

The Power of Community



Ending Child Abuse
and Neglect.

Citizen Connections

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Welcome!

IN THIS ISSUE

- Bright Idea
- State Updates
- Advisory Board Spotlight

SAVE THE DATE

National Citizen Review Panel Conference
April 15-17, 2012

Hosted by the Washington, DC Citizen Review Panel

Bright Idea...

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.

Have your Citizen Review Panel host a one day conference or "expert panel" discussion. This is a great way for you to fulfill your "public outreach" mandate from CAPTA as well as publicize the efforts of your panel and gain great information for your work topics.

South Carolina Update

At the National Citizen Review Panel Conference held in May, the **South Carolina** Citizen Review Panel (SCCRP) reported that there had been a change in South Carolina's Department of Social Services (SCDSS) administration. Aided by past knowledge about the importance of establishing good working relationships, panel chairs met with new SCDSS child welfare staff to discuss and explain how the agency and the SCCRP worked collaboratively in the past. The SCCRP chairs are working to get key documents, like the Memorandum of Understanding, revised and implemented. They are also continuing to track the progress of past recommendations at scheduled SCCRP Administrative meetings. These meetings are attended by the chairs and SCDSS representatives.



The changes in administration have not deterred the panel from focusing on new projects. This year all three panels are examining the process for Out of Home Abuse and Neglect investigations. Some SCCRP members have expressed concern about whether cases are properly indicated as maltreatment. The SCCRP and SCDSS are working together to determine what can be done to improve the safety of children in out of home placements. SCCRP is interested in hearing from other CRPs who have done work in this area. Please contact Cheryl Worrell, SCCRP Program Coordinator, by email Worrellc@mailbox.sc.edu or phone (803) 777-9404 if you have information to share.



Michigan Update

CRP on Prevention:

The Citizen Review Panel for Prevention has created a training module for child welfare workers on strengthening families and protective factors through a grant from the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention. Trainings will be available on-line and in person. A teleconference was held with the Illinois Office of Behavioral Health to discuss how the Strengthening Families approach was integrated through-out the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS). The Prevention Panel continues to work with the Michigan DHS to establish a definition of prevention to be included in the DHS policy.

CRP on Children's Protective Services, Foster Care and Adoption:

The Citizen Review Panel on Children's Protective Services, Foster Care and Adoption is continuing their work on a Youth Bill of Rights for foster children, coordinating their bill with a pre-existing handbook for foster children maintained by the MI Department of Human Services.

"People who say it cannot be done should not interrupt those who are doing it."

-- Unknown

CRP on Child Fatalities:

The Citizen Review Panel on Child Fatalities continues to work on the reviews of 2010 child deaths. We are paying close attention to those deaths which occurred with an open foster care case or where the child was a ward of the court at the time of the death.



Maryland Update

Maryland participated in the National Foster Care Review Coalition Data Collection on Placement Stability Project. Data collected from reviews held July 1, 2011-September 30, 2011 in all 24 jurisdictions (Baltimore City and 23 Counties). The Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) had focused on target reviews of cases with permanency plans of Adoption and APPLA since 2009. In September 2011 case review criteria expanded to include cases with a permanency plan of Reunification for children 10 and older who have been in foster care 12 months or longer. CRBC will review the cases to determine:

- if appropriate efforts are being made to finalize permanency options before a child's plan is changed to APPLA; in an effort to reduce the number of youth with APPLA plans
- if the child is receiving identified appropriate services
- if appropriate efforts are being made by the department to return the child home.
- that the current placement plan is appropriate and meets the child's needs among other things.

The CRBC is working on increasing recruitment activities and additional or ongoing member training, especially in regard to education and services.

“Children are one-third of our population and all of our future.”

—Select Panel for the Promotion of Child Health

Tennessee and Kentucky Updates

The **Tennessee** Citizen Review Panels recently received news from their state child welfare agency of the decision to implement one of their recommendations outlined in the June 2011 Tennessee Citizen Review Panels Annual Report. For more than a year, the panels were hearing from school districts statewide about the wait time to get a call through Central Intake hotline. With school staff being the most common reporter, and since every form of maltreatment is inflicted on school-age children, the panels thought it was imperative that the state child welfare agency designate a hotline number specifically for school personnel. In August 2011, Carla Aaron, Tennessee Department of Children's Safety Executive Director of Child Safety notified the panels that their recommendation had been implemented.

"I was taught that the world had a lot of problems; that I could struggle and change them; that intellectual and material gifts brought the privilege and responsibility of sharing with others less fortunate; and that service is the rent each of us pays for living -- the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time or after you have reached your personal goals."

--Marian Wright Edelman

Kentucky's Citizen Review Panels held their annual retreat August 19-20, 2011. In addition to orientation for the fifteen new members, each of the Panels chose working topics for the year. These include: mandated reporting, the interface of substance abuse and child abuse cases, children who "fall between the cracks" of child protection and the juvenile justice system, and how community partners can work more closely with the child protection system. The Statewide CRP is planning to host a mini-conference in the spring, 2012 which will focus on evidence-based practices for child welfare.



Minnesota Update

The five county-based Citizen Review Panels in **Minnesota** continue to make progress towards their goals.

Chisago County panel members have delved into the details of the changes made to address truancy and educational neglect cases in the school districts, county attorney's office and the juvenile court system in their county. They recently welcomed a new member.

Hennepin County members are looking at ways to consolidate the information their committees have gathered. The committees are looking at permanency, disparities and the intake process in the Hennepin County child protection system.

Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel members are using information they have gathered from Administrative Reviews to focus on making recommendations to ensure the eleventh goal for youth transitioning from foster care, the child has a permanent connection to a caring adult, is implemented. The Panel recently co-sponsored a mandated reporter training session with Ramsey County Human Services and Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota that was fully attended and well received.

Washington County has two new panel members. The panel is embarking on foster care reentry case file reviews to see if they can find trends and recommend ways Washington County Social Services can reduce the percent of children and youth returning to care within 12 months after leaving foster care to 20% or less.

Winona County Citizen Review Panel members have been busy recruiting and interviewing new citizens, conducted a mandated reporter training survey and, based on that, are coordinating training, seminars and educational events for mandated reporters throughout the county.

All five panels will be submitting annual committee report drafts at their November meetings. The annual panel reports will be approved at the December Citizen Review Panel meetings.



Arizona Update

The **Arizona** Panels have been busy. We have initiated strategic planning through Action for Child Protection and Blake Jones with the National Citizen Review Panels. A survey of the panel members will be going out to the panel members to kick off the process. Meetings will be scheduled in three parts of the state, Tucson, Phoenix and Flagstaff in early 2012. We are hopeful that the el Nina weather pattern holds so that we do not get snowed out of Flagstaff. (Yes, it snows in Arizona). This summer, panels have reviewed the cases of children who have achieved permanency and those of children who “aged out” of the foster care system. We listened to a presentation from an adoptive parent, who spoke about the needs of foster and adoptive parents, needs that often go unrecognized. We also spoke to youth who have aged out of the foster care system and are now working on being successful young adults. Each had very different, yet difficult stories to share. They spoke about what helped them, what went well and what would their recommendations be to the child welfare system. Both of these young adults really brought a focus to the panels on why the work we do is vital to be done well. They were both poignant in their remarks, resilient in ways that are amazing and appear to have promising futures. Both are pursuing college degrees. Their thoughtful comments were very beneficial. We also presented information to the panels about trauma informed care, which reminds all of us that often the perpetrators of today were once the victims. We will end our year looking at cases involving chronic neglect.

National CRP Advisory Board Spotlight



“My faith calls me to be a person of action.” This is how Reverend Vicki Garber describes her passion for preventing child abuse and neglect. “Pastor Vicki,” as she’s known to her Lutheran congregation in Northern Kentucky, got an early start in helping others. Born in Holabird, South Dakota on a tenant farm, Vicki, 60, said her mother and father instilled the importance of helping others to Vicki and her four brothers and sisters. “We were raised in poverty, but we really never knew we were poor until someone told us,” she laughs.

Although her father went only as far as the eighth grade, Vicki says that going to college was a foregone conclusion for the children. She says that she can’t remember a time when she did not work, and she worked as a waitress to put herself through college. She graduated from Augusta Lutheran College, then went to the Illinois College of Optometry and practiced optometry for twelve years, many of which were served in underprivileged communities in rural Eastern Kentucky.

Vicki felt a stirring to be called to the ministry, so she closed her practice and enrolled in Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. She now pastors Gloria Dei Lutheran Church where she continues work with clergy to train them on spotting and preventing child abuse and neglect. “Clergy are uniquely situated to help children,” she says, “and I want to make sure that each church takes responsibility for just one child or situation.”

Vicki is married to Phil, also a Lutheran minister, and has two children: Erik, 32 and Nicole, 25. An eight month grandchild, Kyla, is “absolutely the great joy” of Vicki’s life.

When asked what she hoped was accomplished by Citizen Review Panels in the nation, Vicki says, “I believe the mettle of our culture is revealed by how we treat our children. I want CRPs all over the nation to raise awareness about these abused kids, and to use our influence to support frontline workers and other staff as they work to protect them.