

Annual Report 2002



*Kentucky Citizens
Review Panels
for
Child Protective
Services*

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"The language of citizenship suggests that self-interests are always embedded in communities of action and that in serving neighbors one also serves oneself."

~ Benjamin R. Barber

Introduction

This is the annual report from Kentucky's Citizens Review Panels (CRP), which are groups of citizen-volunteers formed through an amendment to the federal Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA). The panels were started in July of 1999.

The purpose of the Citizens Review Panels is to provide an evaluation of Kentucky's Cabinet for Families and Children. This is done by evaluating how well the Cabinet adheres to its policies and procedures, whether or not the adoption and foster care systems are working well together, and whether or not the Cabinet is coordinating with other agencies in the community to serve children and families. Panels may also look at any other part of the system, including staff training and turnover, child fatalities, etc.

The Panels are located in the Gateway/Buffalo Trace, Bluegrass Fayette, KIPDA Jefferson, and Purchase Regions and are composed of over 60 volunteers who meet monthly.

This is a public report and may be shared without permission from its authors. It is posted on the CRP web site: www.uky.edu/socialwork/trc

For additional copies, please contact:

Blake L. Jones, MSW, LCSW
University of Kentucky College of Social Work
1 Quality Street
7th Floor
Lexington, Kentucky 40507
Phone: (859) 257-7210
Email: Bljone00@uky.edu

Report from Program Coordinator



The year 2002 has brought an amazing wealth of exciting and progressive moves for Kentucky's Citizens Review Panels. The citizen-volunteers have worked diligently to assist the Cabinet for Families and Children in improving services for children and families.

It has been my pleasure to help develop a new citizens review panel in the Gateway/Buffalo Trace Region. A group of ten citizens has been meeting monthly since April to look at services provided, especially as they relate to law enforcement and the judicial system. These citizens have proven to be a committed and enthusiastic group! I would like to thank my colleague, Carla Lemon, for taking over the coordination of the Fayette panel so that I can devote my energies to this new panel.

As with any relationship, sometimes there are chances for growth and extension beyond our comfort zones. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was one such opportunity. This document (attached as an addendum to this report) outlines the specific duties of the citizens review panels as well as the Cabinet. It is hoped that this will more clearly define the roles of each and ultimately aid the panels in becoming authentic partners in the protection of children.

Finally, the national interest that Kentucky has received has been amazing. Several Kentucky CRP members attended the "Pipe Dreams or Possibilities" conference in May (see p. 4) and have committed to helping develop a national infrastructure for the sharing of ideas between state CRPs. This includes a national website and listserv for the thousands of national volunteers. The first research on CRPs will be published in *Child Abuse and Neglect: The International Journal* sometime next year.

Blake L. Jones

National Citizens Review Panel Conference



L-R: Charlie Cooper and Karen Simpson (Maryland), Karl Porter (California),
Dr. Cheryl Peterson (Illinois)

An historic meeting was held in Lexington, Kentucky on May 22-23, 2002.

Citizens Review Panel Program coordinators and members from fifteen states gathered for the first time to discuss ways to authentically involve citizens in strengthening child protective services. States represented were: Ohio, Arizona, Florida, California, Minnesota, Tennessee, Maryland, Illinois, Arkansas, South Carolina, Idaho, Louisiana, Missouri, Michigan and Kentucky.

Although the title of the conference was "Pipe Dream or Possibility: Involving Citizens in Child Welfare," the resounding sentiment expressed after the conference was that this shift is not only possible, but crucial.

From the conference sprang many excellent paths to national collaboration. The 2003 conference will be hosted by South Carolina, and the University of Kentucky College of Social Work has agreed to develop a website that will house all states' annual reports (the address for this site is: www.uky.edu/socialwork/crp).

. Additionally, a listserv has been developed to let citizens review panel members and coordinators across the country share ways in which to make citizen participation in child welfare a reality.

Gateway/Buffalo Trace Citizens Review Panel Report



L-R: Cheryl Love, Carole McDaniel, Deputy Secretary Dr. Tim Jackson

Members

Chairperson: Goldie Williams

Co-Chair: Douglas Brown

*Marilyn Slone
Cindy Kerns
Gary Adkins
Jackie Johnson*
Gail Flora*

*Carole McDaniel
Cheryl Love
Shirley Earleywine
Shirl Branham
Shirley Burge*

** DCBS Liaison*

Activities:

The Gateway/Buffalo Trace Citizens Review Panel was founded in April, 2002, and is the newest panel in Kentucky. Much of this year has been spent learning about the Cabinet for Families and Children in terms of its policy, practice and procedure. The panel has done this through several ways: local Department for Community Based Services staff have given a broad overview of how investigations are handled as well as the adoption and foster care systems; Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet Dr. Tim Jackson spoke with the panel and gave them some direction about how they can most effectively work with the Cabinet; and Dr. Ruth Huebner discussed the recently completed customer satisfaction survey and also encouraged the panel to work with the Cabinet to ensure that

reliable data and conclusions are generated. The Panel was trained on the TWIST system.

Recommendations:

Since the panel is continuing to review its mandate and educate itself about the Cabinet for Families and Children, there are no recommendations at this time. As action steps are taken toward our evaluation of the child protective services system in our region, we will share them with our Service Region Administrator.

Future Plans:

We are continuing to assess how well the different agencies in our community work with the child protective services system. To that end, we will be launching a major survey this fall that will cover all ten counties in our region. The purpose of the survey is to help us gain a better understanding of how well DCBS works with community partners in serving children and families.

Four other areas/questions will be explored as well:

1. Law enforcement and judicial referral process (i.e., making sure process works from initial referral through court process)
2. How well are policies followed by DCBS staff after children are removed from the home (i.e., what follow-up is done)?
3. Education for mandatory reports and the public (i.e., cross training professionals in the field about reporting laws and requirements).
4. How well are staff responsibilities divided (i.e., is the amount of work equitably distributed among staff?)

The Panel continues to add new members. This is an important step in finding the capacity to carry out our mandate.

Fayette Citizens Review Panel Report



L-R: Teri Faragher and Vicky Ritter

Members

Chairperson: Claudia Blaylock

Former Chair: Carol Mayabb

*Pamela Black
Joanne Bell
Melinda Wathen*
Al Speler
Teri Faragher
Sherrian Peyton
Janet Doss
Anne Joseph*

*Rashmi Adi-Brown
Lisa Satin
Vicky Ritter
Steve and Linda Skaggs
Kim Hamilton
Amy Maupin
Kelly Roberts*

** DCBS Liaison*

Activities:

The Fayette Citizens Review Panel concentrated much of its effort this past year on its structure and governance as well as collecting information to assist in the accomplishment of its federal mandate. The Panel's activities included:

- Work towards the actualization of House Bill 645 and the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding.
- Presentation by Ruth Huebner about the preliminary results from the Cabinet for Families and Children survey of foster and adoptive parents, clients, employees and community partners.
- Presentation by Carol Whipple about the upcoming federal Child and Family Services Review.
- Presentation by Murray Wood from the Legislative Research Commission.

- Laying the groundwork to conduct neighborhood focus groups targeting community perceptions of the Division of Protection and Permanency.
- Actively recruiting prospective Panel members.
- Review and revision of the Panel's by-laws.
- Meeting with Nancy Fox and Pauletta Best regarding changes in the Fayette management team.
- Election of new Panel officials.
- Work with the University of Kentucky Training Resource Center to further develop the Panel coordinator role.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the Cabinet for Families and Children continue to work in conjunction with the Panel in the implementation of the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding.
- It is recommended that the Cabinet for Families and Children continue to explore the possibility of new legislation reinforcing the federal mandate of the Panel.
- It is recommended that the Cabinet for Families and Children work with the Panel to identify a communication infrastructure for more efficient exchange of information between the Panel and the Cabinet at the state level.

Future Plans:

Many of the Panel's future plans include new initiatives in addition to the continuation of several activities already in process. These activities include:

- Continuation of the review of governance issues including the by-laws and the Panel coordinator role.
- Exploration of the possibility of an exit interview form focusing on the worker's reasons for leaving the Cabinet in addition to logistical issues surrounding the transfer of the caseload.
- Continuation with the conceptualization and implementation of the CQI/Process Survey project.
- Conducting neighborhood focus groups targeting community perceptions of the Division of Protection and Permanency.
- Acknowledgement of Susan Westrom for the assistance she has given the Panel.

Purchase Citizens Review Panel



L-R: Cindy Darnell and Mary Jackson

Members

June Antony, Chairperson

Pete Jackson

*Peggy Meriedeth**

Steve Jimenez

Dr. Steve Grimes

Gwen Kaiser

Monica Jackson

Freddye Hartsfield

Sheriff John Davis

Kim Brand

Kathy Cooper

Kathy Goatly

Mary Jackson

Tina Dunaway

Wendy Lay

** DCBS Liaison*

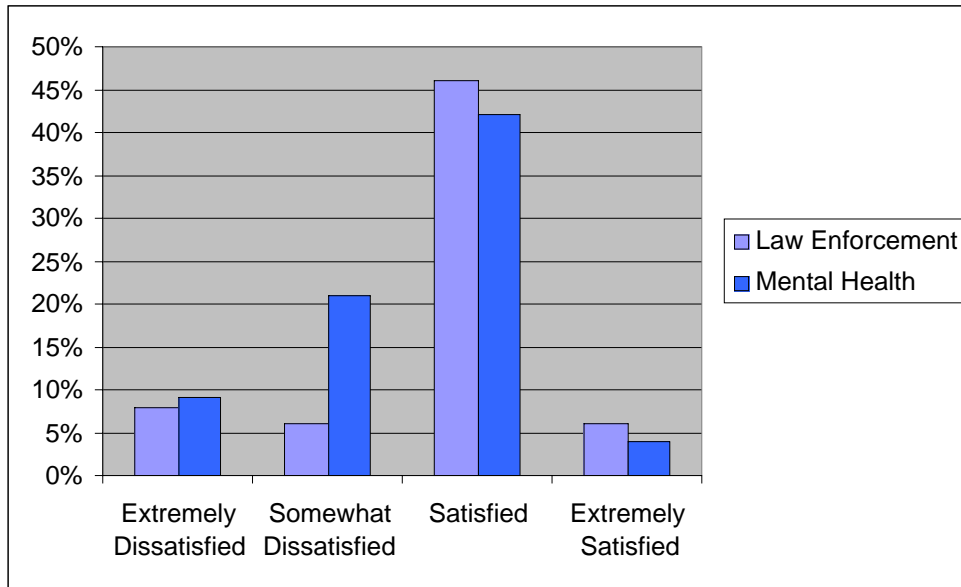
Activities:

Throughout the year, the Purchase Citizens Review Panel has engaged in several efforts to assess the Cabinet for Family and Children's working relationship with the outside community as well as clients. This has been done through the use of individual interviews with clients, an interview with a DCBS staff member, and community surveys.

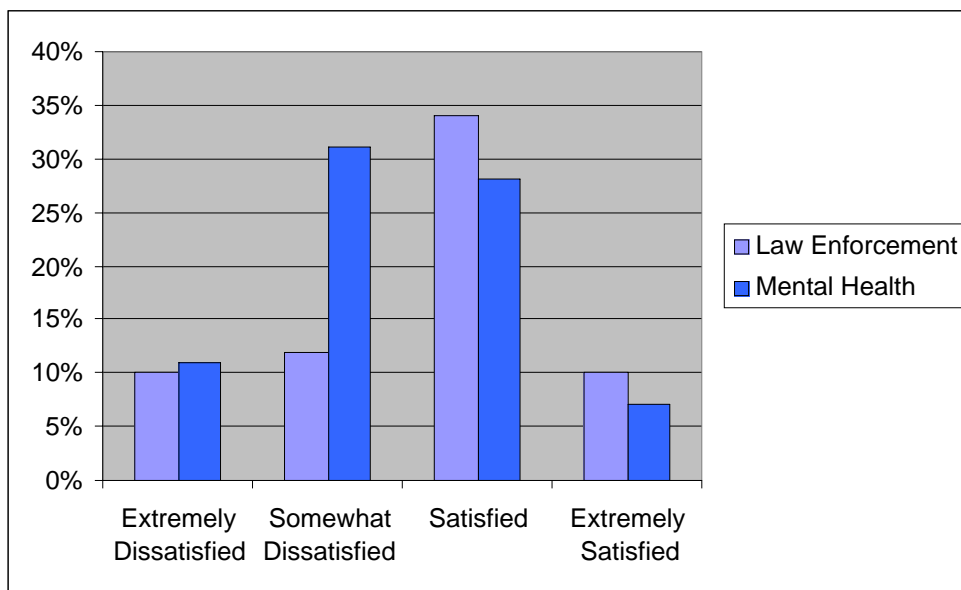
There was a special interest in the areas of law enforcement and mental health. Since so many child protective services clients also interact with these systems, it was thought appropriate to evaluate the working relationship with each.

Below are listed the questions that were asked of law enforcement (n=33) and mental health professionals (n=26) and the responses given.

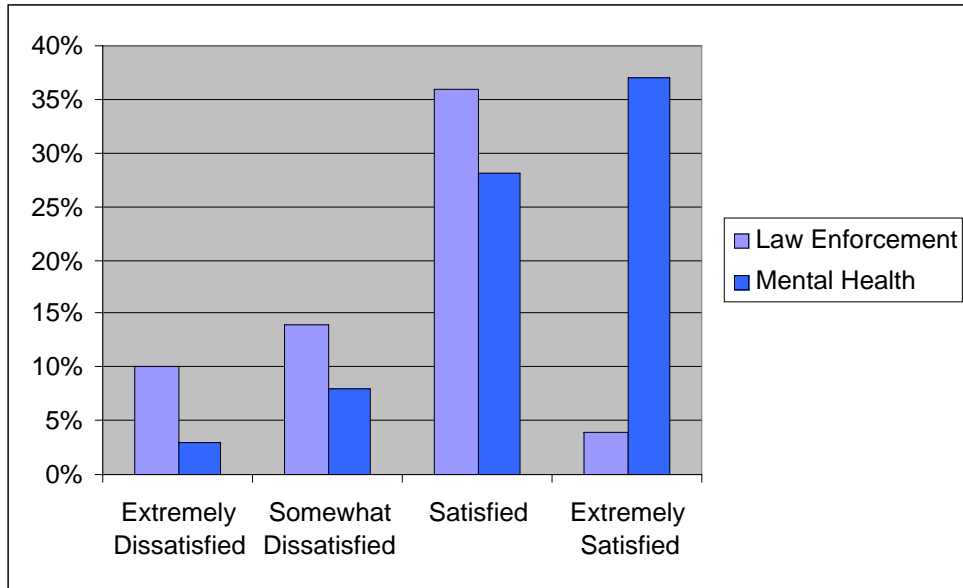
Satisfaction with Reporting



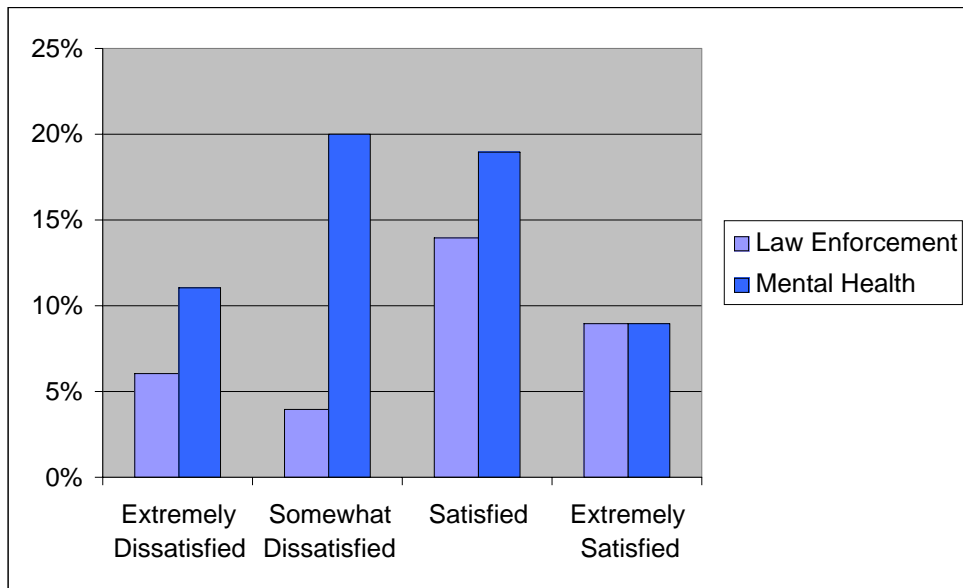
Satisfaction with Investigation



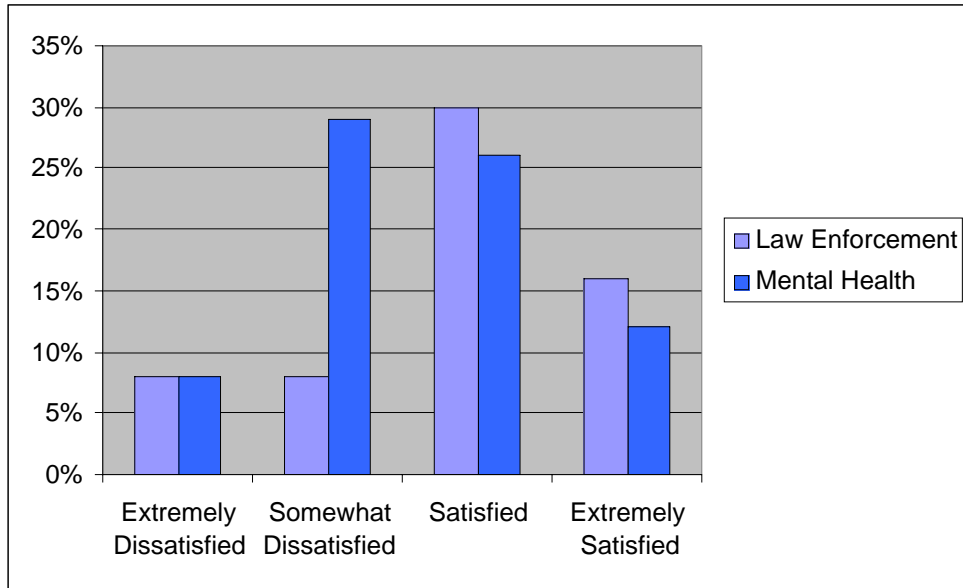
Satisfaction with Ongoing Involvement



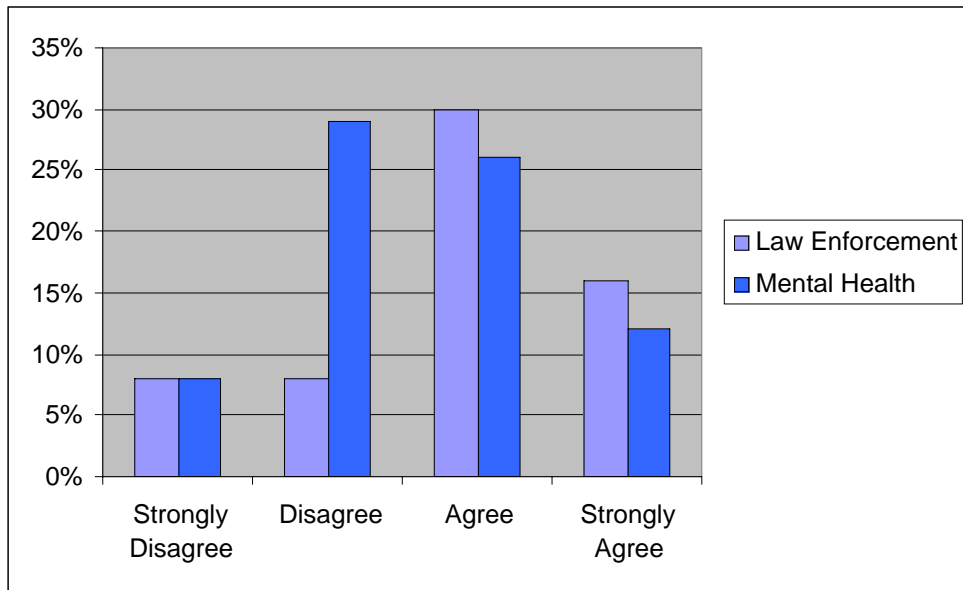
Satisfaction with Communication



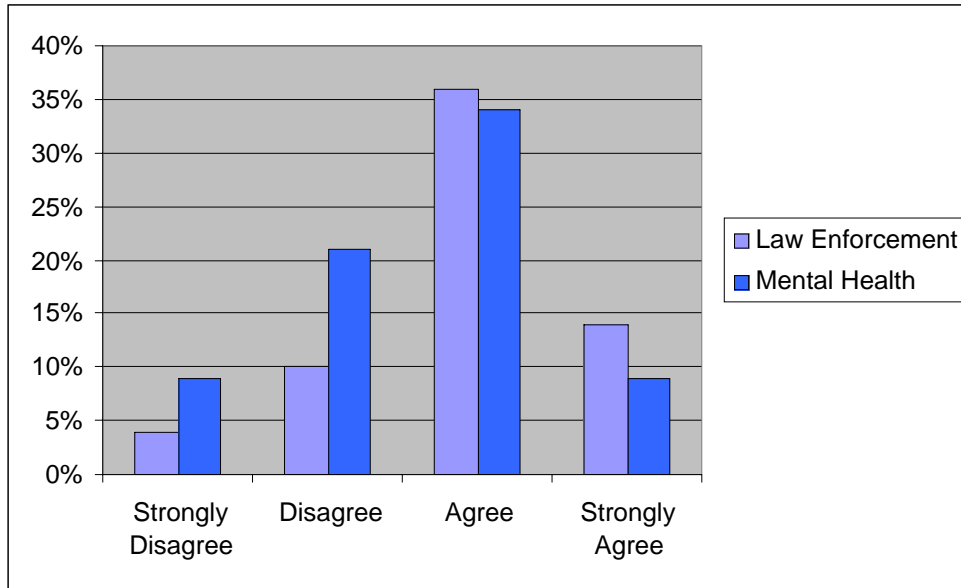
Satisfaction with Collaboration



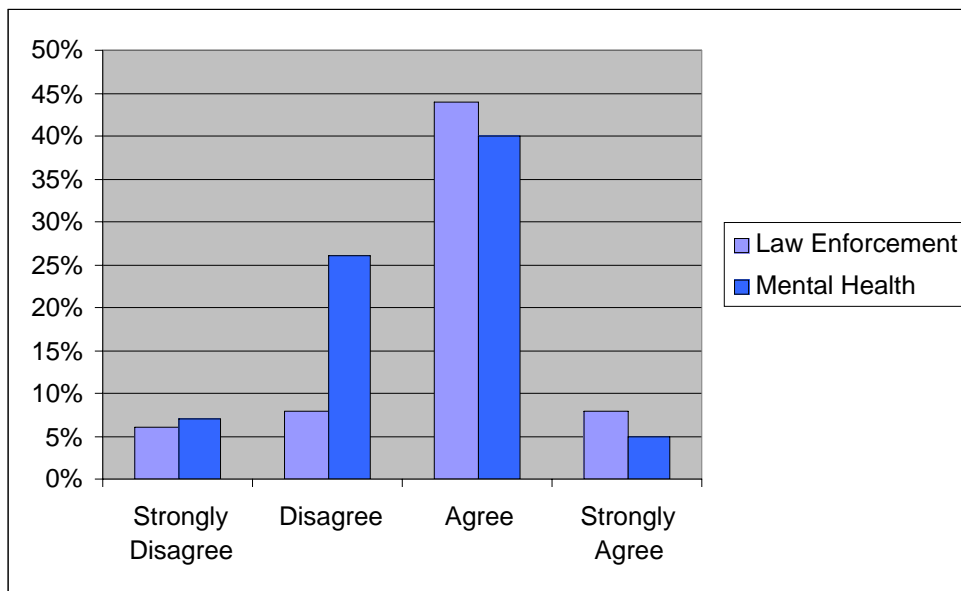
“Child Protective Services is Responsive to my Concern when I call”



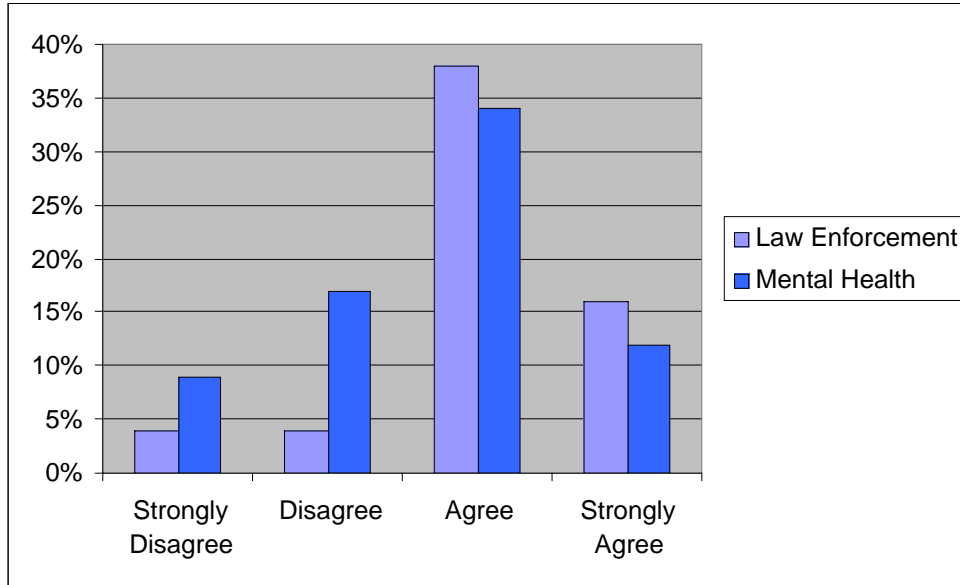
“I get adequate feedback regarding reports made to CPS”



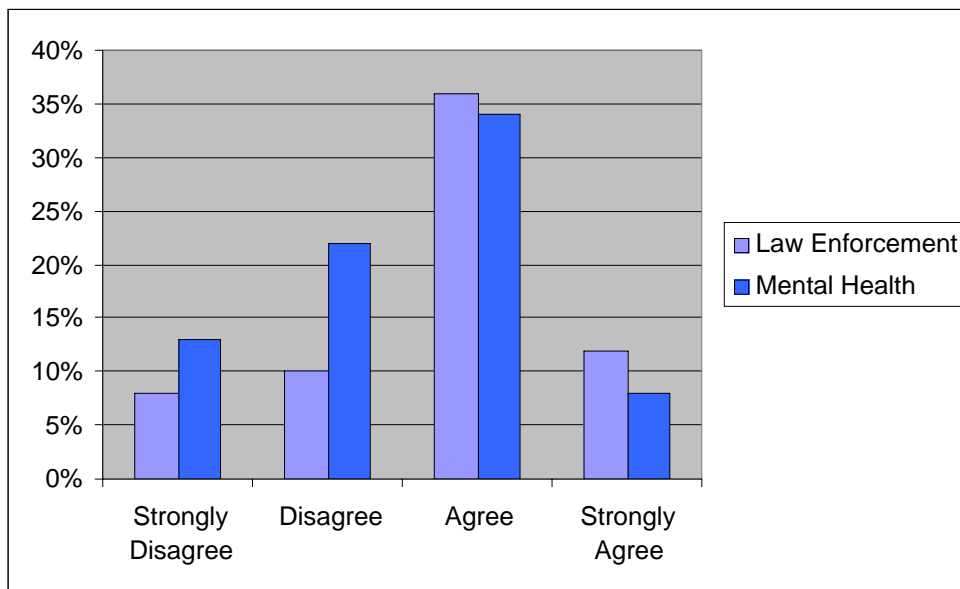
“CPS Staff are well-prepared to do the Job”



“Families are given all pertinent information about their case”



“CPS Does a good job of protecting abused children”



Open ended Comments from Law Enforcement and Mental Health

What is your overall perception of CPS in Kentucky?

Law Enforcement

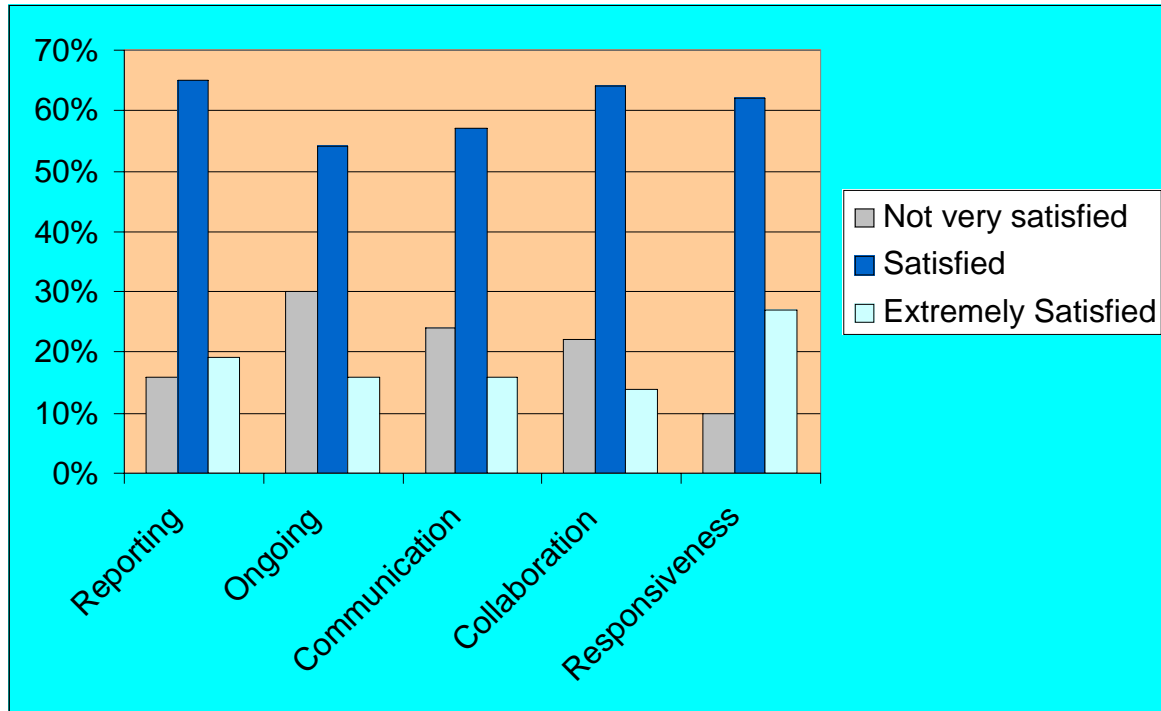
- “Way below standard. They should revamp the laws and help children out of bad situations a lot sooner. I don’t feel it is the workers, I feel we have very weak and outdated laws”
- “Very well thought of and very well organized”
- “Too intrusive in situations not requiring them, too little involvement when seriously needed”
- “I believe the system is good but there seems to be a shortage of suitable placement for abused and neglected children”
- “Funding too low. Workers are not paid well enough to keep them”

Mental health Professionals

- “There are a lot of abused children in KY and nothing is being done about it”
- “Staff have way too high of a case load. It takes forever for them to get anything done because they honestly have too much to do”
- “They need to realize that the child is top priority. They need to actually investigate more often.”
- “The workers do not have time to adequately do their job”
- “Could use an overhaul”
- “Overworked, excessive caseloads”
- “Dictatorial. Locked in attitudes”

Child protective services workers (n=37) were also surveyed as to their satisfaction with law enforcement. Their answers are seen here:

Child Protective Services Satisfaction with Law Enforcement



Some of their comments regarding law enforcement were:

- “I have had one call from law enforcement and they were very patient and concerned.”
- “My experience with law enforcement has been with officers who are willing to work with social services. Sometimes an officer may focus on criminal involvement instead of abuse or neglect.”
- “The Sheriff’s department and Paducah’s police do not communicate very well with each other. I had a pick up order on a runaway and the sheriff’s department did not give a copy to Paducah Police.”
- “City police efforts appear good. County sheriffs police do not seem to feel child abuse is a priority.”
- “Does not follow up on reports”
- “I do not think the sheriffs office is doing on that it can, but the city does a great job in working with us”
- “Prompt assistance and information”

Report from Steve Jimenez, Community Perceptions Chairperson

This past year of meeting and interviewing people in our community has been an enlightening experience. The committee has learned of numerous potholes in how the current systems are failing the very people the systems are in place to help.

Clients are not given correct full information about what benefits they are or are not eligible to receive. This misinformation and/or lack of information has had drastic effects upon the clients' ability to make knowledgeable decisions in their lives.

Programs that are funded to assist clients are of no benefit when the clients are not aware of how they may qualify. Clients were turned down for benefits many times simply because they were not informed of how and when they should apply. For instance, the matter in timing of a few days—"a pay period"--can prevent the client from receiving benefits that otherwise could have given them the assistance and hope of making real progress.

Also the general assumptions about the 'character' of a client has effects on the information being given to the client.

It is strongly recommended that the overall implementations of the systems are reviewed/revised in an urgent way; the children affected have suffered enough while waiting for relief.

Panel Recommendations:

- Continued support and expansion of the Public Child Welfare Certification Program (PCWCP). This seems to help with worker retention.
- The Panel encourages the Cabinet and the community to make every effort to educate each other about their respective roles. This could be done through community forums, interagency councils, etc. This increased communication and collaboration can benefit children and families greatly.
- The TWIST system appears to be a major impediment to workers. Although its intent is to help them, in practice it seems to take more of their time away from serving families. It is recommended that the perspective of the frontline workers be incorporated into a working plan to change TWIST to make it more user-friendly.

Future Plans:

The Panel plans to meet on October 3 with several of our region's State Senators to share with them the results of our surveys and to more fully educate them about the role of the Panel. It is felt that this education and information giving is crucial in helping them understand the child protective services system in our area, and to gain their support in strengthening it.

JEFFERSON CITIZENS REVIEW PANEL



Members

Carla Tyree Curry , Co-Chair

Emily Hutchinson, Co-Chair

*Barbara Carter***

Gloria Talbott

MaryLou Cambron, Chair, 9/02*

Dwala Griffin

Martha Casper

Becky Lewis

Barbara Dempsey

*Paige Shank ***

Robyn Zapp-Basil

Sheila Nelson

Cammie Sizemore

Tamala Gefetos

Gretchen Hunt

Becky Harris

Dr. Annatjie Faul

Becky Harris

Deborah Johnson

** DCBS Liaison*

*** Former DCBS Liaison*

Activities:

The Jefferson Citizens Review Panel has spent much of the year continuing to seek clarity and guidance in carrying out the mandate of the panel. Several guest speakers have been helpful in this regard, including Dr. Ruth Huebner of the Cabinet, a representative from the local housing authority, and other community advocates.

Per last year's report, the Panel's intent was to carry out several focus groups with foster and adoptive parents, children, and workers. However, it was discovered that another group, REACH of Louisville, was already undertaking such an effort and the Panel did not want to duplicate their work. We are working closely with REACH to gain

access to the results of these focus groups and will try to incorporate them into our own plans.

Recommendations:

1. In order to comply with its mandate, the panel needs useful, timely, and accurate information. Since its formation in July, 1999, the Panel has struggled to get self-studies, accreditation reports, and other documents that would give us greater direction. The panel feels that when information is given, it is outdated and/or vague. We ask that the Cabinet assist us in getting timely information.
2. Direct Service workers--those people who work with families on a daily basis helping them to put together shattered lives--are deserving of a day when they are shown appreciation by declaration of the State Legislature. Child Abuse month is in April and it would make sense to have an appreciation day during that time. It is recommended that this day include any person that has direct contact with families in the Child Protection system.

Future Plans

At its August, 2002 meeting, the Panel decided to focus on four areas for the coming year. Each team will have a point person, who is listed in parentheses. The teams are: The Cabinet's handling of immigrant clients (Gretchen Hunt), Internal Cabinet Processes (Mary Lou Cambron), Case Reviews (Martha Casper), and the Foster Care/Adoption System (Dr. Annatjie Faul).

Additionally, we will be working with the Cabinet to utilize exit interview information in order to retain employees.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

**THE KENTUCKY CABINET FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN, DEPARTMENT
FOR COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES**

AND

THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

WHEREAS, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C.A Section 5106a(c), mandates that the Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children ("the Cabinet"), establish and maintain at least three (3) child protective citizen review panels ("the panels") in the Commonwealth, to the extent that federal funds are available for this purpose;

WHEREAS, each panel shall be composed of at least ten (10) volunteers who are broadly representative of the community or area in which the panel is established, and shall include volunteer members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect;

WHEREAS, both the Cabinet and the panels are dedicated to working together to improve the quality and care of services being provided to families and children in the Commonwealth;

Now, therefore, both the Cabinet and the panels mutually agree as follows:

1. Each panel shall:
 - (a) Meet at least once every three (3) months;
 - (b) Review policies, procedures and practices of state and local agencies pertaining to child protective services;
 - (c) Evaluate the extent to which the cabinet is effectively discharging its responsibilities for child protection in accordance with the state plan submitted under the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment

Act;

(d) Review and evaluate other system issues as required by federal law;
and

(e) Issue an annual report by June 30 each year to the Governor, the Cabinet and the Legislative Research Commission that includes, but is not limited to, a summary of the activities of the panel. The report shall not include any identifying information about any specific child protective services case.

2. The Cabinet shall:

(a) Provide access to all information necessary to complete the federal mandate of the citizen review panels as established by 42 U.S.C.A. Section 5106a(c);

(b) Assure the attendance of a regional administrator in the geographic area served by the panel at not less than two (2) meetings of each citizen review panel each year;

(c) Give each citizen review panel notice of all Standards of Practice ("SOP") issuances relating to child protective services, including but not limited to changes in Standards of Practice, practices, procedures, organizational changes, or new program initiatives;

(d) Within ninety (90) days of receipt of the report required by subsection (1 e), respond in writing to the citizen review panels, the Governor, and the Legislative Research Commission on the status of any recommendations made by the panels in the report. The Cabinet's response shall include a plan of action for improvement and a request for clarification of any issues raised in the report;

(e) On an ongoing basis, make the citizen review panels aware of any potential issues, which the citizen review panels may wish to address

as part of their annual report; and

- (f) The Cabinet shall also make the panels aware of issues specifically related to state or federal guidelines. The Cabinet liaison with the appropriate panel shall provide this information to the panel at the regional meetings;

3. All information shared under this agreement shall remain confidential in accordance with 42 U.S.C.A. Section 5106a(c)(4)(B) and KRS 620.050(4)(d). Any breach of confidentiality may be subject to the provisions of KRS 620.990.

4. The parties agree to comply with any new mandates required by state or federal law.

5. This agreement shall be effective upon signature of all the parties and will remain effective until terminated by either party, or their authorized agents, upon thirty (30) days written notice.

6. This agreement may be amended with the mutual agreement of the parties.

So agreed this the 6th day of August, 2002.


SEEN AND AGREED TO:




Commissioner
Department for Community Based Services
Cabinet for Families and Children



Authorized Representative
Fayette Citizen Review Panel


Authorized Representative
Jefferson Citizen Review Panel


Authorized Representative
Purchase Citizen Review Panel


Authorized Representative
Gateway/Buffalo Trace Citizen Review Panel