



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Words along the way
- A great idea for help with your CRP
- State updates
- More information about the NCRP conference
- Meet your advisory board

This newsletter is written by Blake Jones and produced by the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services, a service of the Children's Bureau.

## Welcome!

It has been a tough winter in Kentucky. Lots of snow and ice and so many snow days that my 7 y.o. son Luke remarked to me the other day, "Daddy, I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm actually **wanting** to go to school. What's up with that?!?" But one thing I love about living here is the hope of spring. Sooner than I know, I'll watch the newly-born foals frolic next to their mothers and the Blacked-Eyed Susans push their way inexorably through the rich Kentucky earth.

I think about our work together in the same way. Sometimes it is difficult to believe that citizens can make a difference in the midst of such severe economic times and increased risk to our nation's children. But, indeed, working together is the only way we will see progress...and the spring.

Blake Jones  
National CRP Advisory Panel Coordinator

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

*--Louis D. Brandeis*

## Bright Idea...

Find a practicum student from a local university or college to help you with your Citizen Review Panel. It can be a wonderful placement for a student and can involve learning about research, community organizing, group dynamics, and citizen participation.

## SAVE THE DATE!

Ninth Annual National Citizen  
Review Panel Conference

May 26-28, 2010  
Lexington, Kentucky



## Wisconsin, Nevada & Maine Updates

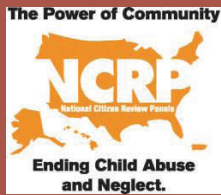
**Wisconsin's** five citizen review panels decided to tackle a statewide issue, the child fatality review process, in 2010. Two co-chairs were assigned to lead the groups throughout the project. On February 1, 2010, the 2009 Wisconsin Act 78, Child Welfare Public Disclosure Act, becomes effective, requiring the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to notify the public that a child death, serious injury or egregious incident of child abuse or neglect has occurred. The citizen review panels are identified as part of the public that will be notified directly in each incident. The panels and the Department will partner to decide how best to use this information to prevent child deaths and injuries as part of the mission of the citizen review panels.

The **Nevada** Statewide Citizen Review Panel just completed its 2009 Annual Report and is currently developing its 2010 workplan. Nevada's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) site visit was held in September, 2009. The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) is currently working with stakeholders statewide to complete Nevada's Program Improvement Plan (PIP) by March 1, 2010. Once the initial PIP is completed, the Statewide Citizen Review Panel will work to align its policy, procedure, and case reviews for 2010 with priority areas identified in the PIP.

*"When I approach a child, he inspires in me two sentiments; tenderness for what he is, and respect for what he may become."*

*~Luis Pasteur*

**Maine's** CRP has developed two work groups to tackle some of the topics chosen by the Panel during their September strategic planning day. The first work group is taking on the subject of educational stability for children in foster care. This work group has developed a survey to be administered to CPS caseworkers, families and schools in order to ascertain the current status of this issue for Maine's foster children. The second workgroup will attempt to identify factors contributing to adoption disruptions and/or failures. They have developed a case review tool and will begin reviewing cases in February. Both workgroups plan to wrap-up this work by June in order to submit their recommendations to the Department of Health and Human Services by way of the Annual CRP Report.



## New Jersey & Kentucky Updates

The **New Jersey** Child Welfare Citizen Review Panel (NJCWCRP) is one of three citizen review panels in New Jersey charged with examining the policies and procedures of State and local child welfare agencies. Comprised of child advocates and experts from across the state, the Panel prioritizes issues important to child safety, permanency and well-being. Past and current initiatives undertaken by the Panel include examining areas related to inter-departmental cooperation and agreements, the functioning of New Jersey's child abuse hotline, the Differential Response initiative, kinship legal guardianship, and youth transitioning out of state care.

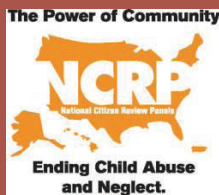
The Panel has helped to advance important policy discussions, many of which translated into initiatives and policy changes that can help improve outcomes for children and families. These include initiating important inter-departmental collaboration that led to the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between New Jersey's Departments of Education and Children and Families to address the special education needs of children in the child welfare system, and a statewide initiative to strengthen the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect in schools. This particular initiative establishes standard training for all New Jersey educators on child welfare issues.

Additionally, the Panel is currently working on a report detailing the findings of the state's first survey of youth aging out of the child welfare system and the professionals working with these youth. The Panel anticipates that this information will help strengthen how New Jersey serves this important population.

Direction for the NJCWCRP is determined by input gained from public surveys, interviews, testimony, and focus groups.

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**Kentucky** has formed a new statewide Citizen Review Panel. The group has chosen to focus on the issues of foster care children who are aging out of care and worker safety. They have been reviewing policy and legislative bills having to do with their chosen topics. Another CRP in Kentucky recently conducted a large focus group with foster children, social workers and parents to determine the best supports for the children as they age out of care.



## Arizona & New Mexico Updates

The **Arizona** Citizen Review Panel program completed its first year under new administration by the Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy (CABHP) at Arizona State University. CABHP developed a new approach to the coordination and support of the three statewide Panels based on interviews with key stakeholders (i.e. Panel members, advocates, representatives from other states, Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) staff, and Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) staff, who formally administered the program); and examination of the National Guidelines and Protocols for Citizen Review Panels. Based on the information collected, a comprehensive work plan was developed which focused on four key goals: 1) centralize responsibility for staffing, coordinating and supporting the Panels in meeting their legislative mandate; 2) strengthen the Panels in order to fulfill all functions of the CAPTA mandate; 3) provide data from various sources to assist Panels in making recommendations that improve the CPS system; and 4) enhance coordination, communication, and reporting of child welfare data to maximize public input and interagency collaboration. CABHP also worked with DCYF staff and Panel representatives to revise the case record review process and instruments. In 2010, CABHP will begin tracking areas of concern identified in several case record reviews (e.g. perpetrators responsible for caretaking while mother working outside the home, parent (s) co-sleeping with infants, and investigations completed by law enforcement and closed by CPS prior to safety factors being resolved) to determine whether these may constitute a trend requiring additional actions. CABHP also completed the 2009 Arizona Citizen Review 11th Annual Report, submitted to the Department of Economic Security in December.

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**New Mexico** Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Board has produced and distributed three publications since November 2009: **CRB Preview Report, 2010 CRB Annual Report and Recommendations**, and **New Mexico Children in Foster Care Facts Sheet 2010**. The publications use data collected during the fiscal year July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. Each of the publications includes CRB data and recommendations and have been sent to all state legislators, the governor, other decision makers, professionals and volunteers in the child welfare system, and CRB volunteers to use in educating and advocating for children in foster care. The three publications are available on the national CRP website and the CRB website [www.nmcrb.org](http://www.nmcrb.org). CRB's Legislative Sub-committee is developing a media campaign to help raise public awareness regarding the needs of children in foster care.



## California Updates

The four Citizen Review Panels in **California** are active in supporting the Child Welfare System. California is one of about a dozen states that have a state oversight, county-administered child welfare system. The three County CRP's, San Mateo, Calaveras and Ventura are focusing their work on supporting each of their own county Self Improvement Plans by reviewing programs and activities structured toward both prevention and intervention programs. Ventura County CRP is focusing their activities on program development based upon data, specifically in the area of recurrence of maltreatment. In addition, the Ventura CRP is reviewing the policies and program components that directly affect reducing the length of stay in out of home care by reviewing current service provisions and out of home care provider program supports. Calaveras County CRP is currently focusing on policies, practices and programs specifically targeting Emancipating Foster Youth and will be making recommendations back to their local Child Welfare Agency. San Mateo Citizen Review Panel, the longest existing CRP in California, continues to focus on Safety and Permanency by working directly with their local Child Welfare Agency in providing input into various programs such as Team Decision Making. In addition, this panel will begin to explore the use of Parent Consumers in a Parent Leadership role, and the benefits this type of program may hold for San Mateo. The Statewide Citizen Review Panel is discussing current case plan issues regarding Team Decision Making and how parents can better understand and be better supported in the implementation of their service plans. The State Panel is also gathering information to develop a possible recommendation supporting the increase of the availability of peer mentors and/or parent partners in the California Child Welfare System.

*"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."*

*~Elie Wiesel*



## Washington State Updates

**Washington State's** three Citizen Review Panels continue to play a valuable role by evaluating the extent to which the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) - Children's Administration (CA) is protecting children from abuse and neglect.

The Children, Youth, and Family Services Advisory Committee serves as the statewide CRP for Washington State. The CRP continues the work begun in 2006 on racial and ethnic disproportionality related to child protection. In the first two years of this plan, the Panel focused on education about racial disproportionality, its effects in Washington state and nationally, and the effectiveness of efforts to address disproportionality and disparity. Plans for 2010 include:

- Review of the effectiveness of efforts to address disproportionality will continue.

- Invite CA Regional Administrators to inform the Panel on current efforts to address racial disproportionality in each region. The Panel will work with the Regional Administrators to develop ideas to help advance and expand successful efforts in the regions.

- Continue to focus on referrals and the education of mandated reporters.

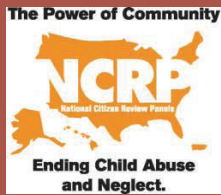
  - Determine what effects educating reporters has had on the child welfare system and disproportionality.

  - Research other changes that can be made to ensure race is not affecting who is reported while still keeping children safe.

The Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) CRP has focused on disproportionality of Indian children within the child welfare system and compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act. IPAC was involved in advocacy, development and implementation of the following state initiatives:

- Substitute House Bill 1472. This Bill gave DSHS the responsibility of convening an advisory committee to analyze and make recommendations on the disproportionate representation of children of color in the Washington State child welfare system. It was found that Indian children are represented at the highest disproportionate rates throughout all points in the system.

- Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Case Review conducted in 2007. Case reviews are conducted for all cases in DSHS on an ongoing basis. Tribes, DSHS staff and community partners voiced concern that Indian children and families are involved in the child welfare system at disproportionate rates. Concern was also voiced that ICW laws and policies were not consistently being adhered too. As a result, an ICW Case Review tool was developed and administered throughout the six DSHS Regions in Washington. It was found that there exists a lack of consistent compliance with the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act and State policies related to ICW.



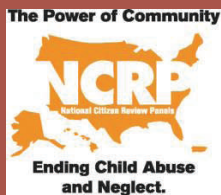
## Washington State Updates Continued

The specific tasks the CA IPAC CRP worked on recently to impact disproportionality and ICW compliance include:

- Development of Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act (WSICWA)
- Development of Template for Tribal-State Agreements
- Development of Brochure for the Local Indian Child Welfare Committee (LICWAC)
- Early Identification of Indian Children and Tribal Engagement
- ICW Training for LICWAC's and CASA's
- ICW Training for DSHS staff and Community Partners
- ICW Training for Family Team Decision Meeting Facilitators

The IPAC CRP examined relevant documents and research, received information from tribes, staff and stakeholders, and used group discussion as its primary methods for development of plans.

The Region 2 Oversight Committee CRP conducts regular meetings in various communities in each of the seven counties which comprise Region 2. Meetings were held in a variety of locations and in additional smaller communities. The Oversight Committee CRP invites local community members to meetings to explore whether CA services are accessible, and whether policies, practices and community collaboration support child safety and well-being. Areas of focus last year included: child fatalities, agency performance meeting federal and state targets (data), foster parent support and training, emergency child placement resources, racial disproportionality in CA services, and staff turnover. The committee also continues to follow agency progress implementing recommendations from prior years.



## Wyoming & Michigan Updates

The **Wyoming** Citizen Review Panel continues to work with the Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS) on initiating Mini Program Improvement Plans (Mini PIPs) based on Federal CFSR results and past Mini CFSR results in DFS offices around the state (community input can be reviewed at: <http://wycrp.blogspot.com/2010/01/casper-dfs-mini-pip-blog.html>). They are also preparing to conduct a Mini CFSR, applying the Federal CFSR instrument to cases, with the Northern Arapaho Tribal partners in April. In addition the SYNC review instrument will be applied to cases in Natrona County and Fremont County this spring working with mental health centers. Finally, they continue working with DFS on select juvenile justice issues to bridge the gap between child protective services and juvenile services. Recently, the Annie E. Casey Foundation presented in Wyoming to gauge the interest in Wyoming for bringing the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative to their state as a follow-up to the CRP's work in communities with community juvenile service board initiative. The citizen review panel has played a large role in bringing citizens to the table to discuss these initiatives with DFS and other stakeholders.

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**Michigan:** The Citizen Review Panel (CRP) on Children's Protective Services, Foster Care and Adoption has several projects in the works. The CRP continues to function as a stakeholder for MI's Department of Human Services (DHS) involving the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

The CRP is still interested in pursuing a mandated reporter awareness effort. The CRP is investigating the possibility of taking advantage of some social networking sites to get their message out. They will attempt to partner with DHS's Department of Communications for this effort.

The MI DHS is moving from a county office system of taking child abuse/neglect intake complaints to a statewide centralized intake system. The CRP will meet to determine if their members can function as stakeholders for the centralized intake work group as they work toward getting a centralized system in place.

Lastly, the CRP is reviewing recommendations made by Michigan's Child Welfare Improvement Task Force to determine where they could be of assistance.



## South Carolina & Maryland Updates

### **South Carolina** Citizen Review Panel for Child Protective Services

It's been a busy start of the year for South Carolina's panels. The panels usually don't meet much during the last quarter of the year because they have their retreat in October... During the retreat in October, they began strategic planning for 2010 and came up with three new projects. All are linked to the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Groups will work on Father Engagement, Kinship Care and Family Group Conferencing. They will review recommendations made to the SC Department of Social Services (SCDSS) over the past 10 years, or at least since the inception of the panel. They will continue the commitment to improving the diversity of the panels. They are emphasizing, not only working on projects that are long term, but trying to make quick fixes that improve processes and services to children and families. Fortunately, the SCDSS agency director is receptive to recommendations made during the course of the year that can be implemented fairly quickly. She has delegated two of her staff to meet with panel chairs on a bimonthly basis for this purpose and to share information. The panel chairs have suggested such things as a Kinship Care brochure to inform prospective families of their rights and responsibilities and the revision/ use of a Health and Education Passport to improve the information shared between foster care workers and foster families. Of course, the results of the panels' work is not always instantaneous, it is still a process. However, they are forging relationships and ties and working hard to make a difference in the lives of children in the state.

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### **Maryland CAPTA Panel Activity in 2009**

#### **Citizen's Review Board for Children**

Beginning July 2009, Maryland's Citizen Review Board for Children entered into an agreement with the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) to focus its case reviews on children with a plan of adoption or APPLA (Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement), two of the most difficult groups of children to move towards permanency. DHR and CRBC recognize that there are numerous barriers that delay or interrupt achieving permanency objectives for children with plans of APPLA or adoption in the State. In addition to CRBC's more targeted focus, the agency will also provide the DHR and local departments of social services quarterly reports on case review findings to promote systemic improvements within the Maryland child welfare system. In January of 2010, Brenda Donald, Secretary of the Department of Human Resources, attended and participated in CRBC case reviews in three major jurisdictions to show the Department's continued support for the work that the volunteers with CRBC are doing for children in the Maryland foster care system.



## Maryland Updates Continued

### State Child Fatality Review Team

In 2009 the leadership of the Maryland State Child Fatality Review (CFR) Team the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Center for Maternal and Child Health worked to get legislation passed allowing Maryland CFR teams to participate in the electronic data entry system offered free to all states by the National Center for Child Death Review. The system makes possible standardized reports, which can help CFR teams identify trends and develop recommendations and action plans for prevention.

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

*~Ralph Waldo Emerson, - from*

*The Conduct of Life*

### State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCCAN)

In late 2009 SCCAN established a Partner Relations Committee to review the responsibilities and legal mandates of SCCAN partners --- Children's Justice Act Committee, Citizen's Review Board for Children and the State Child Fatality Review Team. This Committee will identify:

- Opportunities for closer cooperation and partnership.
- Potential for sharing and leveraging resources such as data and expertise of staff and volunteers.
- Potential for cooperating and leveraging influence in order to effect change for the better in child welfare systems.
- Potential risks of overlap or duplication of effort among the partners.



## Ninth Annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference

**May 26-28, 2010  
Lexington, Kentucky**

More information at <http://www.uky.edu/SocialWork/crp/conference.htm>

Topics include:

**"Update on Citizen Review Panels: The View from the Children's Bureau"**

**"Who are CAPTA Citizen Review Panel members, What are they Doing, and What's Working? Findings and Implications from a National Study"**

**"What Works: A Presentation of our CRP Projects for 2009-2010" from several state CRPs**

**"Everything you wanted to know about CRPs but were afraid to Ask: Writing Reports, Recruiting and Retaining Members, Choosing Good Topics, Tracking Outcomes and Beyond!"**

**"Systemic Child Neglect"**

**"Foster Care Review Boards and Citizen Review Panels: A Golden Opportunity"**

**"So What Happened to our Recommendations? A Ten Year Analysis of Recommendations Made in Kentucky"**

**"Recent Federal Legislative and Policy Developments: What CRPs Should Know and Do"**

**Conference Registration includes an evening at Shaker Village:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YegOOZHBKy8>**

## Meet Your Advisory Board!



**Kelly Hamilton**

Kelly Hamilton describes himself as a “recovering bureaucrat.” Having grown up on a ranch in northeastern Wyoming, Kelly was drawn to law enforcement after doing a ride along with a local sheriff. “I was smitten from that very day by law enforcement,” Kelly said in a recent interview. He spent twenty-five years as a detective, a beat cop and even a security officer with Carnival Cruise Line.

His life began simply enough. Kelly’s father was a Wyoming rancher and his mother a college professor. They lived for a time south of the border where his mother was the first person to discover jade in Mexico. Kelly’s years of law enforcement were influential times for him. He says, “I remember working an industrial labor union strike and watching as families were torn apart because of crossing the picket lines.”

In Wyoming, only police officers and physicians can remove children from their homes. Kelly says of his current job—as the Director of Wyoming’s Citizen Review Panel—“This was redemptive for me in a way; I want to make sure that citizens and families have a voice in what happens to our state’s children.”

Kelly is married to Cindy, who works for Casey Family Foundation, and they have two adult sons, Richard and Hayden. They also have a 9 y.o. foster daughter named Vanessa. Even though he has grown up in the rugged West, Kelly says he is not much of a hunter. “I’ve pulled too many frozen hunters out of the woods to want to do it myself,” he says. He enjoys “boating, landscaping and gambling” and “trying to survive the Wyoming winters.”