



**FINAL**

DHS Children, Adults and Families  
**Child Welfare Advisory Committee**  
January 9, 2008

Members

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|--|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dana Ainam                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leslie Currin  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jean Lasater      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pam Patton    | <input type="checkbox"/> Christine Stetzer        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Arenz          | <input type="checkbox"/> Don Darland               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phil Lemman       | <input type="checkbox"/> Doug Poppen              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judy Stiegler |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Balter by phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Sara Gelser               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Benjamin Hazelton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Angela Sherbo | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruth Taylor              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Iris Bell            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cathy Kaufmann | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jerry Moore       | <input type="checkbox"/> Becky Smith              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nan Waller    |

DHS Staff

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bryan Johnston | <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Neely                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Toni Peterson  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greg Parker |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mickey Serice  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nancy Keeling | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Madeline Olson | <input type="checkbox"/> Debbi Kraus-Dorn       |

Guests: Bruce Goldberg MD, Kamala Shugar – AAG, Michelle Cole, Bill Bouska

Minutes Recorded By Pam Pearson

**OVERVIEW OF AGENDA, APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Stiegler: Reviewed today’s agenda. Noted that the request made during the December 12, 2007, CWAC meeting for an update on Bruce Goldberg’s three work groups will be part of the interim assistant director’s report. The Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee has a proposal for CWAC approval. Members are encouraged to get the 2008 meetings on their calendars.
- The September 12, 2007, and December 12, 2007, CWAC minutes were approved as written.

**TEEN ISSUES IN CHILD WELFARE SUBCOMMITTEE PROPOSAL**

The proposal was moved and seconded. Discussion:

- Patton: On 9/12/07, CWAC established the subcommittee to have a specific focus on teen issues in child welfare. The subcommittee is committed to staying in line with CWAC’s focus on the policy issue of keeping children out of foster care and the operations issue of the Oregon Safety Model. Our initial proposal is to focus on the question: Is the implementation of the OSM impacting teens’ access to DHS Child Welfare or the services they receive? We are meeting later today and hope to gather baseline data on founded dispositions by age, race, and gender to compare one year prior to the OSM to the first 6 months after its implementation. We will then decide what questions need to be asked to make sure teens are not being impacted by the OSM. There was a

concern that the definition of vulnerability included an age description and that it could possibly initiate a comeback of the level system. This project is set to conclude in six months. The subcommittee is advisory to the CWAC to guide CWAC in its advice to CAF.

- Bell: Teens who are not well prepared when they leave the DHS Child Welfare system impact other systems. For that reason, Bryan Johnston's question in the subcommittee's proposal<sup>1</sup> is important.
- Patton: We may not be able to answer that question within the first six months. First we will look at what services they receive.
- Bell: Some of that work is already done. Some homeless youth systems have data.
- Lasater: The Oregon Commission on Children and Families will soon release resources to eight counties and we could use the opportunity to get a snapshot of what is happening in those counties as a supplement to what the subcommittee will collect from CAF. It will help provide a community perspective.
- Stiegler: The subcommittee must remain focused and project-oriented. It will not cease at the end of a project. Its recommendations may lead to future work, but we do not want it to evolve too broadly.
- Patton: We do want to look at what happens to teens when they leave the foster care system and if they are prepared, but we first need to get baseline data. We will ask CWAC what questions they want asked.
- Arenz: After the subcommittee brings recommendations to CWAC, the full committee will make the decision if follow up is needed or if the subcommittee should move to another task.
- Sherbo: Suggested looking at not only where the system failed, but where it succeeded. Look at numbers of diplomas, alternative high school graduations, college, employment; rather than only the number who become homeless. Is not sure that using founded dispositions is the key to finding data on children entering the system.
- Patton: Subcommittee member Lisa Kay also asked that question. The difficulty is to use data that already exists.
- Waller: Data beyond the first six months of the OSM will be needed to show its full impact.

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<sup>1</sup> How well prepared are teens when they exit the DHS Child Welfare system and what is the CW system's responsibility for ensuring that they leave more squared away when they leave than when they came in?

- Patton: This is our baseline and we will ask for six-month increments. We will bring it back to CWAC in six months to see what more the committee wants.
- Waller: Be cognizant of new initiatives during this same time period that may impact data.
- Lasater: One purpose of the subcommittee is to have a point of observation for teens. What we are proposing here is a starting point and then we can observe the changes in policy and sort out what surfaces as important.
- Balter: Complimented the subcommittee to tying its work to the policy and operations issues CWAC has identified.
- Lemman: Thanked Iris Bell for raising the point of the relationship between DHS and other systems.
- Moore: Asked how most children get into foster care. Is the reason connected with how successful they are when they leave?
- Keeling: Children come into DHS Child Welfare as a result of being abused or neglected. There are a few who come because of mental health needs or the need for residential care.
- Goldberg: Abuse and neglect are symptoms of root causes, such as parental substance abuse and mental health issues.
- Moore: When law enforcement goes on calls they see a lack of parenting or parents that are so messed with drugs they can not parent.
- Balter: Inability to parent is not a basis for a child entering foster care, abuse or neglect is.
- Sherbo: It is an excellent question to ask if there are differences to how long children stay in care due to the reasons they entered and if there is a connection between that and how well they do when they leave. Looking for a connection between length of stay, number of placements and why the child came into care is beyond the scope of the current subcommittee's proposal.
- Stiegler: It would be better to take that question to FIWG. We will add it to the next FIWG agenda. We will also let Jerry Moore know when FIWG meets in case he can participate in that portion of the meeting.

**ACTION: The CWAC approved the Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee's proposal.**

**FIWG will frame the following question for the next CWAC meeting: Is there a connection between the reasons children come into care and their success when they leave?**

## **DHS DIRECTOR'S REPORT – BRUCE GOLDBERG, M.D.**

Goldberg: We cannot be OK with mediocrity. Our efforts to transform DHS are to create the best organization possible that provides the best services for clients, the best place for employees to work and one in which we know our outcomes. We have the commitment, outside resources and advice to make it happen. The first stage is to get help from McKinsey and Company, Inc. Will keep CWAC posted as the process moves along.

Expects four child-welfare related topics to come up during the February legislative session:

1. DHS rebalance,
2. Relative foster care payments,
3. Child welfare staffing, and
4. Psychotropic medicines for children in foster care.

Regarding child welfare staffing, a moratorium on staffing changes is in effect. The previously planned elimination of social service assistants [SSAs] is on hold. Plans to change staffing did not integrate with the practice changes in the Oregon Safety Model (OSM). DHS will have a staffing and workload study to look at in February, and concrete plans on how to move forward will be made in February or March. Hopes CWAC will be part of that discussion.

Regarding psychotropic medicine, an internal work group is looking at data and system issues. Recommendations will be made over the next few weeks and they will be sent to CWAC and other groups as we move forward.

### Discussion

- Patton: Is DHS looking at the use of psychotropic meds for children in foster care only or for other DHS clients?
- Goldberg: This is an issue across the agency and includes seniors, children in foster care and those in residential treatment. The work group includes other DHS divisions. The first focus is on children in foster care.
- Patton: The focus should be expanded to the whole out-of-home care system, not only foster care.
- Waller: Agrees. There currently is no tracking as children go in and out of care and residential placements. A bigger issue is medical care in general for children in foster care. Who is in charge? Psychotropic meds is a good starting point, but the issue is bigger.

- Goldberg: Agrees. The issue is health care and well-being and who is responsible for children getting appropriate care, including mental health services. We are about one month into this work and expect it will get much attention over the coming year. We will approach it piece by piece.
- Arenz: Substance abuse treatment should also be included.
- Kaufmann: Will this be addressed during the February session?
- Goldberg: The timeline is too tight to have something ready by then.
- Waller: Are the interested legislators proposing anything?
- Goldberg: Unknown. They asked for a report, which is one reason we are starting with psychotropic meds. More work is needed in defining the problem and what is needed before we approach the Legislature. Some solutions do not require legislation. Some may require resources, either from within or from the Legislature. That can happen at a future E-Board or Ways and Means, rather than through legislation.

**ACTION: Recommendations of the internal work group on psychotropic meds will be sent to CWAC and other groups as we move forward. [Sent to CWAC on 2/14/08]**

#### Transition to permanent CAF assistant director

- Goldberg: Bryan Johnston is serving as interim assistant director to provide stability and direction so that we can then transition and search for a permanent assistant director. The key issues include cultural changes for CAF. At the same time, the McKinsey report is due to be completed in May. We would be ill advised to transition to a permanent assistant director before we have defined what we want to be as an organization.

First, the culture needs to change, including the way we work with partners and internally between field and central office. Second, we need to get our staffing models right. Third, we need to keep the relative foster care system moving forward. And fourth, we must focus on the right things; that children are thriving in foster care and disparity issues.

- Arenz: Will McKinsey release preliminary reports as they complete each division? If not, do you have any concepts that can be shared?
- Goldberg: A complete report will be released in the spring. The report will provide a baseline, benchmarks against those that do it best in the world and a plan to get there. In Child Welfare, the staffing and workload study will be completed and shared before the complete report is available.

- Arenz: Appreciates the commitment to cultural change. She and other stakeholders would like to participate in sharing what the strengths are and the stakeholders' responsibility for the challenges that exist.
- Goldberg: At this time, Bruce Goldberg had to leave the meeting.
- Johnston: Is impressed with how much work has been done since the time he was interim DHS director (prior to Bruce Goldberg). DHS is a changed organization from where it was at that time. It is difficult to change a large organization, but it is moving in the right direction. He came into the interim assistant director position expecting to work on 60,000 foot issues, but spends much of his time putting out fires on a daily basis. His report today will answer questions in the December CWAC minutes.

## **INTERIM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT – BRYAN JOHNSTON**

### Interplay of committees

The role as firefighter does not allow time for reflection. Committees do. Bruce, as a medical doctor, looks for underlying causes. The earlier discussion about the Teens Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee allowed for a conversation we don't usually get. Committees add to the intensity of thought about a subject. This subcommittee on teens is crucial to us in that the subject gets talked about. When he served on the Oregon Legislature, he was concerned that too many agencies wanted to own their work. But that isn't so. Let's find out who is willing to help and has ideas.

He saw in previous CWAC minutes that CWAC made suggestions but did not receive feedback from DHS. He promises to respond to CWAC recommendations.

When Bryan took the interim assistant director position, Bruce created three committees and all are interlocking with CWAC. All three include CWAC members.

- Interim Assistant Director Advisory Committee: Personal committee to Bryan. A thought group rather than a policy making group.
- Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) Review Group: Chaired by Deputy Attorney General Pete Shepherd. The workgroup will be charged with making recommendations to strengthen and improve the state's CIRT process.
- Child Safety Work Group: Will be chaired by Robin Christian, Executive Director of Children First for Oregon. This workgroup will be charged with developing an action plan for the state designed to keep all Oregon children safe

and families strong. This is the one work group with the most potential to be duplicative of CWAC. Ideas will be filtered through CWAC

**ACTION: Updates on the three committees will be a standing CWAC agenda item.**

**DHS will send the committee rosters to CWAC.**

Relative foster care

Payments will begin this month and continue unless the Oregon Legislature stops them during the February session. The original plan was to begin the payments in July 2008, but we found a way to start them in January 2008.

Social Service Assistant (SSA) staffing

SSA and CET (certification, education and training) positions were set to be surrendered in order to gain more caseworker positions. However, because recent legislation encourages more face-to-face visits and family visitation and we determined abolishing those positions would be a poor decision. While we were moving toward abolishing the positions, many people in those positions took other jobs, leaving only 33 filled positions. We are hoping the Legislature will allow us to restore those positions. We understand funding for this package is in the House's and Senate's "go home" list for the February session.

- Stiegler: The issue of concern wasn't that the SSAs were not an integral part of the process, but that their tasks had become such that they were doing caseworker duties. We need them to do SSA duties and we also need the additional caseworkers. It is not an issue of either/or, but defining the work they do and getting the staffing to do both jobs.
- Kaufmann: Will CWAC be able to see the staffing study before it goes to the Legislature?
- Johnston: The study should be ready by the end of January 2008. We do not anticipate the Legislature will resolve the staffing issue during the February session. We do not plan to change the staffing model at the same time of the DHS transformation work. The staffing proposal will go to the Legislature later in 2008. Expects that CWAC will receive it at the same time as the Legislature, not in advance. Another activity that may have an impact is the Sensitive Review Committee on the Allred case. It includes legislators and may determine processes to minimize the reoccurrence of such a situation.

- Waller: Regarding CWAC and DHS interaction, the Sensitive Review Committee should want input from CWAC on process questions. As issues that clearly have policy implications are raised, CWAC is in a good position to give perspectives on what could have been done differently. It may help to have CWAC reflect, not at ground level, but at the 30,000 foot level, in order to avoid similar situations.
- Shugar: The Sensitive Review Committee may have questions that could be brought to CWAC. CWAC could then decide which ones are of interest to CWAC.
- Stiegler: That gets us to CWAC's Continuous System Improvement paper; using CWAC as the bounce-back group for DHS. Addressing issues the agency brings to the committee is using CWAC as an advisory body in the most classic sense.
- Kaufmann: We are talking about taking advantage of using specific cases to bring public conversation to bigger policy issues.
- Keeling: The Allred case brought attention to the policy issue of how Oregon deals with relatives and current caretakers. The recommendations from the Sensitive Review Committee do need to come to CWAC. This is a policy issue CWAC has talked about many times.
- Balter: The McKinsey work is drilling down internally. Is there a process to do that with partners? In order to transform DHS and CAF, it would be beneficial to talk with community partners and providers. As we listen to issues, we should not underestimate the size and complexity of the change and rollout. We should learn from the mental health system change for Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS).
- Arenz: There is a system of care within CAF that includes residential care, not just foster care. Suggested that FIWG determine which issues in residential care are appropriate for CWAC.
- Patton: The BRS change will impact children, many of whom are teens. Contract distribution issues will happen. DHS needs to plan for flexibility when preparing the request for proposal (RFP).
- Sherbo: Suggested we spend more time on the BRS issue in the "hot topics" agenda item.
- Waller: Suggested Wraparound Oregon as another topic for FIWG. CWAC has not talked about this new initiative and it would be good to be informed ahead of the ball.

- Johnston: Agreed to talk about BRS today. He is hearing that staff are confident they have carefully planned the change, but providers are saying that is not so.

**ACTION: BRS will be added to today's agenda.**

## **INFORMATION SHARING**

**ACTION: In order to accommodate the request to talk about BRS today, members are asked to read the information-sharing materials in their agenda packets. Questions should be sent by email to the full CWAC email group.**

**This agenda item will be rolled over to the March 12 CWAC meeting.**

### Overrepresentation of children of color in foster care

- Sherbo: A national teleconference on "Racial Disparity in the Child Welfare System" is scheduled for January 10, 2008, at 6:00 a.m. PST by the Chapin Hall Center for Children and the Urban Institute.
- Kaufmann: Will forward the registration web link.
- Johnston: As he read the articles in today's agenda packets on this topic, he saw that Caucasian children are more likely to receive in home services in lieu of foster care than African American children and African American children stay in foster care longer. Why this is true is a question he would like to pose to CWAC for the next meeting.
- Kaufmann: a PSU Child Welfare Partnership study on the disproportionality in the northwest states was done several years ago.

**ACTION: Teleconference registration information was forwarded to CWAC on 1/9/2008.**

**Send the PSU-CWP study on disproportionality to CWAC if DHS is able to obtain it.**

**Discussion will be carried over to the March 12, 2008, meeting.**

## **BEHAVIORAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**

Donna Keddy, Residential Treatment and Licensing manager, joined CWAC for this portion of the meeting.

BRS are contracted services for DHS Child Welfare and Oregon Youth Authority children with behavioral and emotional problems. They require a higher level of care than regular foster care. The current contracts with private child caring agencies have been in place since 2001 and have some limitations on their flexibility to respond to the needs of children. The contracts are due to expire in 2008. We decided to do an assessment on what children need relative to other system changes that have been made. A proposal was shared with CWAC about 1.5 years ago. We have proceeded on the path in that proposal. A thorough needs assessment included every partner we could think to include. Nine focus groups were formed. Data was researched. A statistical random sample of 249 BRS cases was pulled for a needs assessment. A girls work group looked at gender issues. The purpose was to determine what BRS children look like, where they are and what their co-occurring behaviors are. A needs assessment work group provided oversight and developed 16 recommendations. That ended the assessment work.

A service delivery work group then designed the services to meet the recommendations.

Public notice was sent out on 1/8/08 of the services that will be let in the week of January 21, 2008.

A key goal is to bring services closer to home. Currently 89% of the BRS children from eastern Oregon must leave the eastern region. Forty-nine percent from the metro area have to leave that area to obtain BRS services. We defined four regions and set a standard to work toward keeping children within their region.

We also want to position ourselves closer to the values and principles in the DHS transformation and Wraparound Oregon projects.

During the transition we are being careful that we do not destabilize the current system. Putting the entire system out for bid causes anxiety by itself.

#### Discussion

- Patton: Acknowledges that there has been an open, comprehensive look at the system. DHS must learn from past system changes and the dramatic effect a

complete system change will have on children. Many services are specialized and they would not be available in every region. There must be flexibility in the RFP to allow a child to go to a different region for a specialized service. Sees the RFP sending children to the open slot in their region, not to the specific service that the child needs.

- Keddy: Did not know that was the perception. Each region has dedicated resources for prioritization intending to make the system more, not less, flexible. We are not closing the door to services out of region. The child's needs will come first.
- Patton: That may be based on data and good planning, but the reality is the need for beds.
- Keddy: Contracted beds are partially a statewide resource and partially dedicated per region. This will help match the need to the service. Also contracts can be amended in three years, allowing for changes at that time.
- Patton: The mental health children's initiative was not ready when it rolled out. The same could happen with this transition if wraparound services are not available while a child is waiting for the residential bed.
- Keddy: We currently have 126 BRS contracted beds. This RFP will put out 146 beds, so the number of contracted beds is increasing. There may be confusion because of the number of emergency contracts currently in place. The resources already exist; this is our opportunity to put out for bid as contracted residential beds some of those former emergency contracts. That will result in more oversight and higher requirements for beds that are probably from the same providers. The rate of pay and accountability is higher for contracted vs. emergency beds and that is good for children.
- Balter: There are systemic issues. A shift in BRS service requires work by the provider to move the facility to provide that type of service. Proposes that the providers be notified in advance of letting the RFP so that they know in advance what already exists.
- Keddy: Mike's suggested a good idea that hadn't been thought of before.
- Balter: There is also an internal system problem about the number of emergency placements. Who decides what is an emergency? Assumes it is the caseworker. If provider beds are full of emergency placements, it is difficult for the provider to run the business. Per child growth has outstripped contracted growth. DHS needs to stop the flow of emergency placements and make contracted services more predictable.

- Keddy: Is hopeful that we are retooling the resource to more closely meet the needs of children so that emergency placements can be avoided as much as possible.
- Balter: The day-to-day decision making process in the division on how kids are placed is outside of an orderly plan.
- Keddy: We are not doing away with emergency contracts. We are matching the contract to the needs and expect that emergency contracts will be used for true emergencies only.
- Shugar: How will workers be given guidance?
- Keddy: They can consult with resource coordinators in the field. These coordinators write the contracts and have been involved in the policy shift. One problem we may not be fixing is workers blanketing the system with multiple referrals because they don't know what is available. We hope to have the right resources and a better tracking system of what beds are available to more effectively manage where children are placed.
- Patton: The tracking system needs to be a written part of the plan. That is the most critical part of the change to the system.
- Keddy: The intent is to have slots for children in their own regions, that staff will know where the available beds are, and that multiple referrals will decrease as a result.
- Balter: Suggested examining who has authority to place and who buys the bed. It appears it is the caseworker. Who has ultimate authority? In reality the buyer is the caseworker, but Donna Keddy is the payer. Also repeated his suggestion for a preconference with providers concerning the regional conversions before letting the RFP to help match things up and know where the beds are in advance.
- Arenz: Asked if CWAC could receive a copy of the data compiled from the random sample.
- Keddy: Agreed to send that information to CWAC.
- Arenz: It is good to have a set of goals and objectives for children for the RFP. How will DHS determine if the changes in the system achieve these goals and outcomes? CWAC would like to see that to evaluate the effectiveness of the change and if future shifts are needed.
- Keddy: We intend to have a quality monitoring group to measure things relevant to this change and we are open to receive comments on what those measurements would be. This is the beginning of a change and we will continue to work to improve the system.

- Arenz: What is the length of the new contracts?
- Keddy: They will be open for amendment in three years and can go for four years.
- Johnston: Thanked Donna for coming to the meeting. CWAC's concerns are valid and help refine our effort. CWAC is encouraged to communicate with him and Donna as this moves forward.

**ACTION: Send CWAC the data from the random sample of children served in the BRS system or in other contracted programs which are managed by the treatment services and licensing unit. [NOTE: sent on 1/9/2008]**

## **INTERIM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### Policy Option Packages (POP)

- Serice: DHS is in the early planning stages for the 2009 legislative session and seeking input from community partners. We have until January 31 to get input. The current list of child welfare related POPs is in today's packet. It is not in any priority order, but listed simply in the order in which they were received. We ask that CWAC members let us know whether they can support them conceptually.
- Johnston: Reminder that it is possible none of them might make it to the final list for the department.
- Balter: What are the top things CAF would like to achieve in the legislative session?
- Johnston: 1. Keep children out of foster care. 2. Keep children safe.
- Kaufmann: What impact will the DHS transformation project and the Child Safety Committee have on POPs?
- Serice: Timelines among different initiatives do not always line up. We may have to adjust the POPs later based on these initiatives.
- Johnston: We recently received a copy of the Child and Family Services Review report (not available for public distribution). It shows that we have a lot of work to do. It may also impact POPs. We have three weeks to respond and then 90 days to prepare our program improvement plan (PIP).
- Balter: Concerns with how CWAC pretends each session is a new day. Instead we should line up with and support the major issues. Perhaps we could look at last year's POPs to see which ones were successful and build upon them.

- Johnston: Will send CWAC an email on how he will address this. There are POPs on this list that will not make the final list. The Legislature is free to do whatever they want. If someone other than DHS proposes a concept cut from the DHS list, it may survive.
- Sherbo: Referred to the last item in the agenda packets, “Foster Care and Beyond: An Action Plan for Meeting the Needs of Abused and Neglected Children in Oregon.” If an overlaying vision exists, it doesn’t matter if timelines don’t match up.
- Stiegler: The next FIWG meeting is scheduled for February 13. All CWAC members are invited to attend.

**ACTION: The deadline to submit new POPs is January 14, 2008. After that date, a revised list will be sent to CWAC [*list sent on 1/17/08*]. The deadline to comment and indicate which POPs members can support conceptually is January 30, 2008.**

Meeting adjourned.