

Child Abuse and Neglect Committee Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2022

Remote Meeting

Meeting Attendees: Ginny Powell, FACT Board; Jeanine Harper, GRSCAN; Ellen White, JDR Judge (retired); Melissa O'Neill, CASA-DCJS; Eric Reynolds, Office of the Children's Ombudsman; Shannon Hartung, DSS; Adam Jackson, VDSS State Hotline; Adam Kelley, DSS; Ali Faruk, Families Forward; Maria Altonen, VDH; Carol Wilson, Office of Children Services; Jenna Easton, DJJ; Betty Wade Coyle, State Child Fatality Review Team; Kristen Pritchard, VSDVAA; Beverly Crowder, FACT Board; Nicole Poulin, FACT Executive Director; Stephanie Howard, Norfolk State University; Kathleen Hollywood, Citizen Review Panel Coordinator; Christy Clarke, VDSS State Hotline; Anya Shaffer, DCJS; Maria Altonen, VDH; Betsy Bell, DCJS

Meeting called to order by Ginny Powell at 1:04PM

Due to the virtual meeting venue, no votes were taken. All items that require a vote will be addressed at the next in-person meeting.

Update on the Office of the Children's Ombudsman, Eric Reynolds

- Complaint Cases
 - Most cases are assistance/information requests
 - 12% of complaints have been elevated where VDSS becomes involved
- Legal Representation Workgroup – started through Senate Bill 396 to examine court appointed legal counsel for parents
 - Will deliver recommendations to General Assembly by November 1st.
 - Most immediate need appears to be increasing pay for court appointed parent representation
 - Hoping to start a few pilot projects where legal representation is provided prior to submission of court petition to help families navigate the system
- Safe and Sound Taskforce – addressing foster youth who are unable to be placed and end up sleeping in offices, hotel rooms, or emergency rooms
 - There has been a reduction in the number of these cases due to the taskforce's work
 - Phase 2 & 3 will have a prevention focus
- Preparing first Annual Report which will include information since Eric's appointment
 - Will be made public

FACT Updates – Nicole Poulin, Executive Director

- Problematic Sexual Behavior Project
 - Nancy Oglesby was hired in May to start on this project which to develop a guidance document to improve state and local responses to this issue. A

workgroup comprised of interested CAN members has been established to collaborate with her on this project.

- The focus on the project will be on pre-adolescent children (under 13 years old)
- There was discussion around the capacity of DSS to respond to these cases and to instead look to court service units to take the lead in accessing services for children and families involved in these cases
- Potential to expand this project to include some pilot trainings/response
- **FACT Funding**
 - Due to VDSS Procurement Office capacity issues, the FACT Board has shifted to providing smaller grants through expanding the Emergency Funds Program (to homelessness intervention services and domestic violence programs).
 - Ad hoc grants are increased to \$3000 to support trainings/conferences
- **FACT Sustainability Plan**
 - 2-5 year-long project with two contractors to access and implement a sustainability plan through organizational change
- **Issue Brief**
 - Wrapping up the series on Systems of Trauma. Briefs on racism, economic trauma, and sexism have been posted and working on the LGBTQ+ brief

VDSS Updates - VDSS Family Services Staff

- **Introduction to Kathleen Hollywood – coordinator for citizen review panels**
 - There is potential for future coordination and discussion among the review panels to prevent duplication of efforts
- **Update on CAPTA Report**
 - Child fatality update
 - Recently joined the National Partnership for Child Safety (focused on preventing child maltreatment fatalities)
 - Hired two contractors to assist child fatality specialists
 - Internal staff meetings – looking at high risk referral cases
 - 2021 data – seen an increase in child fatalities reported. There was discussion around fatalities that have been classified as accidental and how they can also be reviewed.
 - Discussion around safe sleep practices. Data was collected on why families were not utilizing cribs and found breastfeeding, cultural differences, and ease of bed sharing were common responses.
 - Human trafficking update
 - FY 22 data: completed 28 human trafficking assessments (involving 31 children and youth). 84% were female, 39% Hispanic, 77% between 12-17 years of age. Investigations happened in 8 cases.
- **Statewide Hotline Update**
 - Have asked for 23 more full-time hotline specialist positions
 - All current positions are paid for from CAPTA funds, ideally these positions would be paid by state funds to allow for CAPTA funds to be used for other services
 - New Program Manager and Shift Supervisors added to the team

- Contact the leadership team at statehotlineleadership@dss.virginia.gov
- When comparing 2021 and 2022 available data, there has not been a drastic change in hotline calls (with the exception of April 2021 to April 2022)
- Mandated Reporter Portal reports have increased (1,838 reports in FY2020 to 5,397 in FY 2021)
- Average around 2,000 calls per week with approximately 500 calls being abandoned by the caller. The average wait time is 20 minutes with most abandoned calls waiting for 8 minutes. The longest wait time was 6.2 hours in February 2022.
- CPS reports make up the majority of calls (45.2%), followed by APS (19%), Child/Adult Welfare questions (18.7%), Child Fatalities/Near fatalities (0.1%), and miscellaneous (17%).
- Have hired 3 full time contractors, 10 part time contractors with 4 vacancies left.
- There was an overview of the training curriculum for staff onboarding
- There are currently not methods for collecting customer satisfaction data but there is interest in development for the future.

Committee Report Out

- School Climate Conference November 29th-30th (Virginia Crossings) – offering resource tables to state agencies and non-profits. Contact Betsy Bell with DCJS

Next Steps, Ginny Powell

- ✍ Next meeting December 5th 1-3pm, virtual meeting
- ✍ The next in-person meeting will be in March

Meeting was adjourned at 3:07 PM