



FINAL

DHS Children, Adults and Families Division
Child Welfare Advisory Committee
Teen Issues in Child Welfare Subcommittee
January 14, 2009

Attending: Nancy Allen (for Bill Bouska), Anna Cox, Leslie Currin, Kevin George,
Jean Lasater, Pam Patton

Minutes recorded by Pam Pearson

ISSUE: Teen access to child welfare services under the Oregon Safety Model

- Patton: Provided some history of the subcommittee and previously addressed issues. Had been charged to look at the Oregon Safety Model and if it was going to impact teens' access to DHS Child Welfare. In the development of the OSM, a definition of "vulnerability" initially included an age factor. We wanted to make sure the "level system" did not resurface as a result. In the end, the definition did not include an age factor, but some concerns remained. The subcommittee's baseline data showed no significant changes were found in teens' getting into the DHS Child Welfare system as victims in founded cases after the OSM was implemented. The subcommittee recommended they continue to get reports from DHS to see if there were any changes in the trends over time so the issue is not taken off the table only to later find there were changes. We wanted a follow up report every six months. The CWAC Future Issues Work Group discussed who should receive the reports. It was decided that the reports would go to the CWAC chair. If the chair found significant data, it would be forwarded to the TICWS (or to the FIWG if the TICWS was inactive). Anna Cox is here today to help confirm what data we can get every six months on founded cases.
- Cox: Shared what she sees as the key elements, data that was produced before.
- Patton: Personally would like data by gender and age. Others may want to include race.
- Cox: Can do by gender or by age or by race, but not together unless she does a special run of data.
- Patton: The goal is to assure there is no change in teens' access.
- George: If that is the question, then we should narrow it to 1-2 questions that are on access only and run the data three times – for age, race and gender. If we see a change in the data, we can then get more to look at the "why."
- Patton: One set of data would be victims of abuse. What else will give us access information?
- Cox: Victims of abuse is a good measure of who is coming into the system. If we see a change in the numbers for teens, we can look deeper. She can send the reports to Pam Pearson to forward to the CWAC chair.
- Patton: Requested the data be ready by the second week in February and be sent to TICWS, who will forward it to the CWAC chair when that person is appointed.
- Cox: The February date fits in with her other deadlines.

ISSUE: Preparedness of teens when they exit the foster care system to enter into adulthood

- Patton: Our next charge is a question about preparedness. Referred to the summary of the 12/10/08 FIWG discussion. Their conclusion was to have the TICWS look at the issue of permanency of children ages 17-19, to address the issue of how well prepared teens are when they exit the foster care system to enter into adulthood. In our previous work we used the Casey Alumni Study. One of its indicators says more than two placements is too many.
- George: One measurement in the Child and Family Services Review is on permanency for children in foster care. There is a piece for older teens and APPLA (another planned permanent living arrangement). We will want to bring Maurita Johnson into the subcommittee to help tie in the PIP. Emancipated and transitioned youth have different legal definitions. How to children truly exit? They age out, transition to adulthood or other systems, less exit through legal emancipation. We need to use a common language. Children can stay in DHS Child Welfare until age 21 if the court orders.
- Patton: Maurita does want to be on the subcommittee but had a conflict today. The TICWS charge needs to be tied into a policy or operations issue in DHS Child Welfare such as the OSM, PIP or something else that affects teens. The permanency of 17-19 ages gets us to better answer the question if teens are ready and successful when they leave.
- George: It may be better to include ages up through 20. We have 400-450 young adults ages 18-20 in our system. At that point we won't see them exiting to adoption. The permanency plan will be different than that for younger children.
- Currin: What data exists on education?
- Cox: Grade level, school credits.
- George: We were looking for how many were graduating and on track to graduate. Collecting data on grade level, credits and school placement history went active last spring. The importance of that data is for the caseworker to know if the child is on track or needs a tutor etc.
- Cox: Once a child leaves care, we are no longer required to enter that data which leads to some limitations for the subcommittee.
- Currin: Graduation data is available by name through Department of Education. It could not be pulled for only foster children though.
- George: The ability of do data exchange was looked at but not pursued.
- Patton: Returning to the permanency question, we need to define the scope, what data was can gather and our timeline. Our goal needs to be to answer a question that will make things better or point out a systems issue that CWAC can have an impact one. Her hope is that today we define the scope of focus and connect it to policy or operations of DHS Child Welfare that is current and imminent.
- Lasater: We can't ask a question until we have a grasp of where we are starting. It is important to know how teens are currently exiting: to their own on the street, to a transitional living program, sought emancipation, etc.

- Cox: We do have some data on where they exit, but we stop tracking once they exit unless they come back for an Independent Living Program service. Some transition to a DD or residential treatment for behavior issues. We have no way to know how they are doing when they exit DHS though.
- George: In 2010, we will begin reporting to the feds on the teen population and it will include surveying those who left at 19 and 21.
- Lasater: That moves us away from our scope is permanency and we need to know what permanency means and what kinds of permanent placements there are.
- Cox: We do have some data for youth who run, but at some point the custody can be dismissed. They are considered to be in foster care until custody is dismissed.
- Patton: First we need to get data on how many are DD, in residential care, by race and gender for the 17-20 population. Then we can define permanency and determine what data we have on that population to answer if they aged out into a permanent situation.
- Currin: The DD population will not live independently and we cannot track them with ones that will live independently.
- Cox: Can stratify by current placement type and placement plan, by age, gender and race. We would have to identify the DD population first and then stratify the rest.
- Lasater: We need to include a statement that though we did not include the DD population, we remain concerned about their permanency and attention is needed to their success.
- Patton: We will be clear in our report that our intent is not to ignore the DD population; however at this time our study is on the non-DD population. For the permanency issues of ages 17-20 (non-DD), the data will be of who they are by age, gender and race and then by placement type and permanency plan.
- George: Include total served by in-home care and out-of-home care, who exited in the last year and where they exit to.
- Lasater: And if that place is considered a permanent placement.
- Currin: How will that data show us the preparedness for entering adulthood?
- Lasater: It establishes a baseline to see where they currently go and starts a discussion on how preparedness fits into those end results.
- George: Some case reading may be necessary to see if the youth got other services, a transition plan and life skills training.
- Cox: To summarize, the data will be for all teens serves by DHS Child Welfare at a point in time, subdivided by in-home and in foster care, dividing the foster care to slice out the DD population and then doing the demographics. What do we gather for the nonfoster care?
- Lasater: Permanency and preparedness are two different explorations. Is permanency a vehicle for attaining preparedness? Are they more challenges for youth in-home as compared to those in foster care? Do we narrow our focus to foster care only? We want our work to add value to DHS and CWAC's work.

- George: We can exclude the in-home population. The numbers are small. We can look at children, 17-20, how many exited and where they exited to. Then do a separate pull for a point in time on current placements stratified as described above.
- Cox: We have looked at APPLA vs. the age group so may have some information to share. As an FYI, we are buying a quality assurance tool. These are resources that may collect some data that may inform us on this work.

ACTION: **The subcommittee will meet February 11, 1:00-3:00, to review the data Anna is able to collect and decide if there is a question to work on, narrow the scope or maybe decide the question is not answerable.**

OTHER

- George: Distributed materials on the Youth in Transition effort. He will have rules to share next at the next meeting. Staff will be hired to train workers on how to develop transition plans.

Meeting adjourned.