child welfare staff.

Emergency foster care is the last option. We must exhaust all other options first. EFH placements are for two weeks, maybe 30.

Questions:

Q: What are the target populations – who is in residential?

A: Teens, mostly African American males, youth in psych hospitals

Q: How do we direct people who are interested?

A: Send to [Jataun.rollins@illinois.gov](mailto:Jataun.rollins@illinois.gov); cell is 312-919-0289

Q: Are allowance and clothing included in daily rate?

A: Yes, and we did get a breakdown.

Q: How will you ensure retention?

A: There will be ongoing training. IPS will be in the home twice a week; once if a child is not placed. The EMH will have FPSS support. Private agencies will also have support identified.

We will be putting mentors in place for homes where there are single female foster parents.

Jataun will send the Program Plan to Terry to share.

### **Update from Cook Region - Jacqui Colyer**

“Our lives don’t get better because of chance. Our lives get better because of change.”

Twenty years ago Illinois was cutting age practice as it related to working with child welfare. She went back to Florida and did a lot of the things that were going on in IL. One thing that was the most unusual and really so forward thinking at the time was that IL talked about having a practice that is family centered, trauma informed and strength based. When she came back as the Regional Administrator she thought this is not what I remember. She went to a family team conference without one family member there. We are going back to what made us good. Part of what we are going to be doing is bringing some of that back. Second part we are going to be doing is somehow DCFS has taken on the weight of the world. We think we are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of every child. We have partners. She has met with Health care organizations – about every hospital – Walgreens – schools - private and public, universities, libraries, parks, faith community, and domestic violence. She is partnering with them to talk about the need for their help to pull this load. All of you should be at the table with us. These children belong to all of us not just DCFS. All of them have said yes and come on board. The Deputy at Park and Recreation said that next year he will work with us to make sure children in foster care are able to enroll in the City of Chicago to have our children at City Park campsites. This year we had 50 slots. Next year we will have at least 250 slots. If these children have fun activities it makes a difference. After school matters – they have wonderful after school and camp programs. Libraries have agreed that we will put together a big campaign so that kids will have library cards, activities, etc. These organizations want to be part of our offices. In Harvey we are going to have co-location of our partners in our offices. They will be there and available so the hand off is easier and better.

Permanency – one goal Jacqui has is by 2020 no child will age out of care in Cook County. We figure it out early in the process – how we work with youth and families to build a system so children don’t age out of foster care. We find them permanency early in the process. Casey foundation thought that was a great goal. In Cook County 104 youth age out each month. The statistics say that 30% end up homeless within 5 years; 50% of girls become pregnant; 40% of boys end up in jail or on probation. All of us working together are smart enough to pull this off. Some youth after they age out do not even have an emergency contact to put on a form.

Town hall meetings – we want you there. We want to hear from you. Ask the Director the kinds of questions that make sense. Ask how we can make things simpler. The Cook date was changed – it will be Tuesday, July 12 from 2-4:30.

Cook leadership had a retreat with foster parents who talked about some things they would like to see done differently. It was held May 18 and over 75 people were there. Youth were there. Listening to youth talk about their experience in care is interesting.

Cathy suggested putting an emergency contact in SACWIS. Teach children to memorize the number.

### **Strategic Plan - Jody Grutza**

Thirteen state agencies have come together to work on how to better serve IL citizens as a whole. Different departments do different things and sister agencies are some of our biggest challenges. We have lots of opportunities to better work with them. We have held HHS Transformation Town Halls – one in Springfield yesterday and Chicago next week. There is a website with an overview.

The transformation plan is inclusive of five major areas:

- Education/self-sufficiency
- Moving from Institutional to Community Based Care
- Paying for Value, Quality & Outcomes
- Prevention and Population Health
- Data Integration and Predictive Analytics

The plan will allow us to bill Medicaid for services we can't bill for right now. Mentoring is one of those services. This will open an opportunity to better serve kids in our communities.

The DCFS leadership team and provider leaders met for two days to come up with mission and values to guide our organization in a new direction.

She will send a PowerPoint out to everyone. They welcome feedback. Feedback can be sent to [dcfs.strategicplan@illinois.gov](mailto:dcfs.strategicplan@illinois.gov). They will also go to local council meetings and do a more in depth discussion of the plan. Email the same address or contact Jody.

One of the top values that people think is missing is trust. It sounds very positive. Getting schools involved is excellent. Schools don't understand our children. That must be recognized in the strategic plan.

The Director's live stream that is available on the DNET and that Terry sent out to council members explains the immersion sites. These are small pilots in individual geographic areas. The goal is to immerse everyone touching our kids and families into a core practice model. It is a local approach.

Who are the Immersion Directors? We are not sure yet. We still have to establish the positions and get them approved. Leadership will be critical. They will be tough positions to fill. We are

bringing in experts who have done immersion sites in other states. They will help us with the criteria and key areas we need to look at.

Statewide Summit – A committee is planning this summit. There is foster and adoptive parent representation on the committee. They are planning for about 750 people attending. Everyone at the summit will participate in a conversation. For those not in immersion sites what do we need to be thinking about? We will also focus on engaging the judicial system. We are looking at October 18-19 tentatively in the Chicago suburbs.

### **Results of Election**

For FY' 17 the officers will be:

Chair – Mark McDaniel

Vice Chair – Donna Gregory

### **Membership Update – Terry McGlothlin**

Members to be renewed for a second three-year term:

Donna Gregory

Stephanie Jones

Kellye Norris

Members leaving the council 6/30/16:

Charlene Burris

Edith Cruz

Irma Dixon

Kurt Kalas

Cathy McCoy

Michael Simpson

Vacancies as of July 1<sup>st</sup>:

Southern Region Foster Parent (candidate identified)

Cook North Foster Parent (candidate identified)

Cook Central Foster Parent (2 vacancies)

CWAC Foster Parent (Rachel Hoyt volunteered)

Non-DCFS Person with Recognized Expertise in Foster Care – (3 vacancies – 1 candidate identified)

Terry will seek candidates for these positions and have them filled as quickly as possible. She asked that any recommendations be sent to her.

### **Committee Reports:**

Adolescent Issues - Michael Simpson

No Report

Policy & Legislation - Cathy McCoy/Darrin Holt

Darrin said the federal legislation that the Director referred to is called the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016. This legislation might greatly affect how we do business in IL.

Cathy McCoy said the Policy & Legislation Committee met last night. She presented their recommendations:

Scoring Plans

The deadline for agencies to submit their Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans will remain November 15<sup>th</sup>.

The deadline for scoring plans will remain January 31<sup>st</sup>.

For the 2017 plans, agencies will be asked to present a clean plan along with a list of anything that has been changed.

Agency Reviews

Council members will again do the surveys.

Bilingual APT or DCFS staff will be available to assist with the surveys if there is a language barrier.

There will be a new award category “Innovative Approaches to Service Delivery” to recognize agencies who are coming up with new ideas to involve foster parents.

We will take out the “Organization” award category.

***Cheri made a motion that the council accepts the Policy & Legislation Committee’s recommendations. Rachel seconded. Motion carried.***

Cathy said that in July the Policy & Legislation Committee will further discuss the Foster Parent Survey Responses to monitor the disconnect between what the plan says agencies do and what foster parents say they do. In September we will ask Mike Ruppe or Deb Kennedy to come to the meeting to discuss.

The Committee also set goals for the coming year and identified these critical issues for FY17:

1. Review specialized care policy and procedures
2. Review of sibling visitation policy, especially when new children come into care and if placement with siblings comes into consideration
3. Reduction in services for families due to the budget

FPSS - Edith Cruz

No Report

Respite - Gladys Boyd

No Report

**Reports from Other Councils/Committees/Workgroups:**

CWAC - Cathy, Pauline, Darrin & Hope

Their last meeting was May 12<sup>th</sup> and discussion was held on immersion sites and the strategic plan. The next meeting is scheduled for August 11<sup>th</sup>. We will need a replacement for a foster parent to be on the CWAC.

IFAPA - Gladys Boyd

No Report

**Regional Reports:**

Northern - Donna Gregory, Cheri Dreska

They are watching what the Emergency Foster Home program will end up being and how well it does. They are concerned with the number of homes with openings that are willing to take children but are not getting calls.

Southern - Michael Simpson, Mark McDaniel

No Report

Central - Carol Sheley, Stephanie Jones, Ken Keefe

No Report

Cook North - Edith Cruz, Irma Dixon

No Report

Cook South - Pamela Webb, Kellye Norris

No Report

Cook Central - Charlene Burris, Gordon Hannon

No Report

**Adjourn**

*Gladys made a motion to adjourn. Kellye seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.*

**Next Meeting:** July 15, 2016 – Eastland Suites, 1801 Eastland Drive, Bloomington