

**State of New Hampshire, Division for Children, Youth &
Families**
Citizen Review Panel, Annual Report
July 2002 -- June 2003

This report covers the 4th year of activity of the NH Citizen Review Panel of DCYF. The panel continued to meet on a regular monthly schedule from September 2002 through June 2003. Meetings focused on several issues:

- Learning about the work and activity of CRPs in other states
- Case Reviews
- Preparation for & participation in the NH CFSR Review
- Consideration of the structure and role of the CRP & other DCYF Advisory groups toward greater efficiency

Learning about CRPs in other states. At the beginning of the year the CRP met with regional Children's Bureau staff member Julie Munro to learn about the work of other states' CRPs. At a subsequent meeting the CRP discussed information from a teleconference presentation, "Improving Agency Services—The Role of CAPTA Citizen Review Panels". CRPs vary considerably in structure, process and activity. Several continue to work to define more clearly a mission and goals to improve child welfare services. Further, although the structure and mandate varies from state to state, most continue to focus on: a) ongoing review of agency policies and practices, b) review and discussion of reports and other data generated by the agency and c) case reviews.

In part, as a result of this information, the CRP did undertake case reviews and has initiated discussion with other DCYF advisory boards about possible affiliation.

Case reviews. The CRP heard and discussed one case presentation that involved several children, foster families and families of origin and many service providers in more than one state. Discussion focused on recent changes in DCYF policies and procedures designed to address some concerns, the lack of adequate psychiatric evaluation and intervention services for children and the need to use an evaluation protocol for CRP case reviews in the future. The panel considered using evaluative protocols similar to those used in the CFSR review with their focus on safety, permanency and wellbeing. In addition, in part as an outgrowth of participation in the CFSR review in NH this spring, there is increased interest to review cases in the future that illustrate some of the complex and difficult issues likely to be part of the CFSR report summarizing the review. It is our hope that consideration of difficult, problematic cases might lead to recommendations to improve service in the NH child welfare system.

Preparation for and participation in CFSR review. Staff of the quality assurance branch of DCYF met with the CRP on several occasions both in preparation for the CFSR and as one of the stakeholder groups to be included in the CFSR review. Preparation included information about the scheduled review and consideration and discussion of the kinds of questions and issues the review would address. Several members of the CRP participated

at the time of the review in one of the meetings with stakeholders. The CRP Chair participated as a stakeholder on one of the district office review teams.

Consideration of the structure and role of the NH CRP. The CRP considered several question of structure and mission. We've learned that some similarity in the goals and activities of the CRO and the DCYF Advisory Board and the Child Welfare Advisory Committee are in fact similar. Several members of each group as well as DCYF administrative staff regularly attend each. Conversations have begun to consider some closer affiliation of these groups in the future.