

WEST HAWAII
CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

ANNUAL REPORT
September 2002 – April 2004

OVERVIEW

The West Hawaii Citizen Review Panel (WHCRP) is the newest member to the State's Citizen Review Panels and has been meeting since September 18, 2002. Panel members range in experience and knowledge of our Child Welfare System, but all have a passion for West Hawaii children and families.

Because members of the panel come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, the majority of our meetings were dedicated to increasing the panel's knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of our child welfare system. Speakers and topics included:

- An attorney to discuss GAL; federal laws regarding CAN
- Police officers
- DHS former director
- CSW administrator
- State centralized intake supervisor

Panel members also attended public forums and Program Improvement Planning meetings.

WHCRP discussions concluded that there are societal and CWS issues that impact the children and families in West Hawaii. In particular, the issues are the ice epidemic, centralized intake and staffing issues in CWS.

Statistics reveal that because of the ice epidemic there are far more children in foster care and more children being moved to permanent placement outside the biological family. The ice epidemic has also increased the special needs of children who are exposed to violent/traumatic experiences. The effects of the ice epidemic have hard hit West Hawaii. Evidence is visible in the statistical section of this report.

The issue of centralized intake has been unique to West Hawaii as we were the first to pilot this new process for reporting. A section of this report has been dedicated to centralized intake and is more fully discussed there.

Personnel and staffing issues are often sensitive as many are attempting to do more with few resources. The WHCRP believes that our report provides a clear and strong case for necessary action to re-allocate CWS resources. WHCRP members understand that statewide, CWS workers are carrying large caseloads and working very hard. However, we have found that West Hawaii workers are carrying more cases per worker with a larger geographical area to cover than anywhere else in the state. This issue is clearly detailed statistical section of our report.

The WHCRP has spent much time and effort in putting together this report on behalf of the families and children of West Hawaii. We believe that our findings and recommendations can and will mean positive changes for West Hawaii families and children.

CENTRALIZED INTAKE

Centralized intake for West Hawaii began in 2002 amongst mixed reactions. As with any new system, centralized intake had its own implementation “kinks” to work out. The West Hawaii Citizen’s Review Panel applauds the intention of centralized intake which is to improve the consistency, reliability and quality of intake services and decisions, including decisions to divert appropriate cases to DHS contracted diversion programs and other community resources.

The West Hawaii CRP included Centralized Intake on several of the 2002 and 2003 meeting agendas and also invited guests to speak to the issue of centralized intake. Police representatives, CPS management, and state intake supervisors were just a few of the guests who provided the CRP with insight on centralized intake. These meetings revealed concern that the new intake system was inconsistent and there was the feeling that intake staff were not always responsive to the needs of callers.

Since its inception, it appears that centralized intake has improved somewhat, although the WHCRP continues to receive negative comments from community members regarding the system. There seems to be a discrepancy between CWS’ intent to work well with the communities it services and the “rule” of centralized intake that reports may not be made in a CPS office in person with local staff and can only be made through calling the number in Honolulu. Hawaiian families are especially reluctant to communicate with CWS in this manner. It appears that centralized intake alone is not sufficient. There needs to be a direct connection to the community for the community to feel comfortable and that its express needs are supported.

WEST HAWAII STATISTICS

Information to complete this section was gathered from the State DHS office, www.fedstats.gov, and the CWS Statewide Outcomes Report. An analysis of the data was conducted and the findings are as follows:

Of the eight Sections included in the CWS Statewide Outcomes Report for FY2003, the West Hawaii Section had the poorest performance in four of the most serious outcomes pertaining to repeated maltreatment.

West Hawaii had the greatest number of children (39) who were victims of confirmed child maltreatment during FY 2003 and who had **another confirmed maltreatment within six months** [Outcome 1.1].

West Hawaii had the greatest number of children (8) who were victims of confirmed child maltreatment during FY 2003 with an actual harm and who had **another confirmed actual harm within six months** [Outcome 1.A].

West Hawaii had the greatest number of children (20) who were victims of confirmed child maltreatment during FY 2003 with a threatened harm who had another confirmed threatened harm within six months [Outcome 1.D].

West Hawaii had the greatest number of children (10) who were in foster care during FY 2003 and were victims of confirmed maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff [Outcome 2.1].

POPULATION BY COUNTY – 2002

HONOLULU	896,019	73%
MAUI	134,007	11%
HAWAII		
EAST HAWAII (58%)	89,780	7%
WEST HAWAII (42%)	65,013	5%
KAUAI	59,946	4%

PERCENTAGE OF CASELOADS
PER POPULATION

EAST HAWAII	.010
WEST HAWAII	.009
KAUAI	.007
HONOLULU	.005
MAUI	.004

NUMBER OF CASES
PER TOTAL STAFF POSITIONS

(Based on total positions, less vacancies, as of 12/03)

EAST HAWAII	20
WEST HAWAII	17
HONOLULU	16
KAUAI	12
MAUI	11

PERCENTAGE OF
OPERATING FUNDS

HONOLULU	63%	\$ 1,420,619
EAST HAWAII	13%	303,416
MAUI	13%	289,049
KAUAI	7%	49,792
WEST HAWAII	4%	96,817

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

West Hawaii has only 5% of the state population, yet it has:

- the greatest number of children who had another confirmed maltreatment within six months;
- the greatest number of children who had another confirmed actual harm within six months;
- the greatest number of children who had another confirmed threatened harm within six months;
- and the greatest number of victims of confirmed maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff.

West Hawaii has only 5% of the state population, yet it has:

- the second highest percentage of caseloads per population, second only to Honolulu, which has 73% of the state population.

West Hawaii has only 5% of the state population, yet it has:

- the second highest number of cases per total staff positions, with more cases per total staff positions than Honolulu, Kauai, or Maui.
- Despite these statistics, West Hawaii has the smallest operating funds in the state, representing only 4% of the total operating funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The WHCRP recommends that CWS allow community members to make reports in person in the local CPS offices, which reports can then be submitted to centralized intake by local CPS staff. This would fulfill the communities' needs as well as the procedural needs of CWS.

The WHCRP recommends a re-allocation of operating funds and staff positions to focus funding and staffing in West Hawaii, where the needs of the children to be protected from repeated abuse and maltreatment are currently the greatest in the state of Hawaii.

Jude Donald, Chair
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