

Illinois Citizen Review Panels

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STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

Report for FY 2008

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Citizen Review Panels

The Illinois Citizen Review Panels are established pursuant to Section 106 (c) of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Their function is to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of State and local agencies and where appropriate, specific cases, to evaluate the extent to which State and local child protection agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.

In particular, the Citizen Review Panels must evaluate:

- The Illinois state CAPTA Plan and the specific areas of the child protective system which are addressed therein;
- The state's compliance with federal child protection standards and assurances set forth in the CAPTA law; and
- Any other criteria that the panels consider important to ensure the protection of children, including: 1) a review of the extent to which the State and local child protective services system is coordinated with the foster care and adoption programs; and 2) a review of child fatalities and near fatalities.

The Child Abuse Prevention And Treatment Act

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was signed into law in 1974. It is one of the key pieces of federal legislation that guides child protection and is fully elaborated in U.S. Code (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq; 42 U.S.C. 5116 et. seq.). It was reauthorized with significant amendments and additions in 1978, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2003. The Citizen Review Panels were first introduced in the CAPTA amendments of 1996 and were further delineated in the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the agency designated in Illinois to implement the provisions of CAPTA and meet requirements set out in federal law. Within DCFS, the Division of Child Protection administers many of the programs and grants required under CAPTA, including the Citizen Review Panels. CAPTA also includes a range of

requirements in other areas including community-based prevention, adoption opportunities, and assistance to abandoned infants.

The Development Of Citizen Review Panels In Illinois

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services established four Citizen Review Panels to examine the policies and procedures of state and local child protective service agencies. Authorizing legislation for the Illinois Citizen Review Panels amended the Illinois Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 505/5) effective June 1999. According to the provisions of CAPTA, the individual states may: 1) designate one or more existing entities to satisfy the citizen review requirements; and 2) appoint volunteer members who are broadly representative of the community, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

In forming the panels, DCFS invited four existing advisory committees to take on citizen review activities in addition to their other interests and statutory responsibilities. Each panel includes a variety of members who have experience in working with children and families. The CFS Advisory Council and SCAN have members who represent professional organizations, child welfare agencies, volunteer associations, and concerned citizens. The Children's Justice Task Force and CDRT Executive Council have members from numerous disciplines including medicine, mental health, law, criminal justice, public health, education, social work, parent advocacy and child advocacy.

A **Citizen Review Panel Steering Committee** oversees the Citizen Review process, formulating guidelines for consistent operation of the panels and assisting with communication between the panels and DCFS. The Steering Committee includes DCFS administrators and program supervisors as well as the chair and vice-chair of each Citizen Review Panel. A list of Steering Committee members and Panel members is included in the appendix to this report.

Overview of 2008 Activities

The Illinois Citizen Review Panels have continued to grow in their knowledge of the DCFS child protection system during the past year. In a response to CRP Recommendations of

2007, DCFS has responded with a letter from Acting Deputy Director George Vennikandam, Division of Child Protection. Representatives from Child Protection and several other DCFS Divisions meet regularly with the panels to discuss current priorities for child safety and the protection of children from abuse and neglect.

Gwen Mastin, Chairperson of the SCAN panel, along with Diane Scruggs, Vice-Chair of the SCAN panel and a member of the Child Death Review Executive Council, attended the 7th Annual National Citizen Review Conference held in St. Paul, Minnesota on May 21 – 23, 2008. The 2008 conference included presentations by numerous state CRP program coordinators and offered opportunities for participants to share information about successful programs, panel membership, outreach to the community, and recommendations to their child welfare agencies. Presenters from the American Bar Association Center for Children and the Law, National Resource Center for Child Protective Services, Administration for Children and Families Children's Bureau, and the authors of *Top 20 Teens: Discovering the Best-Kept Thinking, Learning, and Communicating Secrets of Successful Teenagers* and *Parenting Top 20 Kids: Developing the Potential in 0 – 8 Year Olds* focused on several topics including recent federal child welfare legislative and policy developments, planning strategies of key importance to Citizen Review Panels, and developing connections and creating change in the lives of others.

Illinois Citizen Review Panels have an important role in advising DCFS and affiliated private child welfare agencies about the safety and protection of children from abuse and neglect. Members of the Illinois panels are educated on their responsibilities through the **CRP Orientation Guidebook** which delineates various citizen review responsibilities and provides members with practical information on the operation of the various committees. The members have approached their responsibilities with dedication and resolve, and they serve as an integral part of the Department's outreach to communities throughout the state.

PANEL ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Panel 1. Children and Family Services Advisory Council

The Children and Family Services Advisory Council is appointed by the Governor to advise the Department of Children and Family Services on its services and programs. The Council is established in Illinois law, 20 ILCS 505, and its composition is mandated to include 17 members who serve staggered 4-year terms. Members can request renewal of their terms. The CFS Council meets quarterly in Chicago, Springfield, or by teleconference. Micki Chulick, Executive Director, Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) in DeKalb serves as the chairperson. Dr. Cheryl Peterson, Citizen Review Panels Coordinator, and Ms. Bridgette Glickman, Community Liaison, Division of Communication, facilitate the meetings of the CFS Advisory Council.

Meeting Dates for FY 08

The CFS Advisory Council held a meeting on the following date:

November 5, 2007

Membership Update

The CFS Advisory Council met only once by teleconference during fiscal year 2008. This meeting was held to discuss CFS Advisory Council membership. The current membership of the council is only six members due to council members resigning or retiring and no new members being appointed over the past 3 years. The members that attended the November teleconference discussed membership issues. All current members were still very committed to the council and wanted to continue to pursue getting new members appointed. At the meeting, Cheryl Peterson stated that several possible candidates have been submitted to the Governor's Office over the past few years, but the Governor's Office has failed to respond. Cheryl said she would continue to contact the Governor's Office, through Dana Yowell, DCFS Legislative Liaison in regards to the CFS Advisory Council membership appointments.

In January the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions sent out information to the current members of the CFS Advisory Council asking them to renew their application to serve

as a member of the council. In May, the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions contacted Cheryl Peterson. The office stated that they were eager to get members appointed to the council, and would be moving forward with the current new and reappointed applications that they have received.

The CFS Advisory Council hopes to get new members appointed by the Governor's Office for the next fiscal year. Due to the lack of members the council met only one time during fiscal year 2008. Therefore the Focus Areas of Interest and Recommendations generally remained the same as fiscal year 2007.

Focus Areas of Interest

The CFS Advisory Council identified the following areas of DCFS policy and practice for exploration and discussion during 2008:

- The CFS Advisory Council current members are committed to the council and will seek Governor's Office appointments for more members to fill the vacancies of those who have resigned or retired from the council.
- DCFS services and programs for wards who are aging out of the system, experiencing problems in placement, or who are involved with the juvenile justice system. Adolescents, in particular, appear to be in need of alternative educational opportunities, life skills training, and individual mentoring to prepare for independence.
- An ongoing, structured outreach and marketing program to provide training for mandated reporters and to advertise the web-based curriculum developed by DCFS. The group is especially interested in exploring ways to provide special training and information about mandated reporting to religious institutions and clergy.
- Changes occurring within the public and private sector foster care system and how these changes affect services to children in placement.

Educational Presentations

Web-based Mandated Reporter Training - Annette Stafford joined the conference call in November to talk about the web-based mandated reporter training. The web-based training was launched on April 17, 2007 and there has been a lot of positive feedback regarding the

training. Annette talked about how she has met with junior colleges in Cook County and they have agreed and are excited to offer the training to their students, especially students who plan to work with children. The colleges are even considering offering a college credit to complete the training. The colleges are also working to find creative ways to promote the website to their students including placing the website as a point of interest on the school calendar.

Recommendations

The Children and Family Services Advisory Council continues the following recommendations for FY 2008:

1. DCFS needs to work closely with probation departments, community organizations, residential placement agencies, and foster parents to develop services for adolescents who are transitioning from detention facilities back into the community and who need to be prepared for independence, particularly as this relates to housing, education and employment.

2. DCFS should continue to expand its training outreach to mandated reporters, should market its web-based training curriculum for access by all mandated reporters, and should develop specialized mandated reporter training for clergy.

3. DCFS should support increased outreach and collaboration with other state agencies, particularly the Illinois State Board of Education, Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Corrections in order to provide services to abused children and increase programs designed for prevention of further maltreatment.

4. DCFS should continue to monitor the implementation of P.A. 92-295/HB 3055 in schools to determine if it is effective in protecting at-risk children from further abuse.

5. DCFS must invest in more training of private agencies; more recruitment, support, and training of foster care providers; and more funding for post-adopt services to keep families stable and intact.

Future Directions

The CFS Council will work with DCFS staff and the Governor's Office to address the problem of new member appointments to replace those members whose terms expired in 2005. The Division of Child Protection will continue to provide leadership to the Council in conjunction with the Division of Communication.

Panel 2. Statewide Citizen's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect

The Statewide Citizen's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) is made up of members with experience and knowledge of Illinois human services, educational and health care, children with special needs, child and family advocacy, and community life. The Director of DCFS appoints members of SCAN to 3-year staggered terms. The committee advises the Department on child abuse and neglect prevention services as well as community-based services that promote the health, safety, and well-being of children throughout the state. SCAN is an advisory group to DCFS, and its establishment is a part of the *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA, 325 ILCS 5/11.7)*, the Illinois statute that governs child protection throughout the state.

SCAN holds bi-monthly meetings throughout the year. The October meeting is scheduled in conjunction with the Annual Prevent Child Abuse Illinois Conference and brings all the members together for a day of in-person discussion. The other meetings are held via videoconferencing between three sites: Springfield, Chicago, and a downstate location. Gwen Mastin serves as the SCAN chairperson; she is the President and CEO of New Phoenix Assistance Center in Chicago. Diane Scruggs, Executive Director of Healthy Families Chicago, serves as the SCAN vice chairperson. DCFS Administrator, Gail Jackson, serves SCAN as the Department's liaison and coordinator.

Meeting Dates for FY 2008

The SCAN Committee held meetings on:

August 15, 2007

October 24, 2007

December 5, 2007

February 20, 2008

April 16, 2008

June 18, 2008

Focus Areas of Interest

The SCAN committee identified the following areas for exploration and discussion during 2008:

- SCAN began the year finalizing two Request for Proposals:
 1. Improving the Parenting of Male Foster Children with Children. The goal of this proposal is to reach all male foster children with children or fathers to be and provide services that will assist in breaking the cycle of child abuse and neglect.
 2. Improving services to Intact Families with Children 0 – 3. The goal of this proposal is to enhance the quality of Child Welfare Services delivered, so they can break the cycle of child abuse and neglect. Both programs are funded by the Child Abuse Prevention Fund commonly known as the Illinois Tax Check-off.
- The SCAN committee conducted a case file review on October 24, 2007. Members reviewed a total of 19 serious abuse and neglect investigative case files with an indicated finding. The files were randomly selected from each Region statewide. Each reviewer noted comments / concerns on each case reviewed and discussed.

File Review Concerns:

 - No signatures on safety plans
 - No reference family referred for counseling or other services

Overall the committee felt the case files documentation was complete and all appropriate forms were attached such as the CERAP, Safety Plan etc.
- The continued monitoring and evaluation of the DCFS Mandated Reporter Training. The need for additional awareness and training of the mandated reporter laws for all professionals covered in the mandated reporting statute.
- The issuance of additional Requests for Proposals that focus on programs for male wards of the state who are young fathers and intact families with children aged 0 – 3 that are at risk for child abuse and neglect.

Activities

SCAN conducted their usual schedule of meetings during the fiscal year 2008. SCAN continues to stay invested in the issue of improving the level of reporting by mandated reporters. SCAN was impressed with the Web-based Mandated Reporter Training that was successfully launched on April 17, 2007 and sees this training as an excellent resource for mandated reporters. However, the committee remains concerned that without a *required* minimum level of in-service training on reporting suspected child abuse and/ or neglect mandated reporting will not improve to the degree that it is needed. SCAN continues to discuss the possibility of a legislation being drafted to tie required training to licensure or certification by the State of Illinois for professionals covered in the mandated reporting statute. SCAN would like to see mandated reporter training have more uniformity and continuity among all disciplines especially among school personnel.

The SCAN committee also continued to focus considerable attention on the issuance of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that specifically solicit development of new prevention-oriented projects to be funded from the State Tax Check-Off fund. It was decided that these projects would focus on two groups: male wards of the state who are young fathers and intact families with children aged 0 – 3 years old who may be at risk for abuse and neglect.

During this fiscal year, seven RFPs were awarded. Seven different agencies, four in Cook, one Northern and two in Southern Regions received funding for new programs. Two of the seven programs focus on male wards who are fathers and five of the programs focus on intact families with children aged 0 – 3 years old who may be at risk for abuse and neglect. Each agency has set up their program with specific goals that each participant or family will achieve.

- Passages Alternative Living Programs in Chicago, Illinois set up the “Fatherhood Program for Male Foster Children with Children” on October 1, 2007. The program looks to define and strengthen the male’s understanding in what it means to be a positive person and father in today’s society.
- Hoyleton Youth and Family Services in East St. Louis, IL set up the “Improving Services for Intact Families with Children 0 – 3” Program on October 1, 2007. The goal of this program is to promote a family environment that protects the children from abuse or

neglect and provides healthy child development through services that enhance protective factors, such as parental knowledge of child development, bonding and nurturing and family support systems, and mitigates risks associated with vulnerabilities, such as parental isolation, poverty, or domestic violence.

- Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. in Sterling, Illinois set up the “Project Best Start” on October 1, 2007. The goals of this program include participants learning the importance of having a mutual support network of friends, family, and neighbors, how to best meet their children’s needs for health and safety, how to understand/ manage their infant’s/children’s behaviors in nurturing and effective ways, and how to manage their adult emotions related to parenting.
- Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois in Belleville, IL set up the “The Father’s Center” Program on April 1, 2008. The program looks to improve the father’s self-esteem, ability to provide for their child(ren) financially, and communication with their child(ren) and the mother of the child(ren).
- Uhlich Children’s Advantage Network in Riverdale, IL set up the “Intact Families Child Abuse Prevention Program” on April 1, 2008. The goals of this program include parents gaining knowledge and resources to support healthy parenting and that the children ages 0 – 3 meet their age-appropriate developmental milestones. The long-term goal would include the families remaining intact and avoiding all instances of child abuse or neglect.
- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago in Chicago, Illinois set up the “Enhancement Services Program for Families with Children 0 – 3” on April 1, 2008. The program’s goals include the preventing of further abuse and/ or neglect in the home, providing resources to ensure the healthy development of all children in the home, teaching parents appropriate skills needed to be an effective and nurturing parent.
- Lifelink Corporation in Chicago, Illinois set up the program, “Intact 0 – 3 Parent Coaching” on April 1, 2008. The goals of this program include the participants understanding typical infant development, the importance of a support system, how to foster their children’s optimal developmental achievement, and the nature of a parent /child bond.

The common goal among all of these programs is to improve the relationship between a parent(s) and child(ren) and look to prevent future incidents of child abuse and neglect.

Presentations on DCFS Activities and Projects

Updates on the Division of Child Protection: Kathy Roman, Associate Deputy Director, DCFS Division of Child Protection, presented information on current changes to the Department of Child Protection at the February meeting. She announced that Gailyn Thomas, Deputy Director of Child Protection had separated from the DCFS and George Vennikandam would be the point person for all divisional activities. She also reported on a downstate reporting structure change. The downstate Assistant Regional Administrators who focus on child protection functions of investigations and intact family services will report directly to her instead of their Regional Administrator. This change will allow for the Regional Administrators to focus on placement issues and their individual functions. She also talked about the new CERAP model that the safety workgroup presented to the CERAP Advisory Committee. The proposed new model is an enhancement of the current model that focuses on safety assessment and risk assessment in a more comprehensive way. Roman expressed that there is a concern that the work force is not ready for the new model in its entirety so they are looking to possibly phase in the new model.

Roman also discussed two new legislative bills that were passed August 28, 2007. HB 0617 that was enacted as P.A. 95 – 0527, Section 35.7 allows the Office of Inspector General to work with staff and error reduction. HB 0617 Section 45 states that a pilot program, Child Death Investigation Task Force, will be developed in the southern region that will assist in investigating all child deaths in this region. This task force is a part of the Child Death Review Teams process but will operate separately.

DCFS Director Erwin McEwen Shares His Vision: DCFS Director Erwin McEwen explained that his focus as the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services is on improving the quality of care for children and strengthening families. McEwen talked about the importance of providing treatment for kids in foster care, residential care, group care, independent living, and transitional living and not looking at these places as warehouses for kids. He expressed that there is a great need for appropriate services for children thirteen and older.

McEwen discussed that the Department is looking to establish programs to work with parents in their communities. The Department would like to organize parents around the idea of community awareness, and the parents will be encouraged to facilitate parent cafes in order to educate each other. Parents should also be empowered and make their own choices on where and who they want to help them. If parents get involved in community awareness and educate themselves it is likely that it will increase child safety and decrease risk.

The Director also discussed that the Division of Child Protection does 100,000 investigations a year. Eighty percent of these investigations are either closed or unfounded. The remaining twenty percent are opened and require a certain level of child welfare intervention. The Director would like to see these child welfare cases focused on family connection and not just family reunification. The Department is currently working with Chapin Hall, University of Illinois, and Northwestern on four main performance areas of DCFS in order to learn how to produce the best outcomes for these families.

Recommendations

For FY 2008, the SCAN Committee makes the following recommendations.

1. SCAN recommends that DCFS, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Department of Professional Regulation develop requirements for licensed professionals serving as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect to receive appropriate training on mandated reporting as a condition of licensure or certification. The agencies should share available resources in order to ensure that all licensed professionals understand the importance of required mandated reporter training.

2. SCAN recommends that DCFS promote the use of web-based technology to inform mandated reporters of their responsibilities and to provide them with a basic understanding of how to report child abuse and neglect to the DCFS statewide hotline. DCFS should also continue to offer in-person training for mandated reporters, should regularly update and reprint informational brochures and manuals, and should aggressively market and distribute its mandated reporting materials to all professionals. Individuals completing mandated reporter training should be issued a certificate form with their name on it.

3. SCAN members are interested in promoting greater public awareness of methamphetamine use and the effects that this can have on families and their children. Prevention materials should be widely distributed and DCFS should continue to work with other state government entities including the Illinois State Police, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse and private sector agencies to develop marketing and information sharing strategies to promote a coordinated intervention approach in cases of methamphetamine use or manufacture.

4. DCFS should initiate a new dialogue with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to promote the sharing of information on HB 3005/ P.A. 92-295 with school principals and develop protocols in order to determine how schools can best receive, maintain, transfer, and appropriately purge DCFS indicated findings of child abuse for implementation and consistency in managing child records. The review of these protocols should become part of each year's administrative in-service training for schools and should be listed on the meeting agenda.

5. Any agency that contracts with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and/or is licensed by DCFS will be required to annually demonstrate their on-going training as mandated reporters, and such evidence will be on file at the agency to be provided upon request.

Future Directions

SCAN remains focused on its mission as a Citizen Review panel and will be attentive to follow-up on this year's recommendations. SCAN continues its commitment to prevention initiatives and anticipates that the funding and development of new programs will have a significant impact on reducing the risk of children being abused or neglected.

Panel 3. Children's Justice Task Force

The Children's Justice Task Force is a multidisciplinary advisory group that makes recommendations to DCFS for improving the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse/exploitation and cases involving a combination of jurisdictions. The Task Force was first organized in 1989 according to guidelines in the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and it became one of the Illinois Citizen Review Panels in 1999. Recommendations from this panel are focused on reducing child trauma, enhancing the effectiveness of judicial and administrative actions in child abuse cases, and reforming state laws and regulations with regard to child protection and child welfare while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.

The members of Children's Justice represent professionals in the fields of child protection, law enforcement, medical and mental health, attorneys for the prosecution and defense, criminal and civil court judges, education, children with disabilities, child advocates, and parent advocates. The Task Force includes 28 members appointed by DCFS to staggered 4-year terms. The group meets quarterly at various locations throughout the state and by videoconference. The current chairperson is Kathryn Pomahac, Director of the Carrie Lynn Children's Center in Rockford; the vice-chairperson is Dr. Careyana Brenham, family physician and faculty member at SIU School of Medicine in Springfield. Cheryl Peterson, Ph.D. is the DCFS administrator and coordinator for Children's Justice.

Meeting Dates

The Children's Justice Task Force met on the following dates:

September 21, 2007

November 30, 2007

January 25, 2008

March 13-14, 2008

June 6, 2008

Focus Areas of Interest

The Children's Justice Task Force focused inquiry on the following areas of child protection policy:

- DCFS' continued funding support of current Child Advocacy Centers and continued efforts to build new advocacy centers in all counties that currently lack access to a center. Increased funding and/ or an Illinois location for Child Advocacy Center team training.
- Multidisciplinary coordination of child abuse investigative services, with additional training targeted to a joint audience of DCFS child protection specialists, law enforcement officers, and expert medical providers/facilities.
- DCFS initiatives focused on providing better front end investigative services in serious physical abuse cases.
- The examination of the current DCFS agreement between DCFS and the Department of Juvenile Justice regarding CANTS background checks and employer notification policy for employees indicated in cases of child abuse and/ or neglect cases.

Activities

The Children's Justice Task Force continues to focus on promoting the need for child advocacy centers covering all Illinois counties. The task force understands that it is a lack of funding that is impeding the progress of these centers. The task force works to support new ways to fund CACs like the provisions of HB 1391. HB 1391 allows for counties to add on additional offender fees for certain crimes and these funds are used solely to support CACs.

The CJTF also focused on the expansion of the MERIT Medical Program. The program works to expand the model of the medical resource centers (like Pediatric Resource Center and MPEEC) to all areas. A new medical resource program was funded under Children's Justice in Rockford. The medical resource center was built under the auspices of the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford. The medical resource center involves three hospitals in Rockford. The center will serve the Northwest Region including five counties and the outskirts of Cook County.

The CJTF is actively pursuing the need for an agreement between DCFS and the Department of Juvenile Justice covering background checks and employer notification of employees indicated for child abuse and/or neglect while working for the department. The task force believes that a person could very easily take advantage of children who are under his/her supervision in a juvenile correctional or juvenile detention facility. The group developed recommendations concerning the Department of Juvenile Justice including the DCFS Investigator notifying the Hotline of the perpetrator's work situation, the notification of the Department of Juvenile Justice when an employee is indicated of child abuse and/or neglect, the requirement of CANTS background checks for all new employees, and mandatory reporter training.

Educational Presentations

2007 Legislative Session – At the September meeting, Dana Yowell, DCFS Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, presented an informational discussion on several legislative bills that were of interest to the CJTF. The Sex Offender Registration – Juvenile – SB 121 would eliminate the provision that a person who has been adjudicated a juvenile delinquent for an act which, if committed by an adult, would be a sex offense would automatically have to register as an adult sex offender within 10 days after the person's 17th birthday. The law would provide that in all cases involving an adjudicated juvenile delinquent for an act, if committed by an adult, would be a sex offense the court shall determine at the sentencing hearing whether to order adult registration and the duration of the registration. Governor Blagojevich did not want to condone any leniency for sex offenders, and vetoed the law on August 24, 2007. The CJTF disagreed with this veto and continue to actively support the case-by-case approach of determining if a juvenile sex offender should have to register as an adult sex offender. (On October 17, 2007, Governor Blagojevich's veto was overrode by the House and Senate and an amendment, related to SB 1509, was added and modifications were made to SB 121 and the newly modified SB 121 was written into law as PA 95-0658. Public Act 95-0658 authorized mandatory juvenile registration at age 17, but included a specific court review petition, after 5 years for a felony charge and after 2 years for a misdemeanor charge, in which the person can be removed from the sex offender registry if the person meets certain conditions.)

Yowell also discussed the Juvenile Court – DCFS – Guardianship HB 291 which would raise the age limit to under 15 instead of 13 that a child can be placed into the guardianship of DCFS as a part of sentencing. The CJTF expressed concern that if this bill is passed it allows judges to place delinquent children in DCFS custody due to their delinquent behaviors and not for abuse and/ or neglect in which the DCFS system is designed. These children are also difficult to place in a foster home because of their past behaviors. The CJTF decided that DCFS should be notified prior to the day of sentencing if it is a possibility that a delinquent child is going to be placed in custody due to delinquency so a discussion can be had and a placement can be sought prior to the actual sentencing. (HB 291 was passed on October 17, 2007 and was effective June 1, 2008.) Lastly the Child Abuse – Notice to Police HB 421 was discussed. This bill was passed on August 10, 2007 and requires that DCFS notify, within 24 hours, the police of all serious cases of child abuse.

Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB)—Dan Nelson, Jennifer Wooldridge, and Chevyone Haig – Wood from the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board spoke about their organization, their mission, and introduced their new website to the task force (www.ptb.state.il.us/aboutus.htm). The mission of the ILETSB is “to provide standards and training which enhance law enforcements ability to readily and quickly adapt to our rapidly changing society and which can lead to public recognition of law enforcement as a profession”. The presenters talked about mobile team units. A mobile team unit is a team of local government officials that provide in-service training to local and state law enforcement officers. The purpose of the unit is to encourage the increase and upgrade of knowledge and skills of local and state law enforcement agencies. The benefits of the mobile team training are affordability, availability, accessibility, local control, and quality instruction. The current popular topics for training are domestic violence, sexual abuse, use of tasers, and autism sensitivity training.

Division of Child Protection Update— At the November meeting, Gailyn Thomas, Former Deputy Director of Child Protection, spoke about recent activities within the Division of Child Protection. Thomas talked about the newly revised CERAP that will be most likely be used in the future by DCFS workers. The new model has been in the works since 2005

and is designed to assess immediate safety (safety assessment) and dangerous risks to the children (safety management).

She announced that DCFS has purchased 30 new cameras and 7 new printers for DCFS offices. New computers were also purchased for all DCFS staff and laptops were purchased for direct service workers. With the new cameras and new computer systems DCFS workers are able to upload pictures on to SAQWIS. Cell phones now have unlimited minutes and pagers have been discontinued.

A new scene investigation curriculum is getting ready to be introduced. All child abuse investigators will receive new investigation kits that will include a thermometer, ruler, tape measure, flashlight, and dolls. The training curriculum for all staff will be delivered in 2008.

The DCFS web-based training that is accessible through the DCFS website, www.state.il.us/dcfs has proven to be successful. The website had received 29,000 hits since its launch date in April. DCFS is working to find more ways to promote the website. Currently the website is being directly offered to students at four community colleges including Truman, Harold Washington, Kennedy-King, all in Chicago and Lincoln Land in Springfield.

DCFS posted 148 positions for direct service staff in the Division of Child Protection and Program Operations. The positions were all posted at one time and included positions located throughout the state. Supervisory positions have been opened up to people who have other degree qualifications besides a MSW. The goal of the department is to have worker ratios of 9:1 for investigations, 12:1 for intact family services, and 15:1 for children in placement.

The tax check off funds for child abuse prevention resulted in the issuance of requests for proposals for two new services. The first service is to intact families with young children ages 0 – 3 and the second is to males who are wards of DCFS and are fathers. These two services were recommendations made by SCAN.

Lastly, she addressed the issues of the Department of Juvenile Justice. The Department is working to provide training to the Cook Juvenile Detention Facility especially with the regard to reporting potential abuse or neglect. The department is aware of the need for appropriate screening of personnel of the Juvenile Justice System through CANTS and criminal background checks.

Update on DCFS Integrated Assessment — Paul Langevin, DCFS Administrator, presented the “IDCFS Integrated Assessment Program” to the task force. The Integrated Assessment was designed to improve the field’s ability to address not only safety and risk concerns but also the medical, educational, developmental, behavioral, and emotional needs of the children and the adults caring for the children. The integrated assessment includes many various assessments that require information from all parties including the intake coordinator, clinical screener, clinical supervisor, permanency worker, the permanency worker’s supervisor, caregivers, and the children. All of the information must be gathered within a 45 day timeframe starting with the day the child enters DCFS custody. After the 45 days a comprehensive assessment report is written which leads to the service plan. The service plan addresses the medical, developmental, educational, and behavioral / mental health needs of the parent(s) and child. The Integrated Assessment is updated throughout the life of the case.

Langevin highlighted the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) instrument as one of the important assessments that is a part of the Integrated Assessment. The CANS instrument allows the clinical screener and caseworker to establish a baseline level of the child’s and the family’s functioning. The CANS is re-administered at different times to assess progress towards permanency and well-being.

Overall, the Integrated Assessment has been designed as a tool to help DCFS better evaluate the needs of the family, assist in creating goals that will eventually fulfill the needs of the family, and ultimately reunite the family. Langevin explained that there is current research being done regarding the Integrated Assessment. Chapin Hall is currently working with DCFS to evaluate the program implementation. DCFS is very interested in finding a way to see if

the Integrated Assessment is improving the outcomes of children who enter DCFS custody and their families.

Operations of the DCFS Hotline — Linda Williams presented on the DCFS Hotline at the January meeting. The hotline was started in 1980 and consisted of only a twelve person staff. The current hotline staff has grown to an eighty-nine person staff and consists of response workers and supervisors. The hotline is open and staffed twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. A supervisor is always on duty to make final decisions regarding a call. All calls are recorded. The hotline averages 250,000 calls per year. The hotline not only serves as the child abuse/neglect hotline but it also is in charge of placement clearance for all children currently in custody, and it performs background checks for all organizations who work with children.

Multidisciplinary Approach to Child Abuse Investigations – Jim Radcliffe, Sheryl Essenburg, and Kathy Schimpf presented the accomplishments and challenges of the multidisciplinary approach to child abuse investigations. Jim Radcliffe, a Retired Juvenile Court Judge, discussed the development of Child Advocacy Centers and the Integrative Assessment as two of the most important DCFS accomplishments. Radcliffe explained that the CAC discovery process is thorough and complete and is an excellent resource for the court system. The Integrative Assessment is beneficial because it offers a judge a lot of detailed information in a multidisciplinary fashion.

Sheryl Essenburg, an Assistant State's Attorney, talked about two challenges of child abuse investigations – collaboration and training development. She explained that the best way to approach the investigation is through collaboration. Future generations need to understand the importance of collaboration. Training needs to continuously be developed and improved. Different disciplines need to learn not just about their one specialty of the investigator but about all aspects of the investigation.

Kathy Schimpf, a Child Advocacy Center Executive Director, explained two challenges of the multidisciplinary child abuse investigation – funding and member turnover. Child Advocacy Centers that perform multi-disciplinary child sexual abuse investigations work on limited

funding. Increased funding is needed so Child Advocacy Centers are able to cover current costs and to broaden these services. The turnover rate of a child advocacy team member is high and the average stay is only three years. When a CAC team member leaves the entire team is affected.

DCFS Training Initiatives – Annette Stafford, DCP Training Coordinator, presented on three new DCFS training initiatives. DCFS is currently planning a special training on scene investigation procedures for child protection investigators. New investigation kits have been purchased for all investigators, and the training incorporating these kits will be interactive and include scenarios for the investigators to analyze and practice. The Division of Child Protection has also developed a new curriculum approach for child protection staff. The new training will include classroom, in-line, and field-based instruction. Lastly, mandated reporter training continues. DCFS is currently working with community colleges in Chicago to offer regular classes on mandated reporting. DCFS will eventually extend this effort to downstate Illinois.

Recommendations

During 2008 the Children's Justice Task Force identified the following recommendations as having critical importance to the achievement of its child protection goals:

1. DCFS must continue their commitment to work to support existing Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and develop additional CACs/satellite sites in unserved counties so that every child throughout the state of Illinois has access to coordinated investigative services provided by an accredited CAC.

2. DCFS must provide funding and technical assistance to develop new protocols and procedures for the inclusion of physical injury cases into the multidisciplinary investigative approach of Children's Advocacy Centers. These protocols must ensure that child victims of abuse are receiving medical evaluations by physicians with expertise in the area of child abuse medicine in a timely manner. DCFS should develop a system where these physicians with the child abuse expertise can be easily identified and contacted in cases of suspected physical abuse.

3. Illinois must expand and enhance the development of regionally-based Child Protection Medical Centers to ensure that children alleged to have been abused or neglected have access to a medical evaluation by physicians with expertise in child abuse medicine and who can also provide effective leadership, communication, training, and support to other professionals and court personnel involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse.

4. DCFS should work in partnership with law enforcement, states attorneys, mental health providers, school personnel, and Child Advocacy Centers to develop appropriate responses to children who sexually act out in the community, including intrafamilial, neighborhoods, and schools. Specialized interventions, including effective diagnostic and therapeutic programs, need to be implemented for these children, and when necessary safe and appropriate placements of these children should be made. Supportive education and training resources must be made available for parents, foster parents, and service providers.

5. DCFS should develop a legislation that would provide funding for additional counseling sessions for child victims of sexual abuse. The ten sessions that are provided by a Child Advocacy Center is not enough for young victims of sexual abuse. A network of mental health professionals with skills in counseling children who have been sexually abused could be developed and made available to all service agencies. The professionals would be required to complete specific educational credits to be made a part of the network.

6. DCFS should actively support legislation which encourages individual assessment, treatment, and tracking for juvenile sex offenders and which prohibits categorical imposition of adult sex offender registration standards on juveniles.

Future Directions

The Children's Justice Task Force will continue to promote the multidisciplinary approach to child abuse investigation and will work to improve communication within the system of professionals who serve on the front lines of child protection.

Panel 4. Child Death Review Team Executive Council

The Child Death Review Team Executive Council was formed in 1998. It coordinates the operational procedures of the nine regionally-based Illinois child death review teams and advises on statewide projects like the Annual Report and CDRT Symposium. The CDRT Executive Council includes the chairperson and vice-chairperson of each regional team for a total panel membership of eighteen. Public Act 88-614 (September 1994) established the Illinois child death review teams in state statute; amendments to P.A. 88-614 in 2001 authorized the executive council.

The CDRT Executive Council operates according to the following objectives: 1) to serve as the voice of child death review teams in Illinois; 2) to ensure that the data, results, findings, and recommendations of the teams are adequately used to make changes in policies, procedures, and statutes to protect children; 3) to collaborate with the General Assembly, DCFS, and others to develop legislation needed to prevent child fatalities and to protect children; 4) to ensure that the review process for the regional teams is standardized; 5) to develop an annual statewide training symposium; and 6) to assist in the preparation of an annual CDRT report. Dr. Daniel Cuneo of Belleville is the CDRT Council chairperson and Ms. Clairice Hetzler, Executive Director, Children's Action Network in Quincy serves as vice-chairperson. Ms. Sherry Barr is the DCFS Coordinator. Ms. Kate Watson is the Program Coordinator contracted through DCFS.

Meeting Dates for FY 08

The Child Death Review Team Executive Council met on:

September 7, 2007

April 11, 2008

November 9, 2007

April 17, 2008

December 14, 2007

January 11, 2008

January 22, 2008

February 8, 2008

March 14, 2008

Focus Areas of Interest

During its meetings in FY 2008 the CDRT Executive Council reviewed a number of statewide issues and concerns regarding:

- The development of the Child Death Investigation Task Force in the Southern Region of Illinois.
- Availability of quality training for DCFS workers on cases involving parental domestic violence, parental mental illness, and parental substance use and how these affect competent parenting.
- Prevention initiatives that focus on dangers to children from 1) drowning; 2) children sleeping with parents; 3) parental substance abuse, particularly methamphetamine; and 4) paramours caring for children.
- The promptness and quality of DCFS' responses to Child Death Review Recommendations.

Activities

The CDRT Executive Council continues to hold monthly meetings in which the Executive Council members approve all recommendations that have come out of the nine child death review teams. If the recommendations are approved they are sent to the DCFS Response Team. The CDRT Executive Council also uses these monthly meetings to discuss any other business or updates.

The CDRT Executive Council has been focused this year on working with DCFS on developing the Child Death Investigation Task Force for the Southern Region of the state. The Illinois' Child Death Review Team Act 20 ILCS 515/45 empowers the Illinois' Child Death Review Team Executive Council to create and oversee a Child Death Investigation Task Force. The task force will assist in the investigations of sudden, unexpected, or unexplained deaths of children under the age of 18 years.

The Child Death Investigation Task Force will need to submit a report for each individual death case containing findings and recommendations to the CDRT Executive Council, the Director of DCFS, DCFS Inspector General, and the States' Attorney's Office, the State Representative, and the State Senator in whose jurisdiction the case arose. The task force is a pilot program and the Executive Council's job is to oversee the task force and submit a final report on January 1, 2010, to the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services, the General Assembly, and the Governor. The report will summarize the results of the program and include any recommendations for statewide implementation of a protocol for the investigation of all sudden, unexpected or unexplained child deaths.

The Executive Council is working to hire an Executive Director for the Child Death Review Team Program, and a Task Force Coordinator for the Child Death Investigation Task Force. The Executive Council has worked diligently on the job qualifications and job descriptions for these two positions. The Council hopes to have these two positions filled early in fiscal year 2009.

The Child Death Review Executive Council continues to review recommendations from all nine Child Death Review Teams related to paramours causing the deaths of children especially infants. The current paramour campaign is called "How well do you know your lover?" The campaign is aimed at increasing awareness of the role played by paramours in situations of child abuse and neglect. Paramours, or live-in boyfriends and girlfriends, are often not prepared to be the caretakers of young children although they often assume this role when mothers are at work or school. Brochures, in English and Spanish, containing this information continue to be printed and distributed. The Executive Council takes every opportunity to distribute these brochures along with order forms to agencies who work with families. The brochure remains in high demand and almost 25,000 of them have been sent out to public and private agencies at their request.

CDRT Executive Council continues to be represented on the collaboration with DCFS, Department of Human Services, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, the Red Cross and the Illinois Department of Public Health in furthering the promotion of the statewide public awareness campaign on child drownings. The campaign, *Get Water Wise---Supervise*, which was first developed in 2003, in response to a Child Death Review recommendation. The campaign continued to flourish throughout this fiscal year. The Committee continues to offer and encourage their message to be spread by news programs, radio programs, newspapers, and newsletters. Committee members take every opportunity to attend conferences and community events aimed at parents and children to share the message. The committee offers English brochures, Spanish brochures, English posters, Spanish posters, and PowerPoint CD presentations on the dangers of water for young children free of charge.

The Executive Council has talked about the SUIDI form that gathers extensive information about a SIDS death. The form, however is very long and many coroners and medical examiners would not have the time to complete the entire form. The Executive Council member, Duane Northrup, Champaign County Coroner, compared the SUIDI form to the Infant Mortality Form that all coroners are mandated to

complete. He then combined the two forms into a 2 sided-one page form. The combined form includes all the information included on the Infant Mortality Form and some additional information that was on the SUIDI form. Northrup is trying to work with the Infant Mortality Program to possibly replace the mandated Infant Mortality Form with his new combined form. The information included on the new form would be beneficial for SIDS research.

The 12th Annual Child Death Review Team Symposium was held September 6 - 7, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. The presentations included: 1) Sudden Infant Death During Sleep Epidemiology and Physiology by Dr. James Kemp from Saint Louis University; 2) Child Death Review: Improving our understanding of why children die and taking action to prevent child deaths by Teresa Covington of the National Center for Child Death Review; 3) Irresponsible Medical Testimony and 4) Investigation of Child Deaths by Dr. Mary Case, the Chief Medical Examiner for St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson, and Franklin counties. The symposium was well attended with approximately 120 members present.

The CDRT Council collaborated the printing and distribution of the ***Illinois Child Death Review Teams Annual Report 2005***. This report provides detailed information and statistics on numerous categories of child death. It also presents charts of CDRT recommendations and DCFS responses regarding: 1) primary prevention; 2) DCFS systems; and 3) other systems. The Annual Report for calendar year 2006 is currently being developed.

Educational Presentations

Investigation Task Forces – Steve Cardona, an Aurora Child Death Review Team Member, presented on the basics of an investigation task force. He discussed general issues of membership and activation. He talked about the importance of having law enforcement agencies, states attorneys, and coroners all supporting the task force. He also stressed the importance of offering training that includes scene investigation, medical and child abuse information to all individuals involved in the task force. This training is a great benefit for not only the task force, the individual, but also the individual's law enforcement agency as a whole.

Recommendations for 2008

1. DCFS should continue to offer support to the Child Death Investigation Task Force. The Child Death Investigation Task Force will need the cooperation of DCFS, including a DCFS

representative on the Protocol Board, in order to develop and implement a successful task force.

2. Hospital emergency rooms and local law enforcement agencies need to be educated about the importance of promptly reporting all fatal, near fatal, and suspicious injuries of children to the DCFS Hotline. A training initiative should be implemented that targets new employees and that systematically provides educational seminars to all regions of the state on a biannual basis. In turn, DCFS investigators must immediately request the assignment of a trained, experienced police detective to assist with investigations involving situations of fatal child abuse and serious child injury.

3. DCFS must continue to expand and update staff training to provide all child protection investigators, and intact and permanency caseworkers—including those authorized through Purchase of Service agencies—with the skills and tools needed to assess risks to children posed by domestic violence, parental mental illness, parental substance abuse, including but not limited to alcohol, cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine.

4. The CDRT Executive Council recommends that DCFS continue to aggressively market and promote the drowning prevention brochures, posters, CDs and media presentations for “Get Water Wise—Supervise.” Any parenting classes that are specifically funded under contract with DCFS and/or targeted to DCFS families should be required to include the CD PowerPoint information on drowning prevention in the curriculum used for the classes.

5. The CDRT Executive Council recommends that DCFS actively promote the paramour prevention brochures, “How Well do you know your Lover?: Children in Danger”. The child abuse homicides at the hands of paramours continue to be cases reviewed at all nine child death review meetings. The prevention message of the dangers of these paramours needs to be required curriculum in all parenting classes.

Future Directions

The CDRT Executive Council will continue to make recommendations that provide for more child and family services and increased public awareness about issues of child safety and protection. The Executive Council is actively implementing the new Illinois legislations, P.A. 95-0405 and P.A. 95-0527, that require additional reporting by DCFS on responses to CDRT recommendations, that establishes a separate organizational approach and funding appropriation for child death review, and that authorizes a pilot project Child Death Investigative Task Force for the Southern Region of Illinois

**THE DCFS RESPONSE TO
CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM 2007**

Date: May 20, 2008
To: Members of the Illinois Citizen Review Panels
From: George Vennikandam, Special Assistant to the Director, Division of Child Protection

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services appreciates the work of the Illinois Citizen Review Panels. It is evident from the Annual Citizen Review Report 2007 that each of the 4 panels has been dedicated in gathering information, reviewing child welfare policies, and learning about DCFS programs/private sector programs to help protect the children of our state from abuse and neglect. Your recommendations create a “community of concern” which is vitally important to achieve positive outcomes for all children who come in contact with the DCFS child protection system.

In response, DCFS staff prepared this letter to provide an explanation of the steps that the Department has taken during 2007 and 2008 to address your recommendations. We look forward to continuing a partnership that has accomplished so much in helping to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of Illinois children.

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING INITIATIVES

Mandated Reporter Training

The Department centralized all requests for Mandated Reporter training and the scheduling of staff for presentations. The manager in charge of this process assures that there are appropriate staff persons available to present and distribute appropriate reference materials for agencies requesting training.

The Department convened a committee in 2005-2006 to assess the feasibility of standardizing the Mandated Reporter in-service curriculum with the following objectives: 1) training a cadre of DCFS staff to conduct in-service training using the standardized curriculum; 2) offering regular monthly training dates at central locations throughout the state; 3) offering a pre- and post- test and a certificate of completion; 4) tracking participants via testing and sign-in sheets; 5) notifying the mandated reporter community of the training schedule on DCFS websites and via communication with employment departments, notices to educational institutions, professional newsletters, etc. A standard PowerPoint presentation has been prepared for use by trained DCFS personnel across the state.

Additionally, the Department has begun offering in-person mandated reporter training at four City of Chicago community colleges and a Springfield area community college. Advantages for this approach include a regular schedule of presentation dates and locations to which entities with mandated reporting staff can send participants. The plan is to post dates and locations on the DCFS website and include information in communications with employment department, notices to educational institutions, professional newsletters, etc. The initial trainings, of which there were 14, were held in early 2008 and an expansion of the community college locations is scheduled for 2009.

10 West 35th Street, 10th Floor • Chicago, Illinois 60616
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Web-based Mandated Reporter Training

Throughout 2007 and 2008, the DCFS Divisions of Child Protection, Clinical Practice/Staff Development, and Communications have worked closely with the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center and the Chicago Public Schools to further advertise and promote the state-of-the-art online training for mandated reporters developed during 2006-2007. The web-based training approach is interactive, engaging, informative, and comprehensive. Several professionals and members of the Citizen Review panels were approached to provide feedback on the original model. Announcement of the online training website was launched during a press conference in Chicago on April 17, 2007. The site provides a pre- and post-assessment of specific information learned as well as training on the overall concepts related to mandated reporting. Training participants can print a personalized certificate of completion at the conclusion of their session.

Staff of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) have been some of the heaviest users of the web-based training. The Chicago Public Schools have inserted a special internal system for the web-based training that allows CPS employees to access instructions and information directed specifically to school situations and issues of CPS policy. Overall, the web-based training has registered over 21,000 participants during its first year of operation. DCFS is pleased to recommend this training opportunity and continues to promote the Web Training as an accessible and motivational training for all mandated reporters and particularly for those who are new to their responsibilities. The website can be accessed via a link at: www.state.il.us/dcfs.

Mandated Reporter Manual

At the conclusion of the 95th General Assembly in July 2007, several new laws were passed that impacted the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, ILCS 325 5. DCFS recorded the appropriate changes to the statutes impacting mandated reporters and updated the Manual for Mandated Reporters effective January 2008. The manual's most current revision is available on the DCFS website in the Library section. Depending upon the nature of any changes, the Department may prepare a subsequent distribution to agencies and individuals bearing responsibilities as mandated reporters.

Direct Service Leadership Training

In 2007, DCFS Executive Staff in the Division of Child Protection developed specialized workshops for the division's management staff. The training was designed to empower, motivate, encourage, and enhance leadership skills that management staff could take and apply to practice in the field.

The Division of Child Protection (DCP), working in conjunction with Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, sought to find a speaker who was an expert in Leadership Training and Motivational Training and who had a child welfare background. Barbara McKinney Jackson of the University of Chicago, along with 2 of her colleagues, was selected as the main presenter. DCP conducted a survey of 80 upper and mid level managers. A total of 33 surveys were returned, a list of nine topic areas was ranked and three open-ended questions on leadership were discussed. The four major topics preferred were:

- improving low performance
- dealing with difficult personalities
- motivation and inspiration, and
- improved teamwork.

Other topics included managing conflict, refining leadership, communicating effectively and defining leadership and were also addressed as sub topics. The agenda for the training in was based directly on feedback from the management staff who would be attending the Conference.

The participant evaluation results were overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the conference covered all stated objectives. Ninety –two percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would implement what they learned. They were impressed by the knowledge and teamwork of the three trainers and indicated the conference stood out as a unique and valuable professional development. Forty DCFS, Operation/ DCP Mangers from around the state attended.

In 2008, the training is planned as a one-day training for Regional Administrators, Assistant Regional Administrators, Child Protection Managers, and Field Operation Managers. The Division of Child Protection extended the invitation to include all of the Department of Children and Family Services Executive Staff Divisions, especially including the Division of Program Operations, Office of the Guardian, Office of Legal Services, Division of Permanency Planning, and Division of Service Intervention. The training is scheduled for August 2008

Scene Investigation Training

In 2008, the Department has developed a Scene Investigation Training in coordination with the Office of the Inspector General. This is a full day training that specifically addresses child protection specialists and their supervisors for improvement of information gathering when first investigating a report of abuse or neglect. The training also emphasizes the new procedures related to the investigation of Allegation # 11/61 which refers to Cuts, Welts, Bruises, Abrasions, and Oral Injuries. The Division of Child Protection is in the process of distributing scene investigation kits to child protection workers.

CHILD PROTECTION PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Out-of-State Hotline Number

The Department has published the out-of-state telephone number for those individuals wanting to make child abuse and/or neglect reports. The number (217-524-2606) is accessible on the IDCFS website, via a link on the Illinois government website and is displayed prominently in conjunction with the online Mandated Reporter training and its link at: www.state.il.us/dcfs.

House Bill 3055/ P.A. 92-292

When SCR sends notification of a finding of child abuse to a school's principal, the letter summarizes information about HB 3055. The letter explains the purpose for the notification, the length of time the notification should remain in the student's public school file, and confidentiality aspects of the notification. School administrators may contact the DCFS administrator in charge of the State Central Registry (SCR) by phone or fax with any questions. The SCR administrator regularly responds to school personnel inquiries about HB 3055 and provides in-person training and information at educational facilities upon request. The Illinois State Board of Education has offered to work with DCFS to post further clarification of P.A. 92-292 on the ISBE website.

Methamphetamine Awareness

The DCFS Office of Communications worked closely with the SCAN Committee throughout 2007 to produce a methamphetamine prevention brochure and flyer targeted to schools and youth audiences. The

materials are completed and have been distributed. The brochures are titled “10 Ways Meth can Mess with You” and “Meth Fact Sheet” and are available on the DCFS website at www.state.il.us/dcfs/library/index.

The Department partnered with the Illinois State Police and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop the Drug Endangered Children (DEC) protocol . The protocol standardized the procedures of “first responders” to child abuse and neglect situations when the illegal production or use of methamphetamine is suspected. The DEC protocol:

- provides Law Enforcement investigators with a child welfare response system that quickly addresses the needs of any involved children;
- minimizes delays in the DCFS response in order to ensure child protection and safety;
- promotes a coordinated investigation between Law Enforcement and DCFS Child Protection that protects the integrity of the evidence needed for each investigative system; and
- ensures that all affected children are enrolled in school, as appropriate.

In addition to the investigative protocol, DCFS developed the 1) Statewide Medical Care Protocol for Drug Endangered Children in Illegal Methamphetamine Labs; and the 2) Physician’s Guide for Medical Examination of Children Exposed to Methamphetamine Laboratories. Caregivers are also provided with a special guidebook for the care of children exposed to methamphetamine labs. The Illinois State Police conducted all training of DCFS staff and Purchase of Service Providers on the Drug Endangered Child Protocol.

As part of the Department’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP) filed with the Administration of Children and Families (ACF), a committee was convened to revise the Substance Affected Families/Substance Exposed Infant policy. One signification modification included processes for screening youths suspected of substance misuse. Revisions were incorporated in the statewide Reunifications Training that was delivered to staff in 2006.

Drowning Awareness Campaign

DCFS and several of its partner agencies assisted the Office of Communications in further promoting and disseminating the new brochure and new posters designed in 2007 to advertise the *Get Water Wise--- Supervise* drowning prevention campaign. This campaign was initiated in 2003 upon the recommendation of the Child Death Review Teams and has continued to be a focus for DCFS prevention activities during the spring and summer of 2008 with thousands of copies distributed to recreational programs, health departments, public parks, and private sector businesses. The posters have been printed in both English and Spanish, and they communicate a powerful message to parents and caregivers about the importance of adult supervision at all times when children are in and around water. The posters and brochures were featured during an extensive media campaign conducted throughout the state during 2007. Governor Rod Blagojevich proclaimed May 2008 as Drowning Prevention Month in Illinois.

CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATION

Child Endangerment Risk Assessment

The Department convened a workgroup to review the Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP) and make appropriate revisions to the instrument and corresponding training. The work of this inter-divisional committee included evaluating current definitions of safety and risk, factor application,

safety plan development, etc. Targeted implementation of a field-level pilot study began in the fall of 2007 and is continuing to expand throughout 2008.

Children's Advocacy Centers

Thirty-eight Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) have been established in Illinois and they serve 85 of the state's 102 counties. DCFS provides funding to 36 of these centers of which 26 are accredited through the National Children's Alliance; 10 of the remaining CACs are working toward accreditation. In addition to funding, DCFS provides ongoing assistance to CACs in the form of: 1) case investigations or team coordination needing problem resolution, 2) governing board and budget issues, and 3) information/support on training and funding opportunities. DCFS collaborates with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois, the state chapter office of the National Children's Alliance, to ensure that CACs are operating effectively and to assist them in their endeavors to achieve accreditation.

In 1996 the Illinois Legislature appropriated funds into the DCFS budget specifically for CACs and continued to increase the appropriation annually until FY05, at which time there was a 2.25% across-the-board cut to the General Revenue Fund which reduced all CAC grants. FY 08 CAC grants remained level. Of the 17 counties that currently have no access to CAC services, DCFS has met with community members from 5 counties who are interested in establishing a CAC; however, no funding is currently available to provide assistance with start-up or continuing grants. The federal Children's Justice grant has been utilized during FY 07 and FY 08 to fund expansion and enhancement funding for 10 CACs, but all available funding is currently committed. DCFS Director Erwin McEwen is solidly supportive of the Children's Advocacy Centers but budget shortfalls have not allowed for any expansion during FY 2008. DCFS staff remain steadfast in their recommendation for additional state revenue funding for CACs in FY09 to assist in the development and start-up of new Children's Advocacy Centers in the 17 counties that remain unserved.

The Chicago Children's Advocacy Center (CCAC) has indicated willingness—via a formal proposal—to expand its scope to include reports of serious harm upon completion of its facility expansion project. The proposal is under consideration by the Department.

DIVISION OF SERVICE INTERVENTION

Cooperative Agreements with Department of Juvenile Justice

DCFS established an effective communication network in 2004 with the new Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Both DCFS and DJJ have liaisons who have met and developed protocols for the exchange of information. DJJ provides DCFS with initial and quarterly written reports of the youths' progress during their incarceration. DJJ agreed to support and has continued each youth's active participation in his/her administrative case reviews (ACR) and Child and Youth Investment Team Meetings (CAYIT). DCFS staff are mandated to attend all parole hearings. Cases of all youth involved in the criminal justice systems (youth that are in juvenile detention centers, adult jails, and correctional facilities) are reviewed quarterly. The purpose of these reviews is to determine receipt of services received during incarceration, maintain communication between the youth and his/her case manager, and insure effective planning is occurring in preparation for their placement upon release.

Cross-trainings have taken place with adult parole to address placement issues of youth released from adult correctional facilities. DCFS continues to communicate with the supervisor of the sex offender

parole unit regarding placement issues of Department youth. DCFS has developed programming to address placement needs for youth exiting corrections (juvenile and adult) via contracts with Lutheran Child and Family Services and One Church One Family. Lutheran Child and Family Services has been able to provide placements for youth in home settings or with relatives and has developed other specialized foster home placements for youth leaving correctional facilities.

Transitioning DCFS Wards to Independence

Transition planning for DCFS adolescents for whom family reunification, subsidized guardianship, or adoption is not an option is an ongoing process. It begins with an assessment of the adolescent's needs and allows for input from the youth, caregiver, teachers, counselors, youth's family, and caseworker. DCFS uses the Ansell-Casey Life Skills assessment to develop well-defined transition plans for youth transitioning to self-sufficiency. Policies and programs are in place to expand post-secondary educational opportunities for youth; to support vocational training, job skills, job placement and retention; to promote mentoring programs with dedicated adults; and to offer financial, housing, and counseling support. The Department offers the following programs through the Office of Education and Transition Services:

- ***Youth in College/Vocational Training*** – provides a monthly grant to youth in care who are attending college full time and maintaining a 2.0 GPA. Assistance with purchasing books and supplies is also provided.
- ***Youth In Scholarship*** – 48 scholarships are awarded annually. Youth in care, youth who aged out of care, and youth who achieved permanency through adoption or guardianship are eligible to apply for the merit-based scholarship. Scholarship winners receive a monthly grant, a medical card, and help with purchasing books and supplies.
- ***Community College Payment Program*** – pays tuition and fees expenses for youth in care for up to 4 semesters, after financial aid has been applied.
- ***Education and Training Voucher Program*** – youth in care, youth who aged out of care, and youth who achieved permanency through guardianship or adoption at age 16 or older are eligible for up to \$5000 per year to assist with “cost of attendance” expenses at an accredited post secondary program.
- ***Employment Incentive Program*** – youth in care who are working a minimum of 20 hours per week can receive \$150/month, and up to \$200 one time to assist with purchasing work related clothes, supplies, etc., for a maximum of 12 months.
- ***Life Skills Program*** – youth in care are required to have an Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment at ages 14, 16 and 6 months prior to leaving care. Life skills training is available through contracted agencies for youth showing deficits or needs.
- ***Added Chance Employment Program*** – youth in Cook County can participate in pre-employment workshops or job placement through the Alternative Schools Network
- ***Alternative Schools Network*** – 275 slots are available to youth in care who are not succeeding in traditional school to be placed in an alternative school setting.

Conclusion

The Department of Children and Family Services welcomes continued recommendations from the Citizen Review Panels. With the assistance of these advisory committees, DCFS and its partners will assure continuing improvements to the child protection system throughout Illinois.

APPENDIX

LIST OF CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS STEERING COMMITTEE
June 2008

Members

Micki Chulick, Executive Director
Community Coordinated Child Care
Chair, CFS Advisory Council

Gwendolyn E. Mastin, President, CEO
New Phoenix Assistance Center
Chair, SCAN Committee

Diane Scruggs, Executive Director
Healthy Families Chicago
Vice-Chair, SCAN Committee

Kathryn Pomahac, Director
Carrie Lynn Children's Center
Chair, Children's Justice Task Force

Dr. Careyana Brenham
SIU School of Medicine
Vice-Chair, Children's Justice Task
Force

Dr. Dan Cuneo
Clinical Psychologist
Chair, CDRT Executive Council

Clairice Hetzler, Executive Director
Children's Action Network
Vice-Chair, CDRT Executive Council

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George Vennikandam, Special Assistant
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