

**Advisory Board Meeting
12/15/09 @ 10:00 a.m.
Meeting Minutes**

The Division of Children and Family Services Advisory Board Meeting was held on December 15, 2009 - 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon in Conference Room #5368 in the Donaghey Plaza South building.

The following members were in attendance:

Debra Hurd, Karen Worley, Dr. Jerry G. Jones, Renita Robinette, Howard Turney, Consevelia James, Rose Bates, Sheri J. McClemore, Lisa McGee

The following members of DCFS Executive Staff were in attendance:

Cecile Blucker, Greg Crawford, Sandi Doherty, Mona Davis, Cherylon Reid, Christin Harper, Debbie Roark, Marilyn Counts

Handouts distributed:

- Agenda
- 2009 High Performance Culture Survey
- Transitional Life Plan and Agreement
- Case closure project
- Area 1 Quality Services Peer Review Synopsis
- Questions to Ask Prescribing Physician for Psychotropic Medications handout
- Practice Model
- Organizational chart

Minutes:

Cecile Blucker opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions from attendees.

First thing on the agenda was discussion of the new area directors. All of them are new except two. We will have to re-advertise Area 2's position. They all attended a week of orientation held at Central office. The question was asked, what are the different roles between Area Directors and Area Coordinators and what are the job functions for each? Cecile responded and told them the Area Directors are in charge of supervision. They are responsible for building community relationships with groups such as CASA, OCC, providers and etc., and also going out and building relationships with Judges. Area Coordinators have no supervision responsibilities and report here to central office. They make sure waiver packages gets followed through, and manage the trust accounts. Those are just a few of their job duties. The Area Coordinators report to Central office to Chris Price (which is up for review), and the Area Directors report to Cherylon Reid.

DCFS also has an increase in staff. The governor asked the question what could be done to jump start the transformation of the child welfare system. We were given permission to fill positions that were going to be available in SFY 2011. June 30th there were 822 employees, and in November there were 868. There are 50 pending new hires for the

month of December. People are beginning to see change. The question was asked by Ms. James where was the increase in staff going? Cecile responded and said they were going all over the state. Increase will especially be in higher case load areas. There's also some clerical support positions filled that were really needed.

DCFS organizational chart is also new. They include the Program Managers now. Felt it was important that they be a crucial part of discussions, and they need to know what everyone is doing. Dr. Jones asked if there was an organizational chart for each county and Cecile told him she would send him something showing more of a breakdown of what he was asking for.

DCFS also centralized adoptions. In the past there were problems of Area managers who really didn't understand adoption. It's critical we have someone who understands adoptions. Marilyn has been doing a great job, and she and Cherylon have developed a plan and will be having joint trainings and joint meetings. In the future there are hopes to hire new adoption specialist and supervisors.

Tablets and cars were also distributed out to staff. The staff were real excited to have the notebooks. They are beginning to use them while they are out conducting investigations.

There's also been trouble with trust accounts. A lot of the children have them, but are not spending the money quick enough, and there's not enough vendors. January 16th we will use current purchasing cards to purchase things and they will be open up to the field and it will be more of a variety where they can be used. Thanks to Greg's dept. and Mary Baker, they have most cards in departments.

Every year each department does a cultural survey. We had 69% to respond. We will be looking at these closely. There was a 5% increase with employees realizing they had to change themselves in order to help the department. It will also be apart of the PIP.

We had mandated supervisor training and mandated child welfare training. The feedback we received was Thank you so much for the training. They received guides and were able to ask lots of questions. They seemed to really enjoy and appreciate it. We also had a mandated 3 C's training. Care-Commit-Connect, together for Arkansas Children and Families. The training was skilled specific to what they do on a daily basis. It covered case reviews, how to hold meetings, structuring your success, creating a model supervisor, etc. Feedback on the 7th and 8th has been positive feedback. There is also a second round of training going on now regarding the 3 c's. Working with Crimes against Children Training will be held January-February. We also will be bringing in Ed Cotton to do Structured Decision Making training and eventually will be extending it to Child Welfare. We need to make sure we have what is needed to do the job.

Arkansas has been recognized for all of the new and innovative things we're doing with our youth. Cecile, Toma, Judge Warren and Shaden will be flying to Washington, DC tomorrow. We'll share with other states what we're doing. The youth have become a

voice and we're very proud of them. We're in discussion about doing a video so they can share their story.

DCFS is also in discussion about putting RFP on the street, an evidence based model. Looking at home builders. St. Francis, Saline, White, Jefferson, Boone, Conway, Pope, Faulkner, etc. are Phase in Sites for DCFS and Area 5 where there is no IFS service available. We will go out in January, and hopefully have some by March. Looking to enhance current IFS providers. Hoping to do things a little differently by catching them on the front end. We want to help them get back in the home instead of going into care. We will be using the North Carolina tool so we'll have a standard assessment.

DCFS partnered with the Casey foundation. We found out we have too many children that have been in care too long. So a design team (roundtable) was created. They will do 15 cases per week. E-mails were sent out for volunteers and 18 people signed up. They will come down and conduct training. They will train all volunteers and extra help employees. Training will start in January and roundtable starts February 17. They will look at all children regardless of their goal. It will be intensive case reviews and weekly follow up with worker/supervisors. They will document everything on a monthly basis.

Zero to Three project is going to be piloted in Judge Warren's courtroom. The project will be working with 15 different mothers. Judge Warren will pick which families at a time. Danesha Bell will come aboard in another week and will be housed here and work with Judge Warren. In Pulaski Co. there are 243 children that range from ages 0 to 3. This has been done in Texas, Ohio, and Mississippi and it has made a difference. There will be data by 2011.

Sandi and Cherylon are working together to get all cases closed that can be. There will be a final case closure report coming out at the end of the month. Over dues are being watched every week. Over dues occur on day 31. They are steadily increasing. Hand written notes are being done, but then it's not being put in CHRIS. All it takes is staff taking the time and entering the information in and closing the case. Garret's Law report found 52 cases true with no open. Sandi reviewed and saw that some were private adoptions, some families lived in Border States, or grandparents were taking guardianship. The screenings may be false positive.

We no longer have QA. It's the Service Quality and Practice Improvement Unit. Raise quality rating to staffing. The finding more in line now with Child and Family Review. It will become baseline for improvement and for the remainder of the PIP. Need a tool every month to help us make changes. There was a 50% difference in rating when the same tool was used. A MetaAnalysis will be put together. It compares each area to state. It will be given to executive staff and program staff will track in monthly reports.

St. Francis and Saline Co. are our two Phase In Sites we're working with right now. Meetings have already begun. Talked about Service Array website. Tommy Milford put it together. Saline came up with the catch phrase "shape". They had 90 community partners. Mona and Debbie have been meeting with the groups and developed

measurements. There are future meetings scheduled. Everyone's goal is to safely reduce the number of children coming into care.

Anne Wells is currently working with Dr. Domon in regards to the medication form. The goal is to have done and submitted to Cecile for review by the first week in January. Foster parents need to understand how drugs interact with each other, and understand the symptoms. Everyone should be consistent in using the form. They have a reference guide for what the drug is used for.

Lynn Keith-Wellisch will be starting the week of the 28th. She is Alicen's replacement. She will be heading recruitment of foster homes. Foster Care board payments went up also. It varies with the age of the child.

Getting foster children birthday gifts on their birthday is something that we need to look into. A lot of kids are not getting anything on their birthdays and it's really sad. There is talk about maybe doing birthday cards on their birthday. We will be working with the Foster Parent association on this issue.

- 1st quarter PIP items were submitted in November.
- Board request reports will be on website.
- Nothing has changed with the budget. So far it's the same. Session starts February 8th.
- There was also talk about should Foster parents be able to carry a concealed weapon if they have a permit. Every member voiced concern regarding this and feels it isn't a good idea.
- DCFS is on track in transforming Child Welfare.

Next meeting will be held in April 20, 2010 in Conf. Room #5368.