



**FINAL**

DHS Children, Adults and Families Division  
**Child Welfare Advisory Committee**  
March 9, 2011

**Members**

- |  |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dana Ainam                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Butler | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jamie Hinsz    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jerry Moore      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tina Morgan   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Janet Arenz                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leslie Currin | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Maryanov  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rem Nivens                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Angela Sherbo |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Balter      | <input type="checkbox"/> Don Darland              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leola McKenzie | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pam Patton       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruth Taylor   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Iris Bell        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leah Hall     | <input type="checkbox"/> Debbie Moberly            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carrie Rasmussen | <input type="checkbox"/> Nan Waller               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cindy Burlingame |   |  |  |   |

**DHS / OHA Staff**

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|---|---|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erinn Kelley-Siel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mickey Serice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lois Day | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Debbie Kraus-Dorn | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Bouska |
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Minutes recorded by Pam Pearson

Guests: DeeDee Hartley

**AGENDA OVERVIEW**

- Balter: Four new members join CWAC today. Three are former Children’s Justice Act Task Force members. CWAC satisfies the CJA membership requirements. A subcommittee is forming to fulfill the role of the former task force. Explained the agenda format and that material is sent out in advance for members to read and prepare. The Future Issues Work Group sets the agenda. If other members are interested in joining FIWG, let him know. It looks at topics and sets the order of the agenda so that one or two meaty topics are covered after going through the consent agenda. Today we will focus on Erinn Kelley-Siel’s report on the legislative session and the Governor’s Balanced Budget. We begin with Erinn’s report because she must leave early.

**MINUTES**

The January 12, 2011 CWAC minutes were approved.

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

- Kelley-Siel: Her report will be given from the perspective of CWAC’s four priorities<sup>1</sup>. Almost everything going on in child welfare is related to them.

<sup>1</sup> CWAC Four Priorities:

- Identifying strategies to reduce over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system.
- Preventing foster care placement.
- Assuring that children placed in foster care are safe and are thriving.
- Providing permanency for children placed in foster care in a timely manner.

CWAC advice is influencing our work. Her report will cover an overview of the budget and Governor's priorities, equity legislation, reports that CAF will be releasing soon, OR-Kids, federal issues and, if time, news about the DHS/OHA transition.

To the degree that you, as individual advocates, feel comfortable, this is a good time to talk to legislators about investments for children. In past sessions, the process was more methodical. This year the co-chairs of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services are getting to the meat of the budget and diving into big issues sooner. What we are seeing in the area of investments for child safety is encouraging. The Governor's Balanced Budget (GBB) does not include significant reductions in child welfare. That is not to say there are not serious reductions, but they are not as much as in other programs. In child welfare the GBB reduces foster care foster care payments and BRS payments (Behavioral Rehabilitation Services) by 10%. Those reductions will compromise placements. On the other hand, the Governor sustained system of care, prioritization of addiction treatment and support for in-home services. These programs have no federal match and for that reason are often at risk for cuts. The Governor's support for these programs promotes our goal to reduce foster care and our racial equity efforts.

To her knowledge, no providers were held harmless to rate cuts. And no agency went without administrative cuts. CAF will have administrative and staffing infrastructure reductions. But in child welfare, programs fared relatively well.

Referred to the legislative briefing report in the agenda packet, starting on page 5 of the second PowerPoint. This is the PowerPoint most worthy of your attention. Gave a brief summary of the information in the PowerPoint. The GBB tackles the two major drivers of child abuse and neglect: domestic violence and additions.

Differential response is a new way of investigating child abuse. It invests in families at the front end so that there are other options to keep a child safe than placing in foster care. When the Equity Task Force report is released, you will see that this matches well with one of their recommendations. Lois Day will provide more information later today.

The GBB investment in early learning will impact child welfare because a high percentage of abused children are under the age of 5. The Early Learning Council would provide earlier intervention in a different way for families of young children. We can share a link to the Early Learning Transition Team report. Erinn is on the planning committee and she is hopeful

that child welfare and TANF families will benefit with her being at the table. The Transition Team's report aligns with the alternative response model we are looking at. She emphasized that this does not mean older kids don't matter and are not vulnerable.

We are at the lowest staffing level ever. In 09-11, Child Welfare was budgeted at a 70.5% staffing level. In December 2010, the actual staffing level was 66.8%. This is starting to show up in our data. Our timeliness to response dropped when the hiring freeze began in July 2010 and continues to be down. Staffing levels in child welfare do matter. It impacts our ability to work with families to develop in-home safety plans and so foster care numbers increase. The GBB would get child welfare to an 80% staffing level.

Reabuse rates are the barometer we use to measure child safety. If we see the reabuse rates rise, we will know we are at the tipping point. Right now the reabuse rates are the lowest ever in Oregon. However, Oregon is also in the top 25 states for removing children from their homes. Placing fewer in foster care creates a savings but we currently have no way to reinvest the savings. Strategies to improve safety will not continue without a state and federal commitment to allow a reinvestment of the savings.

There are many things not to like in the GBB, but the damage is less in child welfare than in other areas. She encourages members to advocate for the GBB investments that go above our current budget. They are vulnerable pieces to the budget and the legislature needs to hear that these are the right investments to make: staffing, co-location of domestic violence advocates in DHS field offices, addictions treatment and differential response.

The reductions in TANF are huge: over \$100 million. The budget attempts to keep as many families on the program for as long as they can but with reduced services. This may result in added stressors to the families which can lead to additions and child abuse. About 37% of children in child welfare were on TANF. The GBB reduces the current 5-year limit for TANF services to 18 months. Many families would lose TANF benefits.

We are tentatively scheduled to go back to W&M on April 4-6. The evening of Tuesday, April 5, would be the public testimony time. We will keep you posted as this firms up. Our presentation will focus on differential response.

- Sherbo: Did the foster care rate redesign result in any savings?
- Kelley-Siel: No, the rate redesign equalized across the system and there was an initial investment last legislative session. There is a different dynamic in

adoptions. The rates in adoption assistance since the redesign have been lower, but we have had a lower number of adoptions. We are researching to find out why this is so.

- Patton: It appears from what she has read that the Oregon Commission on Children Families funding will go to the Early Learning Council. She fears that services to teens will be lost in the transition. She appreciates Erinn's statement about her concern for teens. With the Oregon Youth Authority losing many beds, DHS will be impacted. Have conversations among these agencies occurred?
- Kelley-Siel: Not yet. CAF child care subsidies would go to the Early Learning Council. There are other shifts to the ELC from other agencies. We don't have answers to all the questions yet.
- Bell: We don't have the answers yet about the OCCF dollars. We do know that the ELC is just a part of the Governor's broader proposal that covers ages 0-20.
- Kelley-Siel: It is important to recognize that this is a broader education agenda and ELS is just a part. It is an alignment of resources for this 0-20 continuum. The more people who can carry the message that we care about all children, not only young ones, the better.
- Patton: She knows that the message is not that we don't care about teens, but she referred back to past mistakes. If the Governor says we care about teens, but we will care about them later, then they will get lost.
- Balter: This discussion is to give advocates a heads up that decisions will be made soon. It is a major reshuffling of relationships and will be more than just incremental change. There will be some losses. As advocates, we need to coalesce around something that will work, rather than advocating for what was. We need to decide if these are the right policy choices and then we, as individuals, can advocate.
- Kelley-Siel: It is not her role to advise members on their advocacy strategies; however, the children's advocacy community historically has never said a consistent message to the legislature. This time there is some synergy around things you could support. Any recognition to the legislature would help.
- McKenzie: Asked if the reductions to BRS rates will mean fewer beds.
- Kelley-Siel: Yes, in a previous conversation Erinn had with Janet Arenz, Janet said reduced bed capacity would be the result.
- Balter: In the past, most BRS providers for DHS and OYA focused on quality over quantity. The supply of beds has always been lower than the need.
- Rasmussen: Is anyone coordinating public testimony?

- Kelley-Siel: Mickey Serice and Sonya Fischer. Public testimony is first come, first served, but it can be helpful if we alert the committee so organized voices can be heard.
- Taylor: Will they allow consumer-parents to testify?
- Kelley-Siel: Yes, anyone can come and the more that are present the better to show the importance.
- Balter: The legislative session is moving quickly and you must pay attention to when the hearings are held. Encouraged members to visit with legislators and not necessarily wait for a hearing to talk about the challenges facing children and focus on the W&M lists.
- Kelley-Siel: Our Friday noon legislative conference calls are a way to stay connected.
- Balter: There will be difficult personal choices for you on what you will encourage your legislator to prioritize. We are sharing what the themes are and what DHS is putting forward. Don't wait for a hearing to tell your legislator how important kids are.
- Kelley-Siel: The target audience would be the seven members of the W&M Subcommittee on Human Services. Their recommendations usually are endorsed by the full W&M.

Mentioned that DHS will be releasing several reports in the next few weeks: Child Welfare Data Book, Wraparound Report, Equity Task Force Report and the DHS-wide Workforce Report. We will send them to CWAC. Suggested having a discussion on the Child Welfare Data Book at the May CWAC meeting.

On the federal front, the number one issue is the Title IV-E waiver and reinvestment strategies. Oregon is fighting to keep its waiver. The waiver structures evidence-based and best practice. We want to leverage it to get a federal commitment on reinvestment of foster care dollars. The federal advocacy papers sent to CWAC a long time ago are still relevant. There are huge changes for the 2012 federal budget and we are working to stay connected with those federal discussions. We will keep you informed about the impacts for children and families.

- Balter: When you get the four reports from DHS, you will see where they connect to the budget discussions. These reports can help you have informed conversations with legislators.
- Patton: What does Erinn's appointment as acting DHS director mean?
- Kelley-Siel: It allows the Governor to evaluate performance and decide how to do a search if there is one. It is how he approached any new appointments. For

Erinn, it allows her to keep the work going better than if a new person were appointed during session. She was told the temporary appointment would be relatively short and she is in contention for the permanent position. We should talk about the changes in DHS at a future CWAC meeting. Change will not be for the sake of change, but to maximize efficiencies. Bruce Goldberg's appointment to OHA is permanent because he was already in that position. It was not a new appointment. She will accept if asked to take the permanent position, but will also happily stay on in CAF.

- Balter: The W&M subcommittee was complimentary of Erinn and staff, which has not always been the case. They sense progress is being made and they don't want to disrupt it. It will not be a hostile environment if you go to a hearing.
- Kelley-Siel: Contact her if she can be helpful.

## **BRIEFINGS**

### Casey Partnership 2011 Plan and Permanency Roundtables – Catherine Stelzer

- Day: As you know CAF's goals are similar to CWAC's priorities, as are the Casey Partnership goals.
- Stelzer: Permanency roundtables were a strategic plan for 2010. Oregon has an unusually high number of children in long term foster care, also known as another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA), 20% compared to the 8% national average. The permanency roundtables draft executive summary explains the systemic barriers and the individual case strategies that were addressed. Georgia is considered the leader in this initiative. They have had about 30% obtain legal permanency after the child had a roundtable. In Oregon, we are including youth, 18-20, and include looking at transition to adulthood.
- Day: The connection to our legislative agenda is a bill to change statute to be able to offer adoption assistance to age 21 (HB 2052). If the bill passes, the federal Fostering Connections Act will allow us to also extend guardianship to age 21 with a subsidy.
- Stelzer: Permanency roundtables have been held in 10 counties for 274 cases and 378 children. They are time intensive internal case staffings. They are forward looking and strength based, rather than looking at the past and what could have been done better. Priorities are for children of color, children who have been in foster care for the longest time, and young children with permanent foster care as their permanency plan.

The roundtables are internal case staffings except when people of color or tribes are invited to look at the case through the lens of culture and ethnicity. That has helped identify some programs in communities that we don't normally use, has helped communicate with families and children differently, and has helped us navigate with the tribes better to help us get the information we need for the child.

Roundtables include someone that brings a national perspective on permanency. They include a neutral facilitator. Go to the draft executive summary for more detailed information.

- Rasmussen: When children become teens, they start coming to court and the court begins to consider the wants of the teen. Has there been consideration that sometimes the teen does not understand the value of legal permanency?
- Stelzer: Yes, we have found that we do not always do a good job explaining legal permanency to a teen in words they understand. The FosterClub has done a lot of good work in this area that we can benefit from. When we ask a caseworker why a child doesn't want to be reunified or adopted, the caseworker is not always able to explain.
- Rasmussen: Some defense attorneys do a better job in counseling the child-client. Have you thought about using them as a resource?
- Stelzer: Yes. We will be convening a multi-disciplinary work group to strategize for other methods.
- Day: A roundtable is an internal exercise and not a community meeting. We have learned some system issues, including that we don't all share the same values around permanency. We need that conversation with partners.
- Stelzer: The Casey program was built around permanent foster care to help youth transition to adulthood. They provided extensive services to help the youth. However, they found those kids did no better than other kids in permanent foster care, even with all the tangible benefits offered them. The benefits of the relationships in a permanent placement are what matter.
- McKenzie: What work will there be to see whether the caseworkers followed up on the plan?
- Stelzer: The evaluation will be two-fold. We will track data to see if the permanency plan changed and whether any placement changes were made for the child to live with relatives. We also need to develop a way to track the specific action plans for each child. They are living plans and are suited for ongoing casework supervision with the worker's supervisor.
- McKenzie: Suggested using Citizen Review Boards and court reviews as an external monitoring of those plans.

- Day: The conversation with partners can include talking about these natural monitors of case plans.
- Butler: Wants to make sure that the agency's push to legal permanency does not restrict youth being able to do what they want to do. Hears about youth being pressured to move into families they do not get along with. Kids don't understand permanency. It's a buzz word for the agency, but not for them.
- Stelzer: We want a caseworker to have a conversation to determine the road blocks and to get the information they need to make better decisions.
- Hinsz: Foster youth define permanency differently. During her personal experience, she found permanency with the person who drove her to visits with her biological family. For others, it can be with a sport team or church youth group. The youth does not see permanency with a foster family because at age 18, it disappears.
- Hartley: It isn't that foster youth don't want permanency, but that they get bounced around.
- Stelzer: We have found using the Kevin Campbell Family Finding model helps the youth identify the important people in their lives and build permanency around those people.
- Rasmussen: Has a survey been done on alternative approaches to avoid bringing children into care?
- Day: We will get to that later today when we talk about differential response.
- Stelzer: Go to the executive summary to read about solutions. If you want to be part of the conversation with partners, let her know.

## **DASHBOARD – Sandy Dugan**

- Day: During the February 23 Future Issues Work Group meeting, they asked for a review of the dashboards that are being used to monitor the impact of reduced staffing levels:
  - 1) Face to Face contacts
  - 2) Timeliness of response
  - 3) Finalization of adoption
  - 4) Timeliness to permanency
- Dugan: Referring to the online Dashboard at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/data/> , screen 32 shows the history of “median months to adoption” and screen 34 shows “timeliness of CPS response.” Timeliness of response remains level even with the hiring freeze that began in July 2010 because staff have been moved to the front end. Median months to

adoption remained level because the children who were easy to place were placed quicker. It will catch up to us.

We were able to hire for some positions recently, but there is a learning curve of 1-2 years for caseworkers. We have been receiving emergency exemptions to maintain minimum office sizes.

- Patton: Does the dashboard report by gender:
- Dugan: No, we can get data by gender, but the dashboard does not present it.

## **BRIEFINGS**

### Legislative Activity

- Balter: Mickey Serice is not available. Asked that the Friday legislative call-in include time to discuss HB 2053, the equity bill.

## **BRIEFINGS**

### Federal Policy Discussion

- Balter: Erinn spoke to this in her director's report.

## **BRIEFINGS**

### OR-Kids

- Day: Distributed an information sheet on the OR-Kids private provider portal. Some private providers will be inputting into OR-Kids. This will be part of phase two and we can share more when we get closer to that time.

## **BRIEFINGS**

### CWAC Subcommittee on the Children's Justice Act

- Balter: CWAC voted to have a subcommittee. We now have new members that were part of the former CJA task force and they are asked to form the core of the subcommittee.
- Day: We received approval for part-time limited support to get the subcommittee started.
- Balter: The first assignments will be to prepare the annual report, lay out the work that needs to be done, and determine subcommittee membership.

## **CROSS OVER REPORTS**

### Child Welfare Racial Equity Task Force

- Balter: The task force report is not yet ready. When it is public, we will put it on a CWAC agenda to determine support for their recommendations.

## **CROSS OVER REPORTS**

### HB 2009 and DHS / OHA Transition

- Balter: No report made. When the Wraparound report is available, it will be on a CWAC agenda for discussion (May 2011).
- Day: A decision was made to not add additional counties to the Wraparound effort at this time.

## **CROSS OVER REPORTS**

### Juvenile Dependency Interbranch Work Group

- McKenzie: They will be meeting in late March and several legislators will be joining them.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### Report on Workload Staffing Model

- Balter: CWAC will receive the report when it is released to the legislature.

## **CWAC WORK PLAN**

### **Goal #1**

**To advise the Department of Human Services (DHS) on development and administration of child welfare policies, programs and practices related to reducing over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system.**

CWAC will receive the report when it is released to the legislature.

### **Goal #2**

**To expand the representativeness in CWAC discussions.**

Four new members joined CWAC today. Members whose terms have ended or will soon end will receive phone calls in the near future regarding reappointment.

### **Goal #3**

**To coordinate and leverage state and local efforts to improve policy, program, and practice.**

No action taken. Efforts have stalled after Mike Balter sent an email to the local offices. This will be added to the May agenda. Members are asked to list their current participation on local child welfare related groups. Members who are

interested in joining a local group are asked to make their desires known for the May discussion.

#### **Goal #4**

#### **To advise DHS on the practice of the Oregon Safety Model (OSM).**

The Foster Care Safety Team emerged out of a Sensitive Review Committee report on a foster home. Pamela Butler is organizing the initial meeting for DHS and interested CWAC members to meet to decide on subcommittee membership and draft a charter. Pamela Butler and Leola McKenzie have agreed to serve on the subcommittee. Other CWAC members who served on the Foster Care Safety Team will be asked if they are interested in serving on this subcommittee. Their work will include quarterly and biennial reviews of cases and looking at those things the Foster Care Safety Team looked at once. The subcommittee would be able to look at those issues over a long term.

- Balter: CWAC has not had subcommittees for a long time. There is a time commitment and staffing component that must be considered. We are figuring out how to operate subcommittees and find the staffing and structures. Regular reports will come to CWAC.

#### **OTHER**

- Patton: Has been asked to participate on a work group formed as a result of the JM CIRT to look at whether or not the child's age impacted the actions of the agency.
- Balter: Would we consider this a group that we would receive a cross-over report on?
- Day: This group will report to the internal CIRT group, not to CWAC. If you have an agenda item on the progress of CIRTs, then we could provide an update about this work group.
- Balter: Quickly summarized the history of the question of vulnerability of teens. CWAC had tracked data on the impact the Oregon Safety Model may have on teens coming into care and saw no change.
- Patton: We did not see a change in the number of founded cases. We were able to get data on founded cases only. The JM CIRT was for an unfounded case.
- Day: Encourages interested members to read the CIRT online for an accurate description of the issues <http://egov.oregon.gov/DHS/children/publications/abuse/cirt/#reports>
- Bell: Wouldn't we be interested in the recommendations?

- Day: Asked that Pam Patton to ask the work group if they would be comfortable releasing their work to CWAC. Until a report comes out, the activities of a CIRT are not open to the public.
- Patton: She is not serving on this work group as a CWAC representative, but because of her advocacy role.
- Balter: So we cannot have access to it until it becomes public. Maybe FIWG can talk about CWAC routine expectations on CIRTs. It may be that we want to look for patterns in CIRTs.

Meeting adjourned.