

Annual Report 2006



Kentucky Citizen Review Panels for Child Protective Services

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Acronyms contained in this report and their meanings:

CRP Citizen Review Panels

CFHS Cabinet for Health and Family Services

CPS Child Protective Services

SRA Service Region Administrators

QSR Quality Service Review

CQA Continuous Quality Assessment

DCBS Department for Community Based Services

Web sites:

Kentucky Citizen Review Panels: www.uky.edu/socialwork/trc

National Citizen Review Panel Virtual Community: www.uky.edu/socialwork/crp

** All recommendations are in **BOLD** print

Dear Citizen,

Thank you for taking a moment to read the 2006 Annual report of Kentucky's Citizen Review Panels. The Panels were formed in 1999 as a result of a federal amendment to the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act. There are over 70 Panel members serving on five regional and one statewide Panel in Kentucky, representing thousands of volunteer hours.

The Panels' mandate is to evaluate the policies and practices of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services and to make recommendations for the improvement of child protective services. In turn, the Cabinet is required to respond to the Panels' recommendations—in writing—within three months. This year, the Cabinet also provided a "mid year" update which may view on our web site.

I would like to emphasize that this report was written by the Citizen Review Panel members themselves. Within their recommendations and rationale, I hope you will see their deep commitment to fairness and their dedication to assisting the Cabinet in better protecting Kentucky's children.

This is a public report and may be shared with anyone. It can be accessed electronically at www.uky.edu/socialwork/trc or you may obtain a hard copy by emailing Dr. Blake Jones at Bljone00@uky.edu.

I would like to thank Gayle Yocum, our Frankfort-based liaison for all of her hard work, and the many volunteers for their tireless efforts of behalf of Kentucky's children. I would also like to thank the Cabinet's liaisons who attended each meeting and were an invaluable asset as the Panel members pursued their mission.

Blake L. Jones, Ph.D.
Program Coordinator

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see".

~John W. Whitehead, "The Stealing of America"

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

**THE KENTUCKY CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES,
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 Health and Family Services (“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 effectiveness 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;

(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 (3) of this section, 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, and will be reviewed by the parties annually for potential amendments. So agreed this the 25th day of May, 2006.*

SEEN AND AGREED TO:

*Commissioner
Department for Community Based Services
Cabinet for Health and Family Services*

*Authorized Representative
Big Sandy Citizen Review Panel*

*Authorized Representative
Fayette Citizen Review Panel*

*Authorized Representative
Gateway Buffalo Trace Citizen Review Panel*

*Authorized Representative
Jefferson Citizen Review Panel*

*Authorized Representative
Purchase Citizen Review Panel*

*Authorized Representative
Kentucky State Citizen Review Panel*

Response to 2005 Recommendations

Gateway/Buffalo Trace

Recommendation:

Cabinet for Health and Family Services form a task force to look at the regionalization/centralization of the intake process.

The former Commissioner, Mike Robinson had directed Service Region Administrators to develop and implement a centralized intake system for their region by January 1, 2006. All referrals will be made to a central office for review and determination as to whether the situation meets acceptance criteria per Cabinet Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The goal is to have a supervisor for the intake team who will make the final determination. If the referral meets, it will be forwarded to the appropriate DCBS office for response. The goal of this plan is to have statewide consistency regarding interpretation of the statutes, regulations and SOPs.

Jackie Johnson, Specialist in the Gateway/Buffalo Trace region reports that “the region is in the process of developing a centralized intake unit which will facilitate both CPS and APS referrals. The region has obtained approval of 2 staff and 1 supervisory position to complete the unit. Regional Office staff are researching and evaluating various intake units to determine the best intake process to meet the needs of Gateway/Buffalo Trace. It is hopeful the unit can be operational by the end of the year.”

Recommendation:

Updating the computer main frames/networking systems to promote more effective productivity.

*Mary Ella Glasscock, Office of Information Technology, was approached with this recommendation. She stated “many changes have occurred and more are planned. All changes are made with the hope of better more effective use of the application. However, a consideration to remember, all the updates to the software (application) may not provide the envisioned improvement, if improvements to the Operating System and hardware (newer computers, more memory, better lines, servers, etc) are not in place. This is part of the future plans for TWIST, to provide mobile capability and web access. We are in the final stages of completing an **Implementation** Advance Planning Document (IAPD) for submission to our federal partners.”*

Documentation is submitted to the Administration for Children and Families Children Bureau as the Cabinet can receive funding up to 50% of the cost of the new development.

Recommendation:

Cabinet for Health and Family Services policy changes be implemented at 3- or 6-month intervals.

Jeff Wright has worked tirelessly to revise the Protection and Permanency Policy manual. He has made the site more user friendly, has included Tip Sheets, forms and

resource links. He provided the following response regarding the policy change recommendations:

“Due to new or revised federal and/or state law, Council on Accreditation (COA) updates, and the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), quarterly and or biannual policy updates would not be feasible. When the Division of Protection and Permanency's (DPP) online manuals website was developed and implemented August 1st, 2003 we developed Standards of Practice (SOP) Updates, Review and Clarification Process. We have been working with the service regions to revise our Standards of Practice (SOP) Updates, Review and Clarification Process to allow for longer implementation times for distribution and training of staff on new/revised SOP.” Attachments A and B detail the revised process. “The information in blue print was revised on August 27, 2004 to limit the number of new/revised SOPs that went to the field for implementation to two (2) per month. The information in red print was revised in July 20th, 2005 to extend the implementation dates for SOP that entails a multitude of new or different procedures that may require extensive staff training for implementation, a minimum of four (4) weeks will be provided prior to the effective date.”

Recommendation:

Training be brought to the county offices to the maximum extent possible.

The DCBS Training Branch in conjunction with the Training Resource Center at Eastern Kentucky University has made concerted efforts over the past year to develop and deliver just-in-time quality training in an electronic format, so that workers can access training at their workstation on their own computers. Some of these are training tutorials which aid staff in completing a new format for documentation, and others are new program initiatives with critical information. These courses can be taken anytime and anyplace, offering the worker the flexibility to take what they need when they need it. This eliminates travel time and reduces expenses. Attached is a report entitled “WEB Events P & P Staff”, that lists the participants who have participated in distance learning for the FY 05. The file is included in soft copy as a PDF file, with the same title.

Recommendation:

Credit be given for all job-related tasks assumed by the workers including work activities of required documentation as well as any other extraneous activities.

Chris Workman and Jim Grace in Central Office have been involved in discussions regarding weighted caseloads. They noted that a significant portion of a staff member's work is captured through the TWIST system but currently does not capture all job-related tasks/activities assumed by workers. The current development of TWIST 2, a web-based application, is anticipated to have those added functions into the system for capture. Monthly management reports show the number of referrals entered, completed CQAs and case plans, service recordings and home visits. These reports are available to the FSOS and worker. Discrepancies are handled by staff in the Office of Information Technology.

The Department enhanced the coordination efforts with TWIST in 2004 with the implementation of specific protocols and the establishment of a liaison position within the Department to work directly with TWIST management and staff. This effort has yielded several results including the streamlining of work requests and TWIST releases. Additionally, requests for data are regularly reviewed and prioritized for more efficient outcome based performance. By having a single point of entry for all TWIST requests, the Department has been able to better serve not only families and children, but also our staff.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services have a state car assigned to each county office.

A significant amount of staff time is spent transporting children. Many offices have Transportation Aides whose primary responsibility is to transport children. The reimbursement rate for mileage is now determined quarterly using the AAA rate. The Personnel office is diligently attempting to find ways to address staffing issues and the purchase of numerous automobiles and cost for maintenance would be a significant increase in a budget that is already stretched. There are several counties which have multiple DCBS offices and it simply would not be feasible to purchase an automobile for each office. Staff is able to request a vehicle through their regional transportation office.

Purchase Region

Recommendation:

School administrators, faculty and staff should be provided with ongoing training for their role as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

Tamara Tatum with the KY School Based Association, Center for School Safety Program provided information for this recommendation. She informed me that an annual Safe Schools Conference is held with approximately 800-1,000 in attendance. Topics at the conference and regional trainings are based upon the most significant issues facing school districts. Individual school districts can request that information on mandated reporting be presented on their professional development calendar. The Prevent Child Abuse model would be utilized. Ms. Tatum's group is also available to assist school districts in writing policy and procedure pertaining to the issue of reporting. It was encouraging to hear Ms. Tatum offer to work in collaboration with the Cabinet in developing standardized procedures for training on mandated reporting and arrange for regional training. This may be a task that the statewide panel would like to consider including in their strategic plan.

Mary Jo Rist at the Kentucky Department of Education provided the following information: "The Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Board (CSAEP)

established the Child Victims Trust Fund (CVTF) which provides funding for child sexual abuse prevention programs since 1985. The CVTF provides funding for a statewide collaborative program called "Promise Not to Tell? A Teacher's Guide to Recognizing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse", which broadcasted a 3-part video presentation and provided informational binders to teachers on the nature of child sexual abuse, how to identify indicators, how to handle disclosures, legal reporting responsibilities and how an investigation proceeds through the system during the 2003-2004 school year. The Designated Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Coordinators from each regional community mental health center coordinated the distribution of materials to public schools. Natalie Kelly a CSAEP Board member, and Rashmi Adi-Brown, Director of Prevent Child Abuse KY, have conduct workshops at conferences attended by educators covering the "Promise Not to Tell" material.

Mary Ann Miller in the Kentucky Department of Education Commissioner's Office stated " the Kentucky Multidisciplinary Commission on Child Sexual Abuse oversees the operations of Local Multidisciplinary Commissions on Child Sexual Abuse located in each county. Each local Commission has a representative from the school district(s) usually a school counselor or school social worker. Training is available for those local commission representatives at the Annual Victim Advocacy conference."

Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky provides statewide training on the issue of reporting. They collaborated with Kevin Nolan in the Dept. of Education to develop "A Teacher's Guide to Recognizing and Responding". In some counties, the local DCBS offices are on the in-service training schedules at the local schools. This is usually due to the local office taking the initiative to contact the principal or the school superintendent to request time to present.

Recommendation:

A Request for Proposal should be established to provide community education to the general public regarding how to insure allegations are specific enough to warrant an investigation.

Centralized intake teams will have the responsibility for reviewing all referrals which come in to the region and making a determination as to whether they meet criteria. There may be an opportunity to educate the referral source during the course of the conversation as to what criteria are used in determining the appropriateness of the referral.

David Gayle with the Office of Contracts Management informed me that for an RFP to be issued there must be a funding source. Cabinet leadership must identify the need, and if a funding source is available, a very specific process would be followed to request that an RFP be issued.

Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky currently has a contract with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to provide community education. This group maintains a 24-hour/7 days a week confidential crisis intervention, information and referral line, has an annual conference and provides child abuse awareness tools. This organization provides

various educational campaigns including "Never Shake a Baby," "Promise Not To Tell" and the Blue Ribbon Campaign. Jill Seyfred is the Executive Director and could be contacted for assistance in implementation of community awareness programs. Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky currently maintains a statewide prevention network consisting of volunteer groups and agencies in 98 of Kentucky's 120 counties to raise public awareness of the plight of abused or neglected children. A goal of Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky is to "Inform the citizens of the Commonwealth as to the prevalence of child abuse and neglect and how to get involved in prevention efforts".

In regard to the criteria for determining the appropriateness of the referral, the Cabinet has Standard Operating Procedures which include acceptance criteria. This material is utilized by the FSOS in determining if the report meets criteria.

Recommendation:

To substantially increase funding to the Department for Community Based Services, earmarked for mental health services.

There are three primary service providers for counseling/MH services to abused children in the Purchase Region. Four Rivers Behavioral Health (the local Community Mental Health Center), Allison Ogden, Executive Director (270) 442-7121; Rape Victim Services (Rape Crisis Center for Purchase ADD) serves children who have been sexually abused. Richard Remp-Morris is the Executive Director (270) 534-4422; Child Watch (Children's Advocacy Center for Purchase ADD) serves children who have been sexually abused. Sandy Fellows, Executive Director (270) 443-1440. The Purchase ADD is a large geographic area and all counties do not have services available within the county.

McCracken County (Paducah) is the "home" of all of these agencies. Four Rivers and Rape Victim Services have offices in Graves County (Mayfield) and Calloway County (Murray). These three counties are the main population centers of Purchase ADD. Most people have to drive to either Paducah, Mayfield, or Murray for services.

Regional strategic planning meeting(s) will be held in Purchase and the other ADDs this fall. The Citizen Review Panel(s) should make an effort to attend the meetings. At these meetings, representatives from Victim Serving Agencies (Rape Crisis, Children's Advocacy, Domestic Violence Shelter/Programs, Community Mental Health, etc) will be establishing regional priorities for the prevention and intervention in cases of child abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault.

The regional liaison for Purchase ADD is Richard Remp-Morris, Executive Director of Rape Victim Services. He can be contacted at (270) 534-4422 for information regarding the meeting date for the strategic planning meeting for Purchase.

For further information about the planning meetings in other ADDs, Natalie Kelly at the Division of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Services or Eileen Recktenwald, Executive Director of the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs can be contacted at (502) 226-2704.

It is recommended that the Citizen Review Panel members collaborate with community partners in assessing what specific services are needed in the region. If new funds were appropriated to DCBS for the purpose of adding capacity for the provision of counseling services, CADVS would be willing to collaborate with DCBS and other agencies to help decide how to best utilize these funds to meet the needs of the communities.

Jefferson Panel

Recommendation:

That a system be developed to forward the recommendations identified by our local child fatality team to the local SRA and the State Fatality Review Team.

The DCBS fatality team is developing a process for issues and recommendations identified at the local level to be incorporated into the statewide recommendation process. The DCBS team is comprised of coroners, mental health, social workers and other departments within the cabinet

Recommendation:

There should be specific interventions for workers and supervisors when a death occurs on their case load.

Currently workers and staff are referred to the Kentucky employee assistance program or the Crisis Response Board. This process is voluntary right now, but changes in policy are being considered that would make it mandatory for staff. As for other interventions, a root cause analysis is conducted on any fatality or near fatality that has had or currently has DCBS involvement; this is per KRS 620.050.

Recommendation:

Provide training for workers on school policy, procedures and law. Many workers are not familiar with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Acts (IDEA 2004) and Section 504, which outline programs, services and procedures for children with special needs.

There is a component on this in the Care Plus course and the new PS-MAPP courses (both in the Train the Trainer Course for Recruitment and Certification staff and the training that is delivered to resource parents) that includes IDEA 2004 and Section 504. This is also in the development phase to be included in our P & P Academy training for new staff.

Recommendation:

Provide training for workers on Jefferson County Public Schools local policies and procedures. This would include the student assignment plan, transfer policy and

procedure, transportation policies, attendance, health requirements, suspensions, and how to be an advocate for a child in the school setting.

The Regional Interagency Council (RIAC) and a Jefferson County representative (Jackie Stamps) have agreed to provide this training for workers and foster parents, but it hasn't been scheduled yet. We are advocating for this to be a track at the Annual Meeting later this year.

Recommendation:

The SRA should have regular dialogue with the Board of Education regarding systemic issues.

The SRA serves on the Neighborhood Place Operations Committee which meets every Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. The Deputy Superintendent and FRYSC Director are also on the committee. School issues and collaboration are discussed routinely. There is also a recently revived JCPS/P&P committee that meets quarterly. All P&P associates and the SRA are on the committee as well as the Director of Pupil Personnel, the Director of Counselors, the FRYSC Director, and the JCPS Community Development Director. The group met June 14, 2005. The group discussed Educational Neglect referrals (a sub committee which includes Grace Akers, SRAA, Joyce French, Hot line supervisor and Pat Davidson, Court Support supervisor is meeting with school staff and Judge Joan Byers to revise the protocol for referrals and build in language that includes FTMs), COA and Educational Passports, and other topics were on the agenda. The group has meetings scheduled for the new school year- September 27th, December 13th, March 28th, June 13th, 2006.

Recommendation:

The SRA should continue efforts to keep children in their home schools when placed in foster care.

Recruitment staffs routinely make efforts to keep children in their home schools. Through an agreement with JCPS R&C staffs have the cell phone number for the JCPS transportation coordinator and can contact her following the facilitated staffing to explore ways to transport children from their new placement to their home school. I have asked Kim Anderson, Associate, to forward numbers on the success of this effort.

Recommendation:

Study and research national best practices for definition of “caretaker” and review how other states deal with these issues. Research the possibility of other agencies investigating these cases-for example, reports regarding day care providers should be investigated by the Inspector General’s office; out-of-home perpetrator reports should be investigated by the police.

KRS 620.030(1) states: "...If the cabinet receives a report of abuse or neglect allegedly committed by a person other than a parent, guardian or person exercising custodial control or supervision, the cabinet shall refer the matter to the Commonwealth's attorney or the county attorney and the local law enforcement agency or the Kentucky State Police...."

KRS 620.040(1)(b) states "Based upon the allegation in the report, the cabinet shall immediately make an initial determination as to the risk of harm and immediate safety of the child. Based upon the level of risk determined, the cabinet shall investigate the allegation or accept the report for an assessment of family needs..."

KRS 620.040(2)(b) states "Based upon the allegation in the report, the cabinet shall immediately make an initial determination as to the risk of harm and immediate safety of the child. Based upon the level of risk, the cabinet shall investigate the allegation or accept the report for an assessment of family needs..."

The Office of Legal Services has recommended the Cabinet not attempt to revise the statute.

Recommendation:

Examine structure and hiring practices. How many vacancies exist? What are the plans to hire front line staff? Examine if the Cabinet is becoming too top-heavy. Please justify the hiring of higher level staff while direct services are losing staff through vacancies not being replaced.

Mark Cornett in the Commissioner's Office, made the information in Attachment C available. This chart provides a detailed account of investigations (INV) and staffing patterns since 1995.

Recommendation:

Examine Cabinet responsibility in court. What is the rationale for Cabinet CPS workers to file their own petitions in court? Why has that duty, traditionally held by the prosecutor, been placed in the hands of CPS?

Sheila Redmond with Office of Legal Services provided the following response: " KRS 620.050 states that the Cabinet shall take necessary actions and offer protective services to ensure the well-being and safety of a child. Furthermore, the statute talks about the Cabinet's duty to work toward preventing any further abuse or neglect. The filing of petitions with the Court is not limited to a Cabinet representative. However, if the Cabinet is aware of the abuse or neglect of a child, it should take any steps within the law to ensure that the child is protected. Accordingly, that would involve seeking emergency custody pursuant to KRS 620.060 or if the child is not in danger of imminent death or serious physical injury, a non-removal petition. The purpose of a petition is to get the matter before the Court so that the child or children can be protected and services can be provided to either ensure the safety of the child by return to the parent or by terminating the parental rights. The worker is the logical one to file the petition because they have investigated the case and know the facts and as previously stated, they have the duty to take the necessary steps to ensure the safety and well being of the child. Failure to file a

petition, or designating that to someone else, could result in the child or children continuing to be at risk or further injured.

KRS 600.040(2) states that "facilities, programs and services relating to juveniles under chapters of the code [would include KRS Chapter 620] . . . Shall be the responsibility of the Cabinet for Families and Children."

Finally, KRS 605.130 states:

In addition to the other duties, functions, and responsibilities imposed by law, the cabinet, through its authorized representatives, shall have general supervision and management of all matters contained in KRS 620.150 and 620.170 and shall, wherever possible:

- 1) Locate and plan for all children who are dependant, neglected or abused.*
- 2) Cooperate with and assist the courts of the various counties;*
- 3) Assist Circuit Courts through services to children whenever requested by the court. The Cabinet may charge a reasonable fee for such services to be taxed as costs by the court; and*
- 4) Perform such other services as may be deemed necessary for the protection of children.*

Lyn Gurnieri, Administrative Office of the Courts, provides training for DCBS workers on completing the petitions, workers as witnesses, and the Rules of Evidence. These trainings have not been well attended by DCBS staff.

It would be appropriate to have discussions with the DCBS liaison and/or SRA to see if there have been changes in court protocol in Jefferson County. Concerns should be addressed with these individuals who would have an avenue to pursue discussions with the appropriate parties within the court system.

Recommendation:

More training for staff in the court process and also joint meetings with key players (Judges, GALs, parents' attorneys, the school system) so that CPS workers may voice their concerns.

The Administrative Office of the Courts has been providing training for Judges, GALs, and DCBS staff. Guardian ad Litem seminar dates and the number trained is as follows:

April 1 – Western KY – 22 attorneys

April 15 – Western KY – 14 attorneys

April 29 – Eastern KY – 28 attorneys

May 20 – Northern KY – 43 attorneys

June 28 – Western KY – 28 attorneys

There have been three other seminars since January 2005 in central and Eastern KY. A seminar was held July 7 in Hardin Family Court and one is scheduled on September 30 for Jefferson Family Court. These are full day seminars with 6.5 CLEs awarded. The seminars cover dependency, neglect and abuse; termination of parental rights and

adoption; accommodating the needs of children in the courtroom; and ethical responsibilities of the guardian ad litem.

In an effort to recruit GALs, a statutory review of dependency, neglect, and abuse law and an ethics component, have been presented to the Young Lawyers Section of the KY Bar Association. There have been four seminars with over one hundred participants.

Lyn Guarnieri, AOC, presented at the Prosecutor's Advisory Council's annual convention on Aug. 11, 2005. The presentation was entitled Understanding Dependency, Neglect and Abuse Cases and covered the importance of the role of the county attorney in bringing these cases before the court. The presentation also explained the duties of the county attorney and their role in working with the family service workers. Lyn and Duane Osborne, Juvenile Prosecutor in Fayette County, are scheduled to present on dependency, neglect and abuse at the Prosecutor's Advisory Council's annual meeting which will be held Aug. 10-12, 2005.

Lyn met with the Service Region Administrators to discuss training objectives and to ascertain needs of their region. She has also met with the CHFS in regularly scheduled collaborative efforts focused on obtaining the objectives of the CHFS Program Improvement Plan as well as the CAPTA state planning event that was held on November 10, 2004.

Family Service Worker training was held statewide on issues of court testimony, protocol and procedures, etiquette, and preparation of court reports. Training dates were: January 27, February 10, March 10 & 31, April 13, May 19, June 27.

Judicial forums have been held throughout the state. These events provided an open forum for judges and their staff to meet with CHFS staff and discuss issues affecting their particular region. The forums were well received by all in attendance and have resulted in the implementation of new procedures that will result in permanency for children in the system. There have been three forums with one-hundred one in attendance.

Staff in local DCBS offices certainly has the ability to consult with regional management if there are issues/concerns with the court. Authorization could be requested to schedule a meeting with the judge, county attorney, GAL or other parties in order to discuss and resolve.

DCBS, AOC and the Multidisciplinary Commission on Child Sex Abuse collaborated to provide thirty-two hours of training for law enforcement and DCBS personnel. The forensic interview training was titled Hidden Voices, Discovered Words and is a thirty-two hour course for 36 participants at each session. Participants are DCBS and law enforcement. Training consisted of basic forensic interviewing skills including question design, child development issues, issues with teenagers, and children with disabilities. There was discussion regarding statutory requirements of joint investigation and issues that arise when two agencies collaborate on an investigation. There were practicum experiences involving participants interviewing a "victim" and having that interview

critiqued. Legal issues such as court testimony and ways to defend an interview were presented by two judges and a Commonwealth Attorney. There was a lecture on interviewing the non-offending caregiver and documentation and a mock trial. Participant evaluations have been very positive.

Dr. Ruth Huebner with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, conducted a Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2005. A component of this survey was the Judicial Survey to Enhance DCBS/Court Collaboration. All Kentucky judges were sent this survey. A total of one hundred thirty-four completed the survey; a response rate of 65%. In regard to court reports, 65% said worker's reports were good to very good; forty-two% said reports were inconsistent. The greatest need cited for improving court reports was to include all pertinent information and facts concerning the case. Locating information within the report was cited as a weakness. One of the greatest barriers to DCBS/Court relationships was high worker turnover.

The following statistics are of interest:

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| *workers follow rules of court etiquette | 82.5% agreed/strongly agreed |
| *workers are credible when presenting information to the courts | 79.1% |
| *workers are prompt when attending court hearings | 78.8% |
| *judge knows who to call when there are questions/concerns re. case | 78.4% |
| *workers treat families they serve professionally & with respect | 65.9% |
| *workers are diligent in providing adequate services to families | 58.9% |
| *workers keep court well-advised | 56.7% |

Recommendation:

Look at the overflow cases from the flood of APS cases involving children witnessing domestic violence. Is there a possibility of designating more APS workers to cover child protection?

Each Service Region Administrator works with the local DCBS office supervisors, specialists, Service Region Administrator Associates and Service Region Clinical Associates to review staffing issues. They decide where the positions are most needed and would make a formal request to the Director of Service Regions for consideration of additional positions. There currently is a work group reviewing current policies pertaining to domestic violence. The group has drafted policy for Concurrent CPS and

DV Investigations. The draft has been reviewed by the acceptance criteria work group and suggestions have been made. The suggestions will be made and another draft submitted. The goal is to develop policy to assist staff in dealing with the complicated issues that arise when children are involved during a domestic violence event. The work group is composed of individuals with experience and expertise in working with domestic violence victims and DCBS staff.

Recommendation:

The state should examine the legislative definition of cases taken by the Cabinet.

There are workgroups currently meeting to review and discuss acceptance criteria in the Cabinet's Standard Operating Procedures. Extensive research is in progress to gather information from other states. Once a draft is developed, the standard protocol for review by management and the field will be implemented. Office of Legal Services has advised the Cabinet not to pursue a change in language in KRS 620.

Recommendation:

When there is a child fatality, the responsible worker's emotional and other wellbeing should be a priority. A plan should be put in place to guarantee, among other responses, that the affected worker receive some time off, be given a chance to meet with a counselor, and have timely information regarding the investigation and the future of her work with the Cabinet. Other affected staff (supervisors, peers) should be given support and option of counseling as well.

Currently workers and staff are referred to the Kentucky employee assistance program or the Crisis response board. This process is voluntary right now, but changes in policy are being considered that would make it mandatory for staff.

Recommendation:

Training: Court workers should receive adequate training to better anticipate the adversarial nature of court proceedings, which differs a great deal from social work practice. Court workers should also be trained in how to effectively advocate with other players (GALs, parents' attorneys, prosecutors, judges) in order to do their jobs effectively. Such training would supplement the existing training.

The adversarial nature of court proceedings and how to effectively advocate with other players is included in the Preparation and Participation of Judicial Proceedings course. This course is listed as required training on the Staff Development Plan. In addition to this minimum requirement the Office of Legal Services provides training in the regions on Termination of Parental Rights, Court Processes, Juvenile Code, and CAPTA on an as needed basis.

Recommendation:

Make computers with TWIST (or updated data entry systems) available to employees while they wait in court. Provide an office or room for employees to work on casework while waiting for court. Purchase two-way radios for court support staff to facilitate communication between court rooms, and to alert workers of their cases being called.

*Mary Ella Glasscock, Office of Information Technology, was approached with this recommendation. She stated “many changes have occurred and more are planned. All changes are made with the hope of better more effective use of the application. However, a consideration to remember, all the updates to the software (application) may not provide the envisioned improvement, if improvements to the Operating System and hardware (newer computers, more memory, better lines, servers, etc) are not in place. This is part of the future plans for TWIST, to provide mobile capability and web access. We are in the final stages of completing an **Implementation Advance Planning Document (IAPD)** for submission to our federal partners.” Documentation is submitted to the Administration for Children and Families Children Bureau as the Cabinet can receive funding up to 50% of the cost of the new development.*

Recommendation:

Court parking: Allow workers to park at the state-owned lot at 6th and Cedar for court needs.

It is suggested that staff may want to explore this issue through the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process. Each region is to hold regular CQI meetings and where possible, issues are handled on the local/regional level.

Fayette Panel

Recommendation:

DCBS management to join a work group designed to address issues of employee mental health, job retention, and wellness with high caseloads, vacancies, overwhelming needs of families in crisis, and limited available resources.

Sandra Day from Bluegrass (Fayette) Region responded to this issue by stating that “ since January 1, 2005, Fayette County’s front-line Protection and Permanency units one through seven averaged a 52% turnover. These units are primarily responsible for the protection and permanency of our children and their families. The average length of service for employees on these units is about 18 months.

As of today the breakdown is as follows:

- 3 – Staff has 5 years or more*
- 8 – Staff has 3-4 years*

18 – Have 1-2 years

22 - Staff have less than one year or the position is vacant

Based on the statistics listed above, this is a major cause of employee stress and low morale.

Frankfort has done an excellent job insuring that vacancies are filled in a timely manner. They are fully aware of our staff turnover and work hard to assist the region in this manner.”

She continued stating, “Caseloads over all are much higher than in the past. The current cases appear to be more complex and the workers tend to be chronologically younger, fresh out of college and initially lack the experience needed to manage such complex cases. Even our PCWCP students, while they have a knowledge and training advantage entering the agency, have great difficulty adjusting to the demand and volume of the casework needed to keep children safe.

January 2, 2005 Fayette County had 598 in out of home care. As of August 14, 2005 Fayette County had 660 in out of home care. This increase in out of home care creates an additional burden for the entire child protection system. In an effort to address this issue, Fayette County has been selected to pilot a new Out of Home Care Diversion Project. The project is designed to divert children ages 10 – 17 from entering out of home care by providing intensive in home services.”

Jean Kendall with the Office of Human Resource Management provided the following information:

The Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM), within the Cabinet for Families and Children, conducted a standardized Exit Interview process. Beginning with actions effective in January of 2001, all departing employees (except those terminated with cause) received a letter, which included a postage-paid, self-addressed return envelope and an Exit Interview for Separating Employees (copy attached). The returned documents are reviewed, entered into an Access database, and then destroyed by staff of OHRM.

For CY 2003, 506 letters were mailed and 135 interview forms were returned, for an initial return rate of 26.7%. Of those returned, 9 forms were non-responsive, leaving 126 interview forms for analysis and inclusion in this report.

Recommendation:

For the Jefferson Panel and DCBS staff who have focused on solutions to the language and cultural access issues to lead a work group for Fayette representatives and those from other panels in better understanding the multicultural issues, processes, and outcomes to assist all regions.

Ms. Day responded that *“Fayette has worked hard to address this concern. We have been requesting that potential employee applicants be bilingual. We are currently working on our initiative to recruit and certify bilingual Foster Parents and have a Spanish speaking worker assigned to the Foster Care team. We also work with our community partners such as the University of Kentucky, Fayette County Family Court, and the Faith Based Community in efforts to meet cultural and bilingual needs.”*

It would be the decision of Toya Nicholson, SRA Bluegrass (Fayette) to pursue organization of a work group for Fayette County staff to collaborate with the Jefferson Panel and DCBS staff regarding language and cultural issues. The Bluegrass (Fayette) Panel may want to consider having Gretchen Hunt or another Jefferson Panel member with expertise in this area, speak to the Bluegrass (Fayette) Panel regarding resources they have accessed.

Cathy J. Cox, who is the LEP Language Access Section Supervisor in the Office of Human Resource Management, provided excellent information.

The Office of Human Resource Management of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services is currently working to finalize and implement Cultural Diversity/Cultural Competency training recommendations for the entire Cabinet.

At the time of the reorganization and merger of the former Cabinet for Families and Children and the former Cabinet for Health Services, it was recognized that there was a need to assess the diversity-related trainings being provided across the newly formed Cabinet for Health and Family Services and make recommendations to standardize training requirements and content. The Cultural Diversity & Competency Training Committee was formed and charged with the task of developing a proposal regarding diversity-related training recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet leadership. The committee’s recommendations are made at the “Best Practices” level and are based on national standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate services. In many areas of the Cabinet, training and initiatives are already in place that are in line with or exceed the recommendations made. These existing programs often serve as the model for the committee’s recommendations.

The recommendations fall into five focus areas:

1. Organizational Cultural Competency: The Big Picture:

While the Cabinet for Health and Family Services has many components in place that contribute to organizational cultural competency there is currently no comprehensive focus or initiative in place. The committee recommends that the Cabinet:

- *Develop a comprehensive, top-down, long-term organizational development plan to address workforce diversity issues, language access and cultural competence.*
- *Engage the consultation of the Kentucky Conference for Community and Justice to guide this process.*

2. Diversity Related Policy Training:

Diversity related policy training is currently offered through a variety of mechanisms including:

- *New employee orientation overview*
- *On-line EEO training for Supervisors*
- *On-line LEP training for all DCBS front-line staff*
- *Annual/Bi-Annual Anti-Harassment Training for all staff*

The committee recommends that the Cabinet increase diversity-related policy training as follows:

- *Require all Cabinet employees to complete training regarding CHFS policies related to diversity/cultural competency/EEO/LEP issues*
- *Utilize existing on-line trainings already required of many employees as the model for this training.*
- *Require an initial “one-time” training with an annual or bi-annual “refresher” course.*
- *Offer this training through on-line resources such as KY Train.*
- *Place the coordination of this training, including development, implementation, maintenance and tracking under the Office of Human Resource Management, Training and Professional Development*

3. Prejudice Reduction/Diversity Awareness Training: *While components of prejudice reduction/diversity awareness training are being offered in numerous ways across the Cabinet, the Department of Community Based Services offers the “Best Practices” model in this area with their mandatory training based on the National Coalition Building Institute model. The committee recommends that the Cabinet build upon this model through the following:*

- *Require all employees to complete Prejudice Reduction/Diversity Awareness training.*
- *Establish a Curriculum Review Committee to provide coordination, development, evaluation, consultation, outcome measurement and monitoring for all Cabinet diversity training activities.*
- *Adhere to best practices currently established for prejudice reduction activities such as those currently offered through the Cabinet’s Department for Community Based Services.*

4. **Targeted Cultural Competency Training:** *A curriculum on Cultural Competency with Hispanic/Latino Clients was developed for the Department for Community Based Services by Marta M. Miranda, L.C.S.W. This training has been provided to DCBS trainers, Regional Training Coordinators (RTC's), interpreters and EEO/LEP staff. The committee recommends that the Cabinet utilize this curriculum as a model and implement the following:*

- *Utilize the Curriculum Review Committee recommended above to assist in the development and review of all Cultural Competency training lesson plans.*
- *Make the existing DCBS curriculum on Cultural Competency with Hispanic/Latino Clients available Cabinet-wide and utilize it as a model for the development of other modules of training.*
- *Develop and make available modules focusing on a variety of groups (e.g. Hispanic/Latino, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, etc.) as determined by requests from Cabinet management, supervisors, staff and training liaisons.*

5. **Interpreter Training:** *Many of the recommendations regarding interpreter training have already been implemented by the Language Access Section. CHFS interpreters are tested and deemed qualified according to the procedures established by the Language Access Section. A contract has been developed with Eastern Kentucky University for the provision of language training for CHFS staff who are interested in providing interpreter services. A one-day training for all "deemed qualified" interpreters is required and is presented by the Language Access Section. Following are the recommendations made by the committee:*

- *Require all CHFS interpreters to be tested and deemed qualified according to established procedures.*
- *Make language training available to staff who are interested in becoming deemed qualified interpreters.*
- *Give priority to training requests to assist staff in becoming deemed qualified interpreters or to increase the skills of staff who are already deemed qualified.*
- *Develop and provide a mandatory one-day training for all "deemed qualified" interpreters.*

The training recommendations committee is meeting again to work out the details of how these recommendations should be implemented. Ms. Day stated she would be glad to assist panel members in identifying professionals who would be able to provide a training session or presentation on diversity issues.

Krista Grevious in the Training Branch provided some good information regarding the cultural diversity training offered by the Cabinet. In Exploring Cultural Diversity and Prejudice training, we do train/address the issues surrounding youth who are struggling with sexual identity issues and the discrimination /prejudice they so often face. We refer and use the abbreviated version GLBT (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual trans-gender). The depth of discussion depends whether there are participants who identify openly as being a member of this group and their willingness to share information, misinformation, stereotypes, and most importantly what their experiences have been as a member of this group. If there are no participants in the session who openly identify as GLBT, efforts are made to bring out information about this group through the dialogues that occur while debriefing exercises and brief lecture about discrimination and oppression. Statistical information is provided, such as the fact that adolescents who are gay or struggling with thinking they are gay, are at a much higher risk of suicide.

Big Sandy Panel

Recommendation:

There should be increased training for social workers regarding the recognition of drug-induced behavior.

During FY 05 there have been several trainings developed and provided around the state on this issue. So far, 379 social workers have attended 2908.5 hours on courses directly related to drug-induced behavior. Some of the titles are: Assessing Families Involved in Methamphetamine Labs; Collaborative Services in Mental Health and Substance Abuse; and Drug Endangered Children to mention a few of the titles. Attached is a report that is in a PDF file titled Drug-Induced Behavior Courses that lists all courses and the number of participants attending.

National statistics suggest that 80% of all child abuse and neglect cases with a substantiation, involve drugs and or alcohol. Debbie Dile with the Child Safety Branch in Central Office is the point person for a methamphetamine work group. She states there is a focus on methamphetamines at this time due to their explosive nature and the severe effects on children. The Drug Endangered Children training was offered throughout the state in the spring. There will be a train the trainers' session offered in the future. It will be recommended that all CPS investigators receive this training.

Recommendation:

There needs to be a way for social workers to have clients drug tested in an efficient way.

The Administration is continuing to explore possible resources for this much needed service.

Recommendation:

We would like the Cabinet to survey workers throughout the state to determine what roles they are playing in juvenile court proceedings.

Whenever possible, we recommend that more trainings be offered regionally in order to cut down on travel time and other expenses for workers.

We totally agree, and over the past year we have made tremendous strides in achieving this; more trainings than ever before were conducted on a regional basis during FY 05. These courses included mandatory trainings conducted by the Training Branch staff such as: Coaching and Mentoring; Enhancing Safety and Permanency; Family Team Meetings; Case Planning for TWIST. Attached is a PDF file including a report detailing the name of the course, number of participants and the regional locations where the trainings were conducted. The name of the file is Frequent Events Regional.

Statewide Panel

Recommendation:

There should be specific interventions for workers when they experience a death on their caseload.

Currently workers and staff are referred to the Kentucky employee assistance program or the Crisis response board. This process is voluntary right now, but changes in policy are being considered that would make it mandatory for staff.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet should “spell out” exactly what it means by “collaboration” in the context of child fatalities.

This will be presented to the DCBS fatality team for consideration. A nurse has been hired to work with the Child Fatality Specialist in Central Office. Her duties will include case review and consultation, participation in the fatality review meetings, consultation to the field, and review of medical documentation.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet should continue moving toward a more transparent system in terms of consistently providing uniform data to the public for the purposes of discussion, debate, and improvement of services.

The Cabinet has developed a data base for fatality and near fatality tracking. This is a uniform system that utilizes a case review process for completion. Currently there is one Child Fatality specialist that reviews every fatality or near fatality. The specialist is housed in central office but travels around the state to meet with staff on each case with prior history.

Recommendation:

The child fatality reporting form needs to be changed so that it is a faxable document. Additionally, the category “other” should be added as a separate category to this form.

The child fatality form is currently being revised. The hope is that it will be an electronic document which can be quickly disseminated to program staff throughout the Cabinet.

Recommendation:

The state child fatality team should widen its efforts in the following areas:

- *encourage the continued funding of a public health coordinating nurse to work with local child fatality teams**
- *the development of training for local teams**
- *make sure the local teams are established and functioning**
- *make recommendations to the Legislature, regarding the mandating of local teams, including how often they meet**

These issues will be submitted to the DCBS fatality team for review and discussion

Recommendation:

The state team should be allowed and encouraged to review child fatalities in order to look for trends.

Trends from child fatalities appear in the annual report to the Governor, LRC and Public Health and are very comprehensive in nature. The reports are submitted on September 1st of each year.

Recommendation:

Protection and Permanency should move toward a weighted case system, similar to one that is used by Family Support.

A significant portion of a staff member’s work is captured through the TWIST system but currently does not capture all job-related tasks/activities assumed by workers. The current development of TWIST 2, a web-based application, is anticipated to have those added functions into the system for capture. Monthly management reports show number of referrals entered, completed CQA’s and case plans, service recordings and home visits. These reports are available to the FSOS and worker. Discrepancies are handled by staff in the Office of Information Technology.

Recommendation:

Supervisors should have enhanced training in the area of supporting their employees. We recommend, if possible, that supervisors be trained in a “retreat-like” setting to reward them for their difficult jobs.

With the implementation of the Program Improvement Plan (CFSR) requirements several trainings have been mandated for supervisors over the past year: Coaching and Mentoring; Enhancing Safety and Permanency and Family Team Meeting training. The Coaching and Mentoring training is particularly aimed at assisting supervisors in supporting staff. Thus far, these have not been presented in a “retreat-like” setting but totally concur that this was be ideal.

The Department has, in the past, offered a Leadership Development Series, which included skill areas of coaching, mentoring, supporting, and guiding the growth of employees. This course has been put on hold pending other Cabinet decisions related to courses which may be offered by OHRM.

Recommendation:

Workers (including supervisors) should be required to attend a minimum of training.

At the back of this document is a copy of the staff development plan, which includes minimum training requirements for supervisors and all staff in DCBS. Training has consistently advocated that the staff development plan be included and addressed on the Performance Plans for all DCBS employees and yearly plans for advanced trainings be included as well.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the Cabinet contract with an outside agency to do client drug testing.

The Administration understands this is a significant component of casework investigation and management and is continuing to explore possible resources for this much needed service.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the new Employee Wellness Coordinator spend considerable time going out into the sixteen regions to help tailor the Cabinet’s wellness initiative to the region’s specific needs.

The wellness initiative is a pilot project that is being implemented in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services building at 275 E. Main Street in Frankfort. This physical location was chosen due to it being one site and the coordination of activities and programs would be more manageable. The goal was to be able to develop a program guide with suggestions for activities that could be used statewide. There would be packets complete with program information brochures, enrollment forms, activities, media articles and timeframes, and schedules for implementation. The Wellness and Health Promotion Committee wanted to be able to provide regions with programs that would be easy to implement and not require extensive work on their part. The Wellness Coordinator was hired July 1, 2005 and is in the process of familiarizing herself with the

Cabinet structure, development of an employee survey and the overall goals and mission of the wellness program.

Recommendation:

Workers do not seem to be clear about the mission and goals of the Cabinet. The following information is readily available on the Cabinet's internet. All Cabinet employees have access to this site. It is the responsibility of regional management to discuss/review the mission and vision statements with staff.

DCBS Mission Statement:

To provide leadership in building high quality, community based human service systems that enhance safety, permanency, well being and self-sufficiency for Kentucky's families, children and vulnerable adults.

DCBS Vision:

"A nationally recognized department comprised of a highly skilled workforce that:

- *Provides services to enhance the self-sufficiency of families;*
- *Improves safety and permanency for children and vulnerable adults;*
- *Engages families and community partners in a collaborative decision-making process;*
- *Utilizes innovative technological resources to improve outcomes and efficiencies;*
- *Creates information systems and uses evidence-based practice to guide management decisions;*
- *Practices system-wide continuous quality improvement and shared accountability;*
- *Fosters a dynamic learning organization; and,*
- *Adapts to changing community needs and challenges."*

NOTE: Various ATTACHMENTS were also a part of this response and may be obtained by emailing Blake Jones at Bljone00@uky.edu

Gateway/Buffalo Trace



Chairperson: M. Kay Doughman

Shari Stafford

Rhonda Sims

Sue Hill

Joyce Vance

Trudi Bravard

Cheryl Love

*Jackie Johnson**

Claire May

Patricia Clark

Scott Osborne

**DCBS Liasion*

***It should also be noted that Service Region Administrator Mary Ralls attended most meetings of the Panel*

After a brief hiatus, the Gateway Buffalo Trace Citizen Review Panel reconvened in January, 2006 with new membership and a new focus. After a strategic planning session, the Panel decided to focus on evaluating the relationship between local child protection workers and school counselors. The Panel was particularly interested in how child abuse investigations and casework were handled in the school system.

The Panel developed an online survey which was distributed to DCBS workers throughout the region as well as school counselors and social workers. Although this was not a scientific study, it did yield some very useful recommendations:

Recommendations from the Gateway Buffalo Citizen Review Panel

- 1. The recommendation is made to the school system and the Cabinet that they work together to develop a protocol whereby children are called out of their classrooms in a respectful and private manner. This is especially important during initial investigations in order to calm the child's emotions and provide them with the support they need.*
- 2. The recommendation is made that the school system and the Cabinet develop a PRIVATE area in each school where children can be interviewed.*
- 3. The school and Cabinet are asked to encourage DCBS workers to obtain collateral information from teachers and other school personnel at the time they are doing investigations.*
- 4. It is recommended that the Cabinet work closely with our school systems to develop child abuse and neglect in-service trainings BEFORE the start of school. This should include the elements mentioned in the previous recommendations as well the proper protocol for child abuse investigations.*

The Panel looks forward to working with the Cabinet to implement these recommendations and provide expertise from several teachers and counselors who are members.

The Panel's Annual Strategic Planning Retreat will be held on August 18, 2006 at Blue Licks State Park.

Purchase Citizen Review Panel



Ladonna Butler, Chairperson

*Peggy Meriedeth**

Sonia Holmes

Gloria Olney

Ralph Prince

Cheryl Dodd

Kim Brand

Wendy Lay

Kathy Wilson

Linda Johnson

Dr. Peggy Pittman-Munke

Cindy Graham

Ronald Pullen

** DCBS Liaison*

The Purchase Panel focused on recruitment as one of our objectives for the year. Due to new members and the continued need to educate CRP members DCBS provided guest speakers. Workers from the field addressed the panel and answered questions to help us better understanding of their work. We also conducted a survey of law enforcement officers to determine perceptions of their working relationship with DCBS. Panel members advocated with legislatures by phone, mail, and emails to address the needs of families and children. During Social work month panel members provided breakfast at every DCBS site and shared our appreciation of the service to children and families. Each DCBS worker was given an updated community resource book and a bookmark as a gift.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Purchase Area Citizens Review Panel recommends substantial increased funding to DCBS, earmarked to assist clients in financially obtaining mental health services. Certain services, such as parenting assessments, physiological testing, and substance abuse treatment, are not covered by the medical card although often are part of a case plan. Many clients, lacking the ability to pay for these services, do not meet the goals of their case plan. Establishing a fund to assist clients in paying for services required by DCBS would allow these individuals to meet the goals of their case plan in a more timely manner, and would allow children to return home from foster care sooner, thus saving the state significant funds.

The panel is aware of community agencies such as 4 Rivers Behavioral Health, Child Watch, and Rape Crisis and the services they provide. An account needs to be established for utilization by DCBS when a client needs a mandated service. There are no free services in the community for parenting assessments, physiological testing, or substance abuse treatment.

RECOMMENDATION:

In recent surveys completed by area law enforcement, the Purchase Panel discovered that DCBS staff is sometimes difficult to contact after hours. Follow up conversations with various DCBS workers indicate that their issued pagers often do not transmit or signal or there is a delay in signaling. Due to the diverse terrain in western Kentucky and the correlating “dead spots,” the Cabinet needs to upgrade to statewide or nationwide pagers (known for their ability to transmit signals where cell phones and local pagers cannot.) to eliminate the breach in communication.

RECOMMENDATION:

We require from the Office of Commissioner for the Department of Community Based Service accurate written monthly reports during the reorganization and other periods of significant changes, and quarterly thereafter in order to successfully

complete our Federal mandate. Both the state and the panel should abide by the guidelines issued in our Memorandum of Understanding (attached). Furthermore, the Cabinet should reevaluate its use of the recommendations provided by the Purchase Citizens Review Panel.

Recommendation:

The forms to be completed by the natural parent during stepparent adoptions need to be revised. The forms currently in use are the same forms used in standard adoptions. Some of the questions (i.e.: Why are you giving your child up for adoption, Why did you choose not to use an adoption agency, the medical history of the natural parent and child, and the requested description of extended family members) are not applicable in stepparent adoptions. These forms should be changed to reflect the unity of a family provided by stepparent adoptions, rather than placing a burden of guilt on the natural parent and creating the feeling that he/she is surrendering his/her child to another individual.

Jefferson Citizen Review Panel



Gretchen Hunt, Mary Lou Cambron, Carla Tyree Curry, Chairpersons 2005-06

*Ricahrd Nassr**

Carla Tyree Curry

Bonnie Swicegood

Dwala Griffin

Becky Lewis

Mary Lou Cambron

Barbara Dempsey

Sheila Nelson

Joanna Young

Bryan Fantoni

Constance Ard

Phillis Thompson

Dr. Anne Swank

**DCBS Liaison*

As its areas of focus this year, the Jefferson Citizen Review Panel chose to work in the following sub-committees: Child Fatalities; GLBT Foster Care; and, Legal/Judicial. The activities and recommendations of each of these teams is listed below.

**Jefferson County CRP
GLBT Foster Care Working Team
Recommendations
April 19, 2006**

The following recommendations have been developed by the Jefferson County CRP GLBT Foster Care Working Team.

Barbara and Mary Lou provided recommendations based on the review of the Private Care Placement Documentation and Application and the Foster Care Training Materials. These documents have been reviewed and discussed by team members. The following recommendations are suggested:

- **In the Private Care Placement documentation (both training and application) each “nondiscrimination clause” should add language that explicitly includes sexual orientation.**

The Private Child Care Application Section K, pg. 12, discusses the Code of Ethics that includes adoption of NASW¹ Code of Ethics. The NASW Code of Ethics includes sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination clause. This working team recommends that Kentucky private care placement documentation model the NASW language. We realize that by reference it is included but feel that Kentucky should continue to lead in Child Protective Services by updating documentation that reflects clearly our nondiscrimination policies.

- **We recommend that each reference to the Code of Ethics in Private Child Care documentation explicitly include language regarding nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation**
- **Add to Attachment E of the Private Childcare Placement documentation an anti-bullying standard of care. This standard of care would address on a**

¹ NASW National Association of Social Workers

policy level the need to ensure the safety of youth from bullying by other residents and caregivers.

- **This team recommends that any facilitated staffing interaction with youth age 13-18 should address sexual activity in terms of health, safety, risk behavior assessment, responsibility, birth control and protection for both males and females.**

We further recommend that Foster Parent training address sexual activity and sexual orientation. This recommendation also includes a recommendation that Foster Training meet the NASW and COA requirements related to nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation.

MAPP training (foster parents) has many opportunities to incorporate GLBT issues into the existing structure. Bonnie Swicegood has identified several key areas that would be ideal for this inclusion.

- Session III – Child development and the impact of abuse. The training calls for a teen panel of 3-5 youths who have lived in foster/adoptive care with purpose to gain insight into living in care through the youth’s shared experience
 - **During the discussion of child development it is recommended that a specific case example of sexuality be included in addition the gangs, drugs and abuse/neglect.**
- Section 57807 Learn to talk with children about sex
 - **The last part of this section discussing parenting transcultural children, respecting spiritual and language differences. .**
- Section 58571 is a continuation of 57807 discussing the cultural component.
 - **A discussion of sexual orientation should be incorporated into this discussion.**
- Section 58574 discusses dealing with racism and discrimination.
 - **It is recommended that nondiscrimination based on sexual identification or sexual activity in general be included here.**

In our work , this team found that there were many opportunities and needs to address sexuality and sexual orientation for both adolescents and staff. We found that often staff felt uncomfortable addressing these topics during intake and placements. Training and guidelines should be provided to address this level of uncomfortableness for the staff to ensure the continued safety and success of placements for youth. With that thought in mind this team recommends:

- **The establishment of guidelines for Child Protective Services staff be formulated by the Cabinet to address sexuality at times of intake and transition.**
 - **Specifically guidelines regarding discussion of sexuality should be available to staff during facilitated staffing and family team meetings.**

We understand that the development of these guidelines will be a new activity. A few guidelines this team feels should be included are:

- **At least two adults should be present for the discussion.**
- **Guidelines should be specific in the “permission” for staff to address sexual activity.**
- **Discussion of sexual activity and sexual orientation for youth should be a part of the workers Standard Operating Procedure.**

We further recommend that the policy person responsible for implementing these recommendations consult with our working team.

Child Fatality Committee Recommendations

We have learned through our meetings with staff that when there is a fatality or near fatality on a worker's caseload that it is a devastating for the worker and the unit. Workers in the unit tend to social work themselves and they are not always equipped to provide the best professional support.

The Community Response Team that has responsibility for providing professional services to staff need to be identified. Although, managers are encouraged to seek help for the workers this rarely occurs. We are recommending that managers be required to make contact with this team as soon as possible after the event to provide the support for staff that is needed.

We are recommending that the Director of Protective and Permanency develop by September 2006 a policy and/or procedure that requires workers to access their contracted Employee Assistant Program (EAP) for a post traumatic stress assessment within the first two weeks of when a fatality or near fatality occurred on their caseload.

We are recommending that during orientation and training for new staff more focus is needed on the assistance that is available when a serious event happens on their caseload and how to access that help. We would like to be informed as to how and when this can be incorporated into the orientation and training

-We recommend that the Cabinet continue to support the efforts begun at the State level to provide funding for the roll-out of the Safe to Sleep initiatives. These initiatives include but are not limited to bilingual brochures, "onesies", door hangers, and public service announcements.

Judicial Team Activities and Recommendations

LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR WORKERS

COMMENT

The Jefferson County Citizens Review Panel (“CRP”) has identified a problem with the lack of legal counsel available to CPS workers, both during the work day and after hours. The CRP can foresee instances wherein CPS workers may be in immediate need of legal representation and/or legal advice, and there is no current mechanism for workers to directly contact counsel themselves at any time. Use of the County Attorney’s Office cannot be employed in this function, as there lies potential conflict in their role as prosecutors.

RECOMMENDATION

The CRP recommends that the Cabinet immediately address this issue by developing and implementing a policy, procedure, or program that provides workers with direct, emergency access to legal counsel at all times. The CRP further recommends that the Cabinet, while developing this policy, procedure, or program, that it informs all CPS workers of such steps being taken. Additionally, the CRP recommends that the Cabinet bear the cost of any needed legal representation of CPS workers pending implementation of such policy, procedure, or program. The CRP further recommends that the Cabinet consider partnering with pre-existing 24-hour legal networks for these services. The CRP requests a written response to these recommendations by September 30, 2006, outlining the steps it is taking or is planning to take to address these recommendations.

JUDICIAL SURVEY RESULTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPROVEMENT PLAN

COMMENT

The Jefferson County Citizens Review Panel (“CRP”) has been provided with a Judicial Survey prepared by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, relative to the performance of the Department of Community–Based Services. This survey’s results were published June 10, 2004. While this survey serves as a measure of the performance and relationship of community-based services, as rated by the judiciary, this CRP cannot discern if and how these results have been or are being used to “implement a plan to improve the working alliance with Kentucky’s judicial system.” Nor can this CRP discern to whom these results were distributed and for what purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

The CRP recommends that the Cabinet provide to all Kentucky CRPs details of the “plan” being implemented to improve the working alliance between the Cabinet and the judiciary. The CRP further recommends that the Cabinet distribute to each community-based worker and judge either a complete copy of the survey results or a condensed synopsis of the positive and negative observations contained in the survey. The CRP further recommends that the Cabinet, beginning with this survey, endeavor to invite public comment on the survey results by releasing both a press statement relative to the survey results and allowing for comments or criticism from both judges and the community-based workers being rated. The CRP requests a written response to these recommendations by September 30, 2006, outlining the steps it is taking or is planning to take to address these recommendations.

Fayette Citizen Review Panels



Rashmi Adi-Brown, Chair
Jan Hellebusch, Co-Chair

Claudia Blaylock

Janet Doss

Teri Faragher

Debbie Featherstone

Rebecca Graff

*Connie Boyd**

Carol McDonald

Linda Skaggs

Patricia Sidney

Carol Mayabb

Joann Bell

Robin Richmond

Melanie Tyner-Wilson

Pamela Black

Kim Hamilton

Carol Mayabb

Steve Skaggs

** DCBS Liaison*

Activities:

The Fayette Panel meets once a month every month . At each meeting the Fayette Panel would give time to our DCBS liaison who would update the panel on recent events, statistics and staffing regarding the Fayette County office. The panel believes this assists in increasing knowledge of “what is happening” at all levels within the Cabinet- from the local to Central Frankfort Office levels. We are fortunate to have a dedicated DCBS liaison and SRA who are involved not only with our Panel but with many other community groups as well which provides with a well-rounded information system amongst concerned citizens and professionals.

The Panel held a strategic planning retreat and determined that in order for the panel to work effectively we should establish four priority committees: Executive/Program, Child Fatality, Public Outreach and Correspondence. The committees functioned in the following capacities. Panel members met with DCBS staff and reviewed child fatalities and near fatalities as the increasing trend in child abuse deaths has been of concern to the panel. It is hoped that through these reviews the panel can assess the fatal and near fatal “cases” from “an outside the Cabinet viewpoint” and make future recommendations regarding these situations. The public outreach committee worked to determine what activities the panel should provide to Fayette citizens and professionals to increase knowledge and awareness of the issues regarding child abuse in our county. One activity that was coordinated was a child abuse awareness display at the Circuit Court building during April in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month. The correspondence committee is in charge of drafting letters, memos, flyers etc...on behalf of the panel regarding issues brought up that need to be brought to the public’s attention.

Many issues arose this year during panel meetings involving the Cabinet/DCBS that members were involved in outside focus groups, meetings and other venues. These issues included the “reorganization of the regions,” local press regarding Domestic

Violence victims and the change in administrative regulations regarding the handling of DV cases.

Two panel members are representatives of the State panel and bring information from the local level to the state meetings as to how Cabinet initiative impact local offices and staff. Additionally, panel members attended the KY Annual State and National CRP meeting in Louisville this year and worked on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Cabinet.

Recommendations:

The Fayette Panel only has one recommendation and that is to address the same concern the panel has been experiencing for many, many years. The recommendation is to “Develop a formalized plan of communication with the Cabinet in order for the Citizens Review Panels across the state to be utilized as they were intended.”

The Panel is fully willing to work with Cabinet officials to define this “form of communication” in order for all parties involved to feel their work on behalf of local counties is being heard, responded to and respected.

Big Sandy Citizen Review Panel



Troy Price, Chair

*Ron Webb**

Mark Walz

Jenny Ward

Bonnie Hale

Johnnie Ross

Jean Rosenberg

Rita Whicker

Anita Cantrell

Laura Kretzer

Mandy Stumbo

** DCBS Liaison*

The Big Sandy Citizen Review Panel is located in far Southeastern Kentucky. The Big Sandy Panel chose to focus on two areas: assessing and addressing staff Morale in the Cabinet, and continuing to address the question of why there is a large number of children who are reported for repeat maltreatment in the Big Sandy area.

The “Staff Morale Team,” led by Laura Kretzer, The Staff Morale subgroup engaged in several activities this year. This group had identified staff morale as an area deserving attention when the morale of DCBS staff in the region was described to us as at “an all time low.” Several staff had left the agency, especially on the intake teams in the

region. With the time required for posting the vacancy and training new staff, the subgroup was concerned about continue staff turnover due to workload and understaffing. Of note, this concern was identified prior to the announcement of the realignment.

To further explore this issue, we reviewed a staff survey which had previously been conducted. Of note, an employee's perception of the experience with his/her supervisor appeared to directly relate to issues of morale. Additionally, the group distributed a letter and small bag of candy to DCBS staff throughout the region as a token of appreciation. Finally, the subgroup also reviewed a 2006 research article, "Relationship between Staff Turnover, Child Welfare System Functioning and Recurrent Child Abuse", which was prepared by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

This subgroup plans to continue efforts to show appreciation to DCBS staff, through a voice mail thank-a-thon, e-mail encouragement, and hand written notes.

Recommendations:

Implement strategies to reduce staff turnover. Utilize research articles, such as the one identified above, to inform management decisions, especially as staffing relates to repeat maltreatment, a key area needing improvement in the Big Sandy region. Include public recognition of staff in positive ways, such as newspaper articles recognizing achievements. Optimally, the staff needs personal, individualized recognition.

Implement strengths based management strategies at all levels, while still keeping measures of accountability. These strategies must be regular procedure, not the exception.

The "Repeat Maltreatment Review Team, " led by Troy Price, decided to expand the previous year's efforts and further research the perceived causes of repeat maltreatment in the Big Sandy Area and address how empathy activities may impact the community awareness efforts of the Cabinet related to child repeat maltreatment.

A focus group of practicing attorneys was conducted in Floyd Co., KY to assess this population's opinions regarding repeat maltreatment. This group's opinion was that excessive parental use of corporal punishment and the physical filth in the home resulted in the most incidences of repeat maltreatment. The group emphasized Poverty, Lack of education, and Drug use in the home as their perceived most common underlying causes of repeat maltreatment. Further, the group expressed that cases may be closed prematurely due to ill-prepared court cases based on Cabinet activities and reports. This group's opinion was the Cabinet staff being overworked (too high case-load on investigative staff) and cumbersome policies (policy dictating court activities regardless of strength of legal case) as reasons for less than ideal par court involvement by Cabinet staff. This group further noted that additional resources such as funding for immediate drug testing and parent education would benefit the intervention process. Lastly, the group mentioned that they were familiar with DCBS workings due to close involvement with the cabinet and their attendance at an annual GAL training.

Additionally, the members of the Repeat Maltreatment Review Team discussed issues connected to repeat child maltreatment with the DCBS CRP Liason frequently. Through these discussions it was determined that Research indicates with repeat maltreatment 3 out of 4 of the following stressors are present, substance abuse, unemployment, domestic violence and lack of adequate housing.

In concert with the efforts to determine the perceived causes of Repeat Maltreatment in the Big Sandy Area, the group also began raising public awareness regarding the high rate of Repeat Maltreatment in the area. During an early Citizen's Review Panel Meeting the music video "11th Commandment" was shared. Over 2006, experienced child services professionals presented the video as they shared child abuse information during a variety of community activities. These experienced professionals anecdotally noticed increased interest in their information and increased time visiting their informational booths while the video was being played in the background.

As a result of these efforts by the Repeat child maltreatment team, the following recommendations are offered:

There are mixed opinions within the local legal community about DCBS staff involvement in court proceedings. Reviewing what the annual GAL trainings present regarding the purpose of DCBS involvement in court activities. This could lead to a more accurate and positive opinion of DCBS staff. Further increase training with community partners in the legal field about general DCBS policy and procedures.

The presence of at least 3 of the following stressors are present, substance abuse, unemployment, domestic violence and lack of adequate housing are strongly linked to repeat child maltreatment. Continuing to work with family until these stressors are eliminated or at least if 3 out of 4 of these stressors are not present during the exit interview in CQA could reduce repeat child maltreatment. Further a follow up visit as a means of assessment specifically for these factors could reduce repeat maltreatment.

Incorporate the Music Video the “11th Commandment” into public awareness efforts and community presentations currently offered by the cabinet. Review for additional use of “11th Commandment” video in areas such as waiting areas and parent education sessions, as appropriate.

Statewide Citizen Review Panel



Cheryl Dodd, Chair

*Gayle Yocum**

Rashmi Adi-Brown

Constance Ard

Phillis Thompson

Sue Hill

Phillis Thompson

Gretchen Hunt

Ladonna Butler

Cheryl Love

Troy Price

Rita Whicker

** DCBS Liaison*

The Statewide Citizen Review Panel met on October 21, 2005 in a strategic planning session. The Panel voted to continue working in the areas of employee morale and child fatalities. These areas were also chosen for possible evaluation:

Look at merit system and how it impacts social workers

Hazardous duty pay for social workers

The education system and mandated reporting

The benefit of merging health services and family services

The following report was submitted by Chairperson Cheryl Dodd:

RECOMMENDATION:

The Statewide Citizens Review Panel supports the recommendations made by the Fayette and Purchase panels for a consistent, reliable means of communication between the Department of Community Based Services and the various panels throughout the state. To successfully carry out the Federal Mandate, the panels should be apprised of, and possibly included in, significant changes affecting the organization.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Statewide panel recommends the Cabinet implement methods to aid in employee retention and morale. Recent surveys revealed that while employees feel appreciated by their direct supervisors, they do not feel appreciated by the Cabinet in general. Research has shown that poor communication and lack of appreciation are key causes to low employee satisfaction. Additionally, research indicates a direct link between low morale and turnover. By implementing programs and improving communication beyond the Frankfort campus, employees will experience a feeling of self-worth and the Cabinet will benefit from the longevity of its workforce.