

## 2003 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MAUI CITIZEN'S REVIEW PANEL

### Federal Outcome Measures: Maui County's Performance

See attached matrix

#### **1. Reduce the recurrence of CAN**

The Maui section had similar annual results in the FY ending June 30, 2003 (FY 03) as in the previous FY. Similarly, they met the federal standard in 2 of the 4 quarters in FY 03 as they did in FY 02.

#### **2. Reduce the incidence of CAN in foster care**

The Maui section met the federal standard in all four quarters of FY 03. This is an improvement from the previous FY in which they met the standard in three of the four quarters.

The quality of foster parents, the training of the foster parents and the monitoring of foster placements appear to have contributed to the Maui section's performance.

#### **3. Increase permanency for children in foster care**

Although there are no federal standards for this category, the Maui section's performance represents a priority on reunification and adoption permanency. This performance is consistent with the previous FY's data.

#### **4. Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry**

a. As in the previous two FYs, the Maui section's annual percentage met the federal standard, in addition to meeting the federal standard three of the four quarters. Their efforts seem to indicate they are meeting the intent of the law by reunifying families and keeping the family intact. One can assume part of the success is due to families utilizing the services, efficacy of services and specifically, follow up services are effectively maintaining the family unit.

b. The Maui sections re-entry rate, although not meeting the federal standard, improved from the previous two FYs. It appears that the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter spike skewed the annual percentage, and as did the "threatened harm" language in the statute.

The Maui section CRP also believes the priority towards reunification, as reflected in the 4. a. results, heightens the possibility of increased re-entry. However, the CRP does not feel the Maui section should sacrifice reunification efforts to minimize re-entry numbers.

Lastly, the Maui CRP does not feel re-entry is always synonymous with harm or re-abuse.

**5. Reduce time in foster care to adoption**

The Maui section again met its annual goal as they did in the previous FY. However, unlike the previous FY, the Maui section achieved the goal in all four quarters.

This achievement is significant in that it suggests improved efficiency in finalizing adoptions, decreasing foster care drift and increasing permanency for children in foster care.

**6. Increase placement stability**

Due to the lack of data for the fourth quarter, no determination was made regarding the Maui section's performance. The Maui section did not meet the federal standard in the first three quarters however; all three percentages hovered just below the federal standard.

There appears to be an upward trend in the Maui section's performance from the previous two FYs.

Review of 2002 Recommendations:

- A. In 2002, the CRP suggested that the State develop an MOU with the DHS-CWS, DOH-CAMHD, DOH-DD, DOE and the Judiciary to facilitate case management for children, especially those with special needs and severe disabilities.

2003 Outcomes:

In 2003, the CRP again made aware through CWS staff in Maui County that extremely high needs and/or medically fragile (such as "drug baby") children typically with serious health issues, continue to challenge the foster placement system. There are not sufficient therapeutic foster homes and/or regular foster homes able, trained and/or willing to work with this kind of child. CWS workers express that foster care is not the appropriate case manager for children with severe health issues, but that often these children fall into the foster care system. CWS expressed serious problems in securing placement in therapeutic foster homes cooperatively with other state departments.

At the December 2003 meeting, the CRP was advised by SOH staff that the DOH and DHS have just signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding DOH therapeutic foster homes, which are normally short term. The MOU states that if the child is placed for more than 6 months, DOH will pay for that bed. The committee has not seen the MOU, nor has enough time elapsed to determine its effectiveness.

- B. Purchase of Service Contracts

In late 2002 and 2003, the State of Hawaii changed its POS in Maui County:

- Contracts can be as long as 5-6 years;*(contracts are for two years with two possible renewals)*
- Contracts were combined with other federal monies to allow a full time staff and office on Lanai.*(Per the community's request, three contracts [4-B, Diversion & Comp Counseling] were blended into one RFP/contract)*

The CRP feels that the DHS contract monitor's office lacks money/manpower for quarterly audits. As such, the Maui Section Unit supervisor can and does act as a defacto monitor. Furthermore, the Maui section social workers are to be commended for choosing to establish working relationships with the different POS contractors as an informal means of monitoring the contract and ultimately insuring families receive quality services.

The Maui CRP feels the POS contract process be amended to allow the department to consider past performance (both positive and negative) in determining contract awards.

C. Chronic shortages and case load issues

In 2002, the CRP recommended that the SOH address chronic staff shortages and case load issues by: 1) developing a relationship with the UH MSW program to design and create a practicum to regularly employ graduate students and 2) by prioritizing recruitment and retention with appropriate staff.

D. 2003 Audits

State of Hawaii, Marion Higa, released a lengthy follow-up audit in August 2003. Key findings are attached hereto.

*Unlike the federal audit, the Maui CRP was not offered the opportunity to provide input. Furthermore, the CRP felt that recommendations were made across the board and negated a section's proficiency in that recommendation area. It was not clear to the CRP how the auditor arrived at her conclusions. Most significant, was the absence of any strengths of a department and/or sections. The federal audit in contrast, noted strengths and areas of improvement. The pattern of audit deficits decreases the validity of her office's audits. Therefore, the Maui CRP places more weight and credibility in the more balanced federal audit. (I moved this paragraph from Section C. above)*

The auditor did not contact Maui CRP and our experience does not correspond entirely with her findings.

### Legislative Audit

Representative Michael Kahikina conducted statewide community hearings on CWS. Two Maui CRP members attended the Maui community meeting and came away very disillusioned, with both the process and the outcome. Unfortunately, much of the discussion and testimony revolved around individual complaints about how their divorces were handled in Family Court. Little was mention about CWS.

The CRP notes that CWS has no jurisdiction in a divorce, unless the court finds and sustains harm to the children. The Maui testimony involved contested divorces and not CWS cases.

The Maui CRP has concerns as they have yet to receive Representative Kahikina's report on the findings of his community meetings yet he has introduced two CWS-related bills in the current legislative session.

### Federal Audit

In 2003, Federal onsite auditors interviewed the Maui CRP. This in-depth audit, being conducted nationwide, impressed the CRP as thorough and accurate. While the State of Hawaii failed to pass, Maui County's reunification rates and process were rated highest in the State.

## E. Recommendations

1. For semi-annual statewide CRP meetings to be held to discuss and identify common concerns/issues throughout the state. Use the meetings as a forum for collaboration to suggest recommendations the DHS Administration.