

2007 RESPONSE SUMMARY TO CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

CRP Recommendation	Panel	Area Responsible	Response
<p>1. CRP members partner with the Training Academy to develop a training curriculum that focuses on family centered practice to include the following areas: cultural sensitivity, preserving families, building on family strengths and the coordination of public resources.</p> <p>2. DCF perform follow up on all trainings relative to treatment planning with social workers, spending additional time with each concept.</p> <p>3. CRP to continue to work with Training Academy – review and modify curriculum (in-service trainings) to enhance strength based approach and better engagement of families. Review handouts and tools distributed to social workers during training sessions that are designed to assist in treatment planning.</p> <p>4. Review materials distributed to families through CQI process and make adjustments as necessary to ensure they are strength-based and family centered.</p>	FAVOR	Training Academy/Quality Improvement Division	<p>1- 2. In the spring of 2006, the Training Academy began discussions with two of CT's Citizen Review Panels, facilitated by FAVOR, to develop an ongoing partnership to enhance training opportunities for DCF staff through the Training Academy. Specifically, the panels wanted to ensure the content of trainings included information on family centered practice and cultural competency. The Training Academy provided the CRP's with a list of course offerings and forwarded specific curriculum requested by the panels. The Training Academy recognizes the importance of consumer feedback and has already incorporated many of the recommendations for changes in the curricula. The Training Academy remains committed to this partnership and will continue their efforts to modify the curriculum as necessary to include more detailed information on family centered practice. To further this partnership, the following recommendations will be implemented: 1) a member of the CRP is currently serving on the Training Academy Advisory Board; 2) the Training Academy intends to open their classes to enable panel members to observe specific training sessions of interest and provide critical feedback regarding the session; and 3) CRP members will now have the ability to co-train in content areas of interest to ensure the family voice/perspective is heard.</p> <p>3. On 11/1/07, the handouts utilized in the Treatment Planning and Cultural Competence training sessions were forwarded to CRP for their review/input.</p> <p>4. During the Administrative Case Review (ACR) Process, the only material distributed to families is a copy of the family and child's individual treatment plan. The treatment plan contains certain federal requirements that must be addressed by the department for all families receiving ongoing services by the department. The Department acknowledges the current format and content of the treatment plan may not be strength- based or conducive to engaging families fully in the treatment planning process. Modifications to the treatment plan would require long range planning.</p> <p>Timeframe: Collaboration between the Training Academy and CRP will continue this year.</p>
<p>1. Enhance the professional skills of DCF social workers. Establish assessment tools that evaluate staff performance and interaction with families. Are formal</p>	FAVOR	Bureau of Child Welfare/Training Academy	<p>1. The Division of Human Resources developed a formal process to evaluate employee performance on an annual basis utilizing a standardized performance appraisal tool. All social workers and supervisors are rated on the following</p>

<p>performance appraisals completed annually for all employees?</p> <p>2. Is worker performance addressed ongoing?</p> <p>3. Do supervisors/managers develop specific in-service training requirements for social workers/supervisors within their unit based on need?</p> <p>4. Is there a need to develop additional in-service trainings that are strength-based, family centered and focused on better engagement with families?</p> <p>5. Staff performance appraisals to be modified to include areas of strength and concerns.</p> <p>6. Appraisal should include goals/objectives to work on for the next appraisal period.</p>		<p>components: knowledge of work, quantity and quality of work, ability to learn new duties, initiative, cooperation and judgment. A narrative accompanies the appraisal that is designed to expand on these components and other important elements that are not included in the tool. Although there is no specific topic area on family engagement and interaction, these are critical areas that should be evaluated and documented in the narrative section of the performance appraisal. Given collective bargaining implications, the Department is unable to modify the performance appraisal unilaterally without the full support and approval of the union.</p> <p>Managers receive quarterly reviews (PARS) and are rated based on their ability to achieve their identified objectives that are developed and approved by their Supervisor.</p> <p>The Department recognizes the importance of engaging families in treatment planning and has developed a QI process that documents area office efforts to offer and conduct family conferencing meetings. Specific caseload expectations have been articulated by the Bureau Chief of Child Welfare. As a result, Area Office Managers are now being evaluated on their units' performance relative to Family Conferencing and treatment planning practices based on specific outcomes contained within the Exit Plan. Effective treatment planning cannot be done in isolation, but requires the active engagement and participation of families throughout this process.</p> <p>Recognizing limitations to our current system, the department is interested in developing a satisfaction survey that would be distributed to families upon case closing to elicit important feedback from our consumers relative to service delivery/provision. The Department would request assistance by the CRP to help draft this survey. The Department would need to develop a QI plan as to how the information gleaned from these surveys would be utilized and disseminated to staff.</p> <p>2. Given the level of reporting that currently exists within the department, employees receive feedback on their performance on an ongoing basis by their supervisor. Additionally, Area Office Supervisors and Managers routinely receive feedback from parents and/or community providers on case specific concerns or issues. These issues are typically addressed in supervision. Supervisors often accompany social workers out in the field to model and/or assist the social worker in addressing important issues with families.</p> <p>3. Previously, the Training Academy had responsibility for the statewide</p>
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<p>1. DCF complete a thorough review of case practice standards for Treatment Plans and how they are approved.</p> <p>2. Review current CQI process and make enhancements as necessary. Consider CFSR findings.</p>	FAVOR	Bureau of Child Welfare/Quality Improvement Division	<p>1. The Division of Quality Management and the Monitor's Office conduct qualitative case reviews to assess whether the department is meeting the needs of children and families receiving DCF services on an ongoing basis. The Juan F. v Rell Revised Exit Plan and subsequent Stipulated Agreement requires the Monitor's Office to conduct a series of quarterly case reviews to monitor Outcome Measures relative to Treatment Plans and Needs Met. In this review, approximately 70-75 cases are reviewed. This review identified the need for greater supervisory oversight in the development of and approval of the treatment plan. In March 2007, an Action Plan was created to address case practice issues related specifically to meeting children's needs. These two outcome measures present significant challenges to the Department and will continue to be areas of focus this upcoming year.</p> <p>2. Based on CFSR findings, the Department established a Program Improvement Plan to address issues/concerns that were cited in the CFSR. In preparation for the second CFSR scheduled for September 2008, the Department is in process of developing a comprehensive statewide case review that will assist the state in identifying strengths and challenges in case practice. This holistic review will provide both a services and systemic profile of the agency and help identify areas requiring improvement. This CT Comprehensive Outcomes Review (CCOR) will adhere to the same process as the CFSR, utilizing the same instrument with only minor language changes required. Three sites have been identified to participate. Reviewers for the CCOR will consist of representatives from the Area Offices, Central Office and Court Monitor's Office. All reviewers will be trained on the instrument, process and CCOR requirements. Each Area Office will be provided a data profile consistent with the CFSR and responsive to Area Office needs to allow for a more detailed analysis. The reviews for these three locations are scheduled to be completed by July 2008. It is anticipated all Area Offices will have completed the CCOR by 2010. The Bureau of Continuous Quality Improvement will develop the statewide report documenting CCOR findings. Planning efforts will continue.</p>

			Timeframe: Ongoing. First round of CCOR will be completed by July, 2008.
CRP Members recommend some language modifications to the Parents Right to Know Brochure	FAVOR	Bureau of Child Welfare	The Department is willing to consider any recommendations made by CRP members. Timeframe: To be completed by 9/30/08.
CRC/DCF continue their partnership in finalizing an ACR Brochure	FAVOR	Quality Improvement Division	The Department will continue to work closely with the CRP to finalize the ACR brochure. Timeframe: To be completed by 6/30/08.
Develop quality improvement process to ensure children in foster care are informed of their legal rights. Specific questions are identified by SAC for this qualitative review and are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are children informed of their legal rights? If so, how is this accomplished? • How is access to legal counsel represented? • Is the Child's report to the Court given? • Do children understand the process of bring in care? • Is there a checklist available to inform children what they have access to or have been informed of by their social worker? 	SAC	Quality Improvement Division/ Bureau of Adolescent Services/ Bureau of Child Welfare	The Commission on Child Protection recently created a colored brochure that will be distributed to youth in care by their assigned social worker. The brochure was designed to inform adolescents in care of their legal rights as well as provide an overview of the specific services youth should expect to receive from their attorney. The brochure provides some guidelines and contact information for the Office of the Chief Child Protection Attorney if youth feel they are not being adequately represented. Policy will be updated to ensure social workers distribute this brochure to youth on their caseload. Additionally, these brochures will be distributed to youth during Adolescent Planning Conferences. Although it is not the role of DCF staff to provide legal advice to youth on their caseloads, workers do have the responsibility to ensure youth have ongoing access to their legal counsel, provide information regarding the legal process and invite their attorneys to all treatment planning meetings. In October 2007, policy was revised to include the Juvenile Court Appointed Attorney would be invited to all Adolescent Planning Conferences. Recognizing the disparity in legal representation for children and parents in Juvenile Court, the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children established a Committee to address the quality of representation for minor children and parents in CT. Their charge was to make recommendations to the new Commission on Child Protection, established by the CT General Assembly in 2005, in response to a lawsuit that was filed in 2004 by an association of private practice attorneys claiming the rights of children and families were being violated because of inadequate representation by court-appointed counsel. The lawsuit identified several areas of concern, including: lack of training; inadequate pay and compensation for services rendered; no clearly defined expectations and/or

		<p>standards of performance/practice; inadequate supervision/monitoring; and limited access to supports and resources necessary to perform their work effectively. The intent of the law was to create an independent entity that would take responsibility for procuring, training and supervising attorneys who represent minor children and parents. The committee identified problem areas in the state, conducted research to identify strategies from other jurisdictions and developed practice/procedural recommendations based on their findings. Many of the recommendations of the Task Force Committee were accepted by the Commission. Additionally, the Governor's Task Force has sponsored a number of contracted attorneys to attend out of state trainings to enhance their skills and knowledge relative to Juvenile Court so they can better represent children.</p> <p>The Bureau of Adolescent and Transitional Services will enhance efforts to develop materials that are age appropriate to help inform youth of their legal rights through the following mechanisms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. In 2004, the Center for Children's Advocacy developed a packet of materials that were designed to inform youth of their legal rights in foster care and about the responsibilities of DCF and others to keep them safe and secure. The booklet and accompanying video/DVD "I Will Speak Up for Myself" provides detailed information and resources for youth in care, providing education about their legal rights; contacts and visits with their family and community; clarifies expectations and their rights in foster care; the legal process; placement options and resources; health care; access to legal representation and information regarding educational opportunities. The Department purchased these materials several years ago and required all adolescent workers distribute this packet to youth on their caseload. The Bureau will continue this practice and will enhance these efforts by distributing these materials to Youth Advisory Boards, adolescent sponsored events, trainings and the initial adolescent planning conference to increase awareness. b. The Bureau will add to its website the Speak For Yourself booklet and, if possible, a streaming video of the DVD. c. The booklet will also be distributed at each Adolescent Training Conference to ensure maximum use by the adolescent population. It's distribution will be documented on the Adolescent Planning Conference form. d. The Bureau will train additional staff and relevant community providers on adolescent legal issues so they can help support youth in accessing their legal rights. e. Based on recommendations by the Youth Advisory Board, the Bureau
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<p>Department should ensure children have connections and consistency with siblings, social workers, foster parents/placements. Reports to be established that document the above.</p> <p>Report to be established that documents when it is not clinically appropriate for siblings to be placed together.</p>	SAC	Quality Improvement Division/ Bureau of Adolescent Services/ Bureau of Child Welfare	<p>The Department of Children and Families recognizes the importance of sibling relationships and extends every effort to place siblings together when removal from their family of origin is necessary, unless there is a compelling reason in their best interest to the contrary. Despite these efforts, many children are placed apart from their siblings when out-of-home care is required. Contact among sibling groups is sometimes limited and sporadic in nature. The extent of sibling contact and visitation is an issue that is typically discussed during Administrative Case Reviews. The Department, however, currently has no automated mechanisms in place to track the data and/or produce reports relative to this issue.</p> <p>The Department of Children and Families is committed to improving practice in this area by enhancing sibling connections for children placed in the foster care system. To that end, the Department is interested in contracting for a week long overnight camp experience for siblings placed apart through a competitive statewide procurement.</p> <p>The Contractor will provide the typical activities available through a traditional camp experience which may include horseback riding, swimming, hiking, fishing, rafting and ropes and/or other experiential learning courses. Additionally, the department is interested in structured activities (age and developmentally appropriate) designed to enhance sibling connections. These activities provide opportunities for siblings to feel empowered, enhance self-esteem, take pride in</p>

		<p>their accomplishments and be able to communicate with their siblings and others in a safe, accepting and non-threatening environment. We want this camp experience to open and enhance communication, restore and repair relationships that have been impacted by separation, as well as create positive childhood memories.</p> <p>A wide range of structured activities (day/evening) will need to be available to all age groups within the target population. Activities designed to engage younger children with their older siblings during the day will also need to be available. Activities should be developed and managed in a manner that is respectful, responsive and relevant to the culture and languages of the children served. In order to maintain these connections, the Department is interested in two additional follow up events throughout the year to provide additional opportunities for these siblings to be together, to share new experiences and build lasting memories.</p> <p>The Bureau of Child Welfare released this RFP in September 2007 and proposals were due for submission on 11/30/07. The Department is currently conducting the review process to evaluate proposals received. Upon completion, the review team will forward their recommendation to Commissioner Hamilton for review and approval. Upon approval, the Department will notify the awarded contractor, contract negotiations will begin and a Planning Committee will be established.</p> <p>There is a specific outcome measure contained within the Department's Exit Plan that requires the department to place siblings together unless there are documented therapeutic reasons in their best interest to the contrary. This outcome measure presents significant challenges to the department. Our focus continues to be on recruiting and retaining foster homes as this measure is largely contingent upon the availability of foster care resources. In order to evaluate performance relative to this measure, the department developed a specific report that tracks when it is not clinically appropriate to place siblings together. This information can be made available to the CRP for further review.</p> <p>The Department makes every effort to minimize foster care placements and the reassignment of cases whenever possible, recognizing the impact these disruptions and transitions have on children, families and service providers in the community. Some of these transitions are unavoidable. The department acknowledges the benefits to maintaining these connections, particularly for children and their substitute caretakers and will explore potential strategies to maintain these connections when feasible and in the child's best interest. This past year, the Foster Care Division has made efforts to increase the level of</p>
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<p>Report to be established that documents the services children/youth are receiving and documents the number of young people unable to access a service that is clinically appropriate.</p>	<p>SAC</p>	<p>Quality Improvement Division/ Bureau of Adolescent Services/ Bureau of Child Welfare</p>	<p>Administrative Case Reviews typically document the services children and youth are involved in as part of the treatment planning process as well as the service types that are unavailable. There is no mechanism in our current SACWIS system that would allow us to automate this information in a report on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>This information is also captured during multiple case reviews conducted by the Court Monitor's Office. Results of these case reviews have noted that although service needs are captured in narrative and/or through the ACR process, many of the children's identified needs are not incorporated into their individual treatment plan. This will continue to be an area of focus for the department this year.</p> <p>The Bureau of Behavioral Health and Medicine captures the following information: 1) The CT Behavioral Health Partnership produces a daily census report that lists all authorizations for children in intermediate and inpatient care settings. In addition, there is a quarterly utilization report that indicates the number of admissions and average lengths of stay by level of care. These reports look at DCF versus non-DCF members, adults versus children and local area;</p>

			<p>2) The Behavioral Health Partnership produces a Discharge Delay Report that tracks the percentage of children awaiting outpatient services in the community. This report is limited to collecting data for children who are placed in congregate care settings and are being transitioned to a lower level of care;</p> <p>3) The Department tracks information relative to the number of children awaiting residential/group home placement;</p> <p>4) Providers are required to report wait list information to the Department; and</p> <p>5) The Bureau is in process of establishing a Local Area Development Plan for 2008. This plan identifies goals and action steps designed to support local area system development and service expansion. Its primary focus will be to explore access to services and quality of service provision.</p> <p>Additionally, the CT Behavioral Partnership Program Study intends to evaluate the correlates between foster home placement disruptions and behavioral health utilization indications. Value Options will be conducting an analysis of the data to identify trends in the population for use in prioritizing behavioral health services and reducing behavioral health crises these children experience. Results will be expected in January 2008.</p> <p>The Department will explore the feasibility of establishing a report to track this information.</p> <p>Timeframe: To be determined.</p>
<p>Greater consistency among Bureaus in the process for the development/redevelopment of services is needed. Procurement process to be revised to ensure maximum stakeholder and provider input into service development and redevelopment. Develop/publish a partnership and procurement strategy to increase consistency among bureaus. Provider community needs to be informed about a number of key issues including, but not limited to: development of service types and provider expectations, service capacity and procurement.</p>	<p>SAC</p>	<p>Bureau of Adolescent Services/ Bureau of Child Welfare/ Contracts Division/Bureau of Behavioral Health</p>	<p>Including providers in system development and/or program redesigns is desirable. Working through partnership meetings between the department and provider associations, along with special efforts at convening all providers of a particular service type has proven to be useful and effective, particularly for this purpose. Recent examples include EDT, Safe Homes and EMPS. The caution we must exercise in order to protect contractors, department officials, and the procurement process, however, requires us to balance this outreach and engagement activity with the rules governing competitive procurement. In this sense, the reference to procurement in the statement below is not accurate. Relying upon providers to aid in the development of a "procurement strategy", for example, could threaten the validity of a procurement process. Alternatively, if the statement revolved around the development of program designs or raised questions regarding service continuums or treatment approaches, the spirit behind the notion can be fulfilled. It is our intent to do more of this--both formally and informally, with the provider community. The Department intends to pursue a Request for Information related to therapeutic foster care as a new approach to solicit provider input prior to release of a Request for Proposal.</p>

			Timeframe: Ongoing.
Provider community to be informed about criteria for moving children from congregate care settings, transitions to DMHAS/DMR for DCF youth, SSI application process and the establishment of independent living plans for youth.		Bureau of Adolescent Services	The Bureau of Adolescent and Transitional Services recognizes the need to educate and inform the provider network about departmental policies and procedures that are in effect as well as any new initiatives established within the Bureau. The Bureau has committed to monthly meetings with these providers to facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration. Timeframe: Ongoing.
Enhance access to psychiatric care for children – explore with existing organizations/child psychiatrists to increase capacity. Expand focus of group to include the expansion of resources. Assign CO administrative liaison to group.	SAC	Bureau of Child Welfare/Bureau of Behavioral Health	The Department recognizes there is an insufficient supply of child psychiatrists in the state. To address the capacity issue, the Department has developed a partnership with UCONN, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry to increase the number of psychiatrists who have an interest and experience working with children and adolescents in the public sector. In addition, the CT Behavioral Health Partnership is in the process of implementing a requirement that all Enhanced Care Clinics (ECCs) obtain signed Memoranda of Understanding with local primary care practices. The goal is to support primary care physicians in taking on more medication management with additional support from the ECCs. Prescribers at the ECCs will provide consultation services to the primary care physicians, if needed. Timeframe: The above requirement will go into effect by first quarter 2008.
DCF to develop a policy or framework to assist SW staff in helping young people graduate from high school and transition to post secondary education/training. The SAC identifies specific questions relative to college/post secondary education, provision of independent living skills and level of assistance DCF offers with college/scholarship applications.	SAC	Bureau of Child Welfare/Bureau of Adolescent Services	The Bureau of Adolescent & Transitional Services will partner with the Bureau of Child Welfare and the Division of Education to develop and promulgate policy regarding the role of agency staff in supporting young people in their completion of high school and in their pursuit of post secondary training and education. Each Area Office has access to an educational consultant who provides guidance and technical assistance to DCF staff for children and youth, ages- K-12. Within the Bureau of Adolescent and Transitional Services, there are 2 Pupil Services Specialists that focus primarily on post secondary education. These specialists have divided their responsibilities to best support DCF staff. One specialist focuses primarily on traditional colleges - providing more direct services to youth by assisting them with college applications, informing them of college options based on their interests and strengths, providing consultation to Area Office Social Workers and collecting data about youth's participation in post

			<p>secondary education. The other specialist provides case consultation services to DCF staff with the intent of increasing the knowledge base of DCF workers on post secondary options available for youth who may not qualify or have an interest in traditional colleges.</p> <p>The major emphasis of the Bureau is developing educational plans early on for youth rather than wait until their junior/senior year in high school to begin planning or having discussions about their future.</p> <p>The department established a partnership with CT Technical High School Systems which traditionally offer adult programs to begin offering Post Graduate Programs for our youth. Youth are also advised about the pros/cons of Job Corp as a viable Post Secondary option for some of our adolescents. Additionally, the Department is a member of the Workforce Investment Board that offers employment services for young people. All DCF youth are eligible to participate and receive specific services in the areas of resume building, job opportunities, post secondary training and certification programs.</p> <p>Adolescent Planning Conferences provide a forum to assess youth's abilities and interests and to formally discuss their educational future.</p> <p>Timeframe: ongoing</p>
DCF to develop and expand formal process for young people to give input about their experiences in DCF care. Quality assurance system to be developed to track the implementation of youth recommendations over time.	SAC	Bureau of Child Welfare/Bureau of Adolescent Services/Quality Improvement Division	<p>The Bureau of Adolescent & Transitional Services presently uses a variety of forums to collect critical feedback about the services we provide to this population. Youth Advisory Boards, Youth Advisory focus groups, Youth Advisory Board policy reviews, the Youth Voice Survey and Adolescent Conferences to gather information and recommendations from youth in out of home care. It is their intent to further formalize the process through partnering with other bureaus by developing a tool that reaches across the entire agency to help identify individual and systemic issues. This information could be tracked and aggregated to provide useful information. The Department intends to explore the feasibility of developing a report to capture this information.</p> <p>Timeframe: June, 2008.</p>
Youth should be encouraged to participate in enrichment and empowerment activities. DCF to track participation in these and other activities. Develop a mechanism to enhance communication about these opportunities for youth beyond the social worker	SAC	Bureau of Child Welfare/Bureau of Adolescent Services/Quality Improvement	<p>The Bureau of Adolescent & Transitional Services will continue to provide youth with enrichment and empowerment activities such as the Adolescent Training Conferences, The Wilderness School, The Black Greek Alliance activities, The DCF Latino Youth Coalition, the Parenthood program, Rites of Passage and numerous other youth-centered activities. The Bureau will gather input and</p>

informing them.		Division	<p>recommendations from youth through the Youth Advisory Boards, surveys and by other means. Additionally, the Bureau will be updating their webpage on the DCF intranet that will provide an array of events/opportunities for youth and links to other important sites. Flex funding is available to the Area Offices to help support children/youth's participation in enrichment activities available/offered in the community, if linked to the child's individual treatment plan.</p> <p>Timeframe: June, 2008.</p>
Develop a mechanism (annual conference) and communication strategy to coordinate various activities and recommendations being made by multiple advisory councils that exist to advise the Department.	SAC	All Bureaus	<p>The Department will explore various options to coordinate recommendations, feedback and activities from the various Advisory Groups.</p> <p>Timeframe: September, 2008.</p>