



Ending Child Abuse and Neglect.

CITIZEN CONNECTIONS

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7 NEW RESEARCH ON CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

STATE UPDATES

Florida

Florida's *Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers* (FICCIT), mandated by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), assists public and private agencies in implementing a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs providing appropriate early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and risk conditions and their families. The Department of Health is the lead agency for this council, although it represents a critical partnership for young children for the Department of Children and Families.

The *Independent Living Services Advisory Council* (ILSAC) is legislatively mandated under Florida statutes. Its functions are to review and make recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of independent living transition services.

The *Florida Child Abuse Death Review Committee* is a citizens' committee established by the Florida legislature in 1999. Through the establishment of a statewide appointed panel and locally developed multi-disciplinary teams, the facts and circumstances surrounding child abuse and neglect deaths in which a verified report of abuse or neglect is accepted by the Florida Abuse Hotline are reviewed. The committee prepares an annual report to the governor and legislative branch with key data-driven recommendations for reducing preventable child deaths due to abuse and neglect by caregivers.

The *Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council* was created in 2006 to facilitate connections to strengthen communities and families in the state of Florida. The Council is charged to advise the governor and the legislature on policies, priorities and objectives for the



photo: American Life League

The most important office
... that of private citizen.

.....
LOUIS D. BRANDEIS



state's comprehensive efforts to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community organizations to the full extent permitted by law.

Georgia

2014 was a busy year for Georgia's citizen review panels, which are in the early stages of completing their annual report. This month, the CAPTA Panel steering committee, composed of the six panel co-chairs, will meet with the state's new DFCS director and his leadership team to discuss preliminary recommendations and hopefully identify additional collaborative opportunities. Most recently, we were invited to the kick-off meeting for Georgia's Child and Family Services Review and are represented on the state's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team. Very exciting!

The *Child Protective Services Advisory Committee* (CPSAC) focused on its 2014 survey of the child welfare work force. Concerned about the impact of high turnover, the CPSAC solicited feedback from frontline and supervisory staff on caseloads, work environments, personal safety, compensation and professional development. The results were illuminating and affirming for many members of the CPSAC, and have been cited by the state's child welfare agency leaders, Georgia legislators, and the Governor's Reform Council.

The *Children's Justice Act Task Force* (CJATF) spent most of 2014 developing and executing its next three-year assessment. The task force focused on concerns around reported inconsistencies in the response of various state agencies to incidents of maltreatment, and has just completed a policy review of each of those state agencies. The task force is developing a three-year plan in response to the assessment results.

The Child Fatality Review Panel (CFRP) underwent a significant change in 2014 when administrative responsibilities transferred from the Office of the Child Advocate to the Georgia Bureau of Investigations. The CFRP is currently considering revising its approach to reviewing maltreatment-related fatalities to facilitate development of more effective prevention recommendations. Hosting the 2014 National Citizen Review Panel Conference was a highlight for Georgia panels,



photo: cheriejphotography.com

"We find delight in the beauty and happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body."

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RALPH WALDO EMERSON

The Conduct of Life

and we are looking forward to being 'participants' at the 2015 conference in Portland, OR.

Hawaii

At the November 2014 meeting, Maylyn Tallet was voted Vice-Chair and Stephen Morse was voted Chair of the Hawaii CRP for two years starting January 1, 2015.

The Satisfaction Survey of Mandated Reporters Making Reports to the Hawaii CWS Central Intake System has been completed. Survey results will be available shortly.

The two working groups, Engaging Fathers and CWS Qualitative Visitation, remain active and are currently conducting focus groups of CWS social workers regarding each subject.

At its January 2015 meeting, the Panel established a tentative date in May for its annual retreat. It also proposed a new project for the Panel: a video that

documents the Child Welfare Reform Initiative that took place in Hawaii twenty years ago. This effort laid the foundation and structure for the Differential Response System and CAN prevention programs that have reduced CAN and foster care rates significantly.

Stephen Morse, Panel Chair, and Tracy Yadao, DHS Liaison, represented the Panel at the Annual Family and Fathers Conference in Los Angeles in February. Hawaii CRP will likely send three representatives to the National CRP conference in Portland in May.

Indiana

The Indiana Foster Care Advisory Panel continues its study of initial information gathering in a case and its effect on the services recommended and provided to children and families. The Indiana Child Protection Team Panel is still gathering information to determine the topic of their report. The group chosen to participate as Indiana's Fatality Review Panel recently decided not to participate as our CRP, so we are pursuing recruitment of a new team.

Kentucky

Kentucky's Citizen Review Panels continues to move forward with the plan developed at the August 2014 strategic planning retreat. The topics chosen were: pediatric forensic interviewing, father engagement in child welfare, reviewing the timeliness of annual permanency reviews, and staff morale/retention. In addition to holding numerous focus groups with staff and community partners around these issues, the Panels have engaged in electronic surveys and policy review as a way to educate themselves about the topics. Additionally, two conferences are being hosted by the Panels this spring: "What Works in Child Welfare" and "A Conversation on Father Engagement and Child Welfare."

Maine

Maine is currently working on a CW Focus project—recruitment/retention and training. What needs to be done to help recruit and retain caseworkers and resource families? There is a close connection, in that

both are difficult to recruit and tend to have a high turnover rate. They also both care for children, and they should have a collaborative working relationship when doing so. What supports do caseworkers and resource families want to keep them in their respective positions? What would be most useful and/or what is missing for support? (What do you need, and who do you want it from?) What approach should be taken to gather this information? A survey, or a focus group, or both? Mutual respect was discussed. There should be a training program for caseworkers and foster families to let them know what is expected of them (i.e., roles and responsibilities). The training should be standardized and should be provided state-wide. Public service announcement (PSA) might be useful—some type of video that reflects the positives of child welfare, social workers, caseworkers.... This is a long-term project just getting started.

The Panel is also discussing what it can do to thank this same population (caseworkers and resource families). A letter idea was suggested, and members were asked to bring to the February meeting the names of organizations they thought might sign onto this 'letter project.' The Panel would like to have this completed by April and May, which coincides with Child Abuse Prevention Month and Foster Care Month,

"The potential possibilities of any child are the most intriguing and stimulating in all creation."

RAY L. WILBUR



photo: Howard Kang/United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley

respectively. As part of this project, the Panel discussed possible articles to be presented in various media outlets, suggesting that people take a minute to send a note of thanks to a social worker or resource family (SW/CW office addresses would be provided in the article). Large and small newspapers/newsletters could be used for this purpose, as well as local organizations (e.g., AFFM, NASW, etc.).

Maryland

Throughout FY 2014, the Citizens Review Board for Children of Maryland (CRBC) has continued to conduct individual out-of-home placement case reviews selected by targeted review criteria in accordance with the Work Plan Agreement with the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Social Services Administration (SSA). This targeted approach focuses on Reunification, Adoption, and Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). The FY2014 Annual Report includes recommendations to improve outcomes for children such as: (1) reducing the median length of time children stay in out-of-home placement; (2) having an identified permanent connection for all children with a permanency plan of APPLA; and (3) having all children with a permanency plan of Adoption who are age appropriate to receive adoption counseling services. Our FY2014 Annual Report can be located at http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page_id=4750.

In 2014, the Northwest Region Citizen Review Panel began focusing on a few specific projects that would be beneficial to both the Department of Children's Services' (DCS) staff and CRP. One project involved responding to the Northwest Region DCS staffs' need for a better understanding of autism and identifying supports and resources for a child on the autism spectrum. On Friday, January 30, 2015, more than 30 child welfare professionals participated in training on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This event included a keynote speaker, Dr. Dianna Meade, Assistant Professor of Special Education at Bethel University in McKenzie, Tennessee; a moderated panel discussion (clinical psychologist and therapist); and audience Q&A. Dr. Meade's presentation addressed: (1) ASD, including characteristics and sexual behavior of those with autism; (2) the wide range of functioning and abilities seen in children diagnosed with ASD; (3) challenges child welfare staff will face; (4) how and where to possibly interview; and (5) available resources.

During the panel discussion and audience Q&A, child welfare staff shared challenges regarding treatment, such as coordinating services with school systems and identifying local resources for children and families. For instance, it was reported that the region lacks ASD support groups, and that the nearest support group is located in Jackson, TN, which can be up to an hour drive for some families. This region serves a rural population in a relatively large geographical area and has very limited resources to offer children and families with autism. To improve outcomes in this area, the CRP plans to engage community partners (e.g., child advocacy

“This is the duty of our generation as we enter the twenty-first century—solidarity with the weak, the persecuted, the lonely, the sick, and those in despair. It is expressed by the desire to give a noble and humanizing meaning to a community in which all members will define themselves not by their own identity but by that of others.”

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ELIE WIESEL



centers, schools and colleges, treatment agencies, etc.) in meetings with child welfare leadership staff about this issue.

Michigan

The Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) of the Governor's Task Force in Michigan is in the final stages of soliciting feedback from a variety of stakeholders about how to respond effectively to child abuse and neglect and strengthen the child welfare system designed to support children and families. We are gathering substantive information regarding primary and secondary trauma experienced by front line CPS and foster care workers, children, foster parents, adoptive parents, medical professionals, and law enforcement. For the past two years, we have been implementing a system to gather information and holding face-to-face panel discussions with members of the public on the effects of trauma on their families and themselves based on services provided in the current child welfare system. Following the final face-to-face panel discussions, which will most likely conclude by summer of 2015, we will prepare a report on our findings and recommendations for the department of human services. Our goal is to have the report completed by the end of 2015.

New Jersey

The New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect recently updated the *New Jersey Standards for Prevention: Building Success through Family Support* and approved the *New Jersey Statewide Prevention Plan, Supporting Strong Families and Communities in New Jersey: Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect, 2014-2017*. First developed in 2003, the newly updated standards are the culmination of an eighteen-month review and editing process. The updated standards cover such areas as: (1) the history of the document, the importance of prevention, the intended purpose of the standards, and definitions of prevention and risk and protective factors; (2) practice with families, practice with communities, and administrative standards; and (3) an evaluation rubric that allows families, researchers, funders, providers, administrators, communities, and policy makers measure a program's compliance with best practices.

The plan was developed by public and private partners. About 485 parents from diverse populations provided feedback and recommendations that helped to shape the plan. The plan sets out to achieve five strategic goals: (1) Communication; (2) Early Outreach and Engagement; (3) Partnerships; (4) Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed Programs and Best Practices; and (5) Infrastructure and Resources.

Available on our website, the Standards can be accessed at: <http://nj.gov/dcf/news/reportsnewsletters/taskforce/Standards.for.Prevention.Programs.pdf>. The Plan is at: <http://nj.gov/dcf/news/reportsnewsletters/taskforce/SupportingStrongFamiliesandCommunitiesinNew%20Jersey.pdf>.

North Carolina

In North Carolina, we are going through several major events at the same time: (1) the CFSR R3 starting in April 2015; (2) Joint Planning for our 2015 Annual Progress and Services Report; and (3) concluding the year-end survey to all of our panels regarding their work in 2014. NC is a state-supervised child welfare system; therefore we have a local team in every county (100 counties in NC). The state advisory board is comprised of the same disciplines that are mandated for the local level. The Advisory Board has been involved in the completion of our Statewide Assessment for the CFSR R3 and is seen as a multi-discipline stakeholder group that can address systemic factors and outcomes. Based upon the available data, our teams have chosen to look at permanency outcomes for children and how the implementation and delivery of Child and Family Team meetings can impact permanency outcomes.

Ohio

Ohio is in transition with the Citizen Review Panel initiative. We are in the final stages of developing a request for proposal to solicit a vendor to develop and coordinate three new Citizen Review Panels. Currently, we fulfill the CAPTA requirement with a statewide Child Fatality Review Advisory Committee, Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board, and the Stark County Family Court Citizen Review Board.

Oregon

Oregon's Citizen Review Panels are hard at work on their 2015 focus areas. The Multnomah County panel has chosen relative placement and life-long connections as its focus area. As part of its work, the panel will explore whether law, policy, and practice relating to relative placements has a disproportionate impact on communities of color, with more relatives from those communities being ruled out as placement resources. The panel will be surveying and convening focus groups.

The Douglas County panel is also exploring issues related to relative placements. The panel will formulate recommendations aimed at ensuring relative searches are thorough and timely, that they increase the number of safe placement options, reduce the time children spend in non-relative foster care, increase the number of relative connections, and ultimately reduce the time to achieve permanency.

The Lane County panel is working to identify successes and challenges experienced by older children in care, with a particular focus on identifying and eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). It is exploring identification of children exposed to CSEC, safe placement options, and the community response to ensuring appropriate and adequate services for older youth in care. The panel is surveying youth in care to understand the circumstances under which some run away from placement in order to formulate recommendations to ensure stability of placements and appropriate service delivery.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania's Northeast Region Citizen Review Panel recently came to the attention of a local television program, "Taking the Initiative," which highlights the good work being done by local non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, citizen-led groups, government agencies, and individuals to improve their communities. "Taking the Initiative" helps to promote the organization or groups doing the positive work and also encourages others to join their efforts. Two members from the panel were invited to be guests on the show, which was taped on December 3rd. Jason Raines (current Chair) and Steve Guccini (previous Chair) were the guests. The segment was 24 minutes in length and done in two 12 minute pieces. During the first half, Jason and Steve discussed the changes to the Child Protective Services Law and prevalence of child abuse in Pennsylvania. The second half focused specifically on the work of the panel. They stated that for the past two years their activities and recommendations have targeted the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) in an effort to alleviate the time that children spend waiting to transition to service providers or homes outside of the state. They also talked about who qualifies to be a panel member and how to apply to become a panel member. The segment aired January 6th and 9th at 8:30 PM. This was a great accomplishment for the panel and one of many steps they plan to take this year to promote their work within the community and help to recruit new members. The panel has been selected to present at the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in Portland, OR in May on the topic of the ICPC and is considering reaching out to "Taking the Initiative" to explore the option of a follow up segment.

To view clips from the show, visit the Pennsylvania Citizen Review webpage at <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/CAPTA.htm> and click on the link (Video Clips of Panel Members Speaking) on the right hand side.

West Virginia

The West Virginia CRP is pleased to have completed its Annual Report for the 2013–2014 year. We are grateful to have attended the National CRP conference as our report preparation, presentation, and distribution incorporated so many of the suggestions

National Citizen Review Panel Conference

Portland, Oregon
May 18-20, 2015

*"People, Programs and Performance:
Piecing Together Successful Citizen
Review Panels"*

REGISTRATION INFO IS AT
<http://www.uky.edu/socialwork/crp>

and best practices from that conference. Our focus and recommendations for the report included parental substance abuse; capture, use, and distribution of data; barriers to adoption; continuity of the CRP; centralized intake; and several other topics of interest and improvement potential. We anticipate that our meetings and reports will only get better with time, and we are deeply invested in improving the system of child protection in West Virginia.

Wisconsin

In 2014, Wisconsin expanded its number of citizen review panels from four to eight, including a youth-led panel of former foster care youth. The panels came together in January 2014 at a statewide meeting facilitated by Dr. Blake Jones to collaborate and identify the next statewide panel project. We voted to research and, if needed, develop recommendations for guardians ad litem (GAL) practice in child welfare cases. Also in 2014, panel members presented findings from their review of 2011-2012 cases involving egregious maltreatment to the State Department of Children & Families (DCF).

In 2015, the DCF increased the amount of CAPTA funds allocated to each panel to help ensure panel member attendance at the annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference. We are currently performing 14 local reviews for the Department of Family Services. These include interviews with staff and stakeholders as well as facilitation of foster parent focus groups.

The Marathon County Citizen Review Panel is working on the following goals for 2015:

- ▶ Increase citizen membership on the panel;
- ▶ Increase public awareness of the detrimental, long-term effects of Shaken Baby Syndrome by providing an education demonstration with a shaken baby simulator doll;
- ▶ Facilitate a second Journey Bus Tour to increase collaboration and communication between school staff and Marathon County Department of Social Services staff; and
- ▶ Actively participate in a statewide GAL focus group to develop a Best Practices Guide for GALs working with children who are in the child welfare system.

Wyoming

In Wyoming, we are currently performing 14 local reviews for the Department of Family Services. These include interviews with staff and stakeholders as well as facilitation of foster parent focus groups. We are also coordinating with the agency to train caseworkers on a domestic violence curriculum. We have been working towards a more coordinated effort with a variety of agencies in the state that directly impact children and families. It is also our hope to encourage the agency to review policies on parents actively involved in substance abuse and assess available resources in the state.

BRIGHT IDEA



When writing your annual report, do an **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** so busy legislators and others can quickly review the key points in the report.

New Research on Citizen Review Panels

Two research projects on Citizen Review Panels are currently underway. Drs. Jay Miller and Blake Jones are using “Concept Mapping” as a way to evaluate the work of the Citizen Review Panels in Kentucky. Concept Mapping is a visual way to map indications of effectiveness of such groups as CRP.

In addition, Drs. Crystal Collins-Camargo, Neal Buckwalter, and Blake Jones are conducting a study of child welfare administrators’ perceptions of Citizen Review Panels. This ground-breaking research will provide new knowledge to the field.