

Citizen Review Panel Annual Report

For the Period January 1 – December 31, 2008

Name of Panel:	Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council
Contact Person:	Janel Hines

Briefly describe the number and type of meetings held in 2008:

There were thirteen Executive Committee meetings in 2008. The Executive Committee is an advisory committee which, on behalf of the Council, receives and reviews reports from Council committees, the Milwaukee Child Abuse Review Team (CART), the Bureau, the Division of Safety and Permanence, the Department of Children and Families and other organizations. The Executive Committee receives written and in-person monthly updates regarding child fatalities and egregious events.

There were four Partnership Council meetings in 2008. The Council was provided information on BMCW performance, policy, issues and initiatives. The Partnership Council receives quarterly updates on child fatalities and egregious events.

Where applicable, please describe the panel's activities in regards to:

1. Evaluating local child protection services
The Council worked with the BMCW on establishing the Child Safety Scorecard. The Council received updates on the progress on the Milwaukee Child Welfare Safety Plan and the results of the second Quality Service Review.
2. Evaluating local and State progress under the State CAPTA Plan (3 and 4 go to this)
The Milwaukee Child Welfare Safety Plan was launched September 2007. The Council participated in its implementation and in the development of the tool to evaluate Bureau's progress in meeting identified safety goals for children in BMCW care.
3. Review of cases, child fatalities and near fatalities
In January, the Partnership Council was designated as a Citizen Review Panel. The Executive Committee began receiving detailed information on CART reviews. The information is important to generating the "big picture" of child welfare in Milwaukee and determining what changes need to be made across systems to prevent such future tragedies. The Health Committee agreed to work with the Division on developing a report to track CART recommendations, BMCW response and changes in policy and/or practice.

4. Review of the extent to which the child protective services system is coordinated with the foster care and adoption programs

The Bureau revised its policy on relative placement for children entering out of home care. The information was shared with the Council as part of the Milwaukee Child Welfare Safety Plan. The Bureau held all staff training in May 2008.

5. Public outreach and comment

The Council held two community meetings. The meetings provided the public an opportunity to hear about the work of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and the Department of Children and Families, to ask questions and comment on services.

All Partnership Council meetings and Executive Committee meetings are open to the public unless closed session discussions are on the agenda. Partnership Council meetings are particularly well attended by the public and often the press. The Council also provided an opportunity for public comment at each Council meeting.

Please describe other panel activities or issues addressed in 2008

- The legislative members of the Partnership Council advanced and passed legislation to clarify the use of informal disposition orders for families involved with Safety Services. Legislators and DCF are working on defining legislation to allow child protective services staff access to juvenile criminal records for specific purposes.
- The Health Committee met with BMCW partners to determine methods for mental health screenings and ways to move toward trauma based services.
- The Health Committee hosted two mini-summits on health screens with Bureau staff, partner agencies and Child Protection Center staff. As a result, a pilot program was implemented to improve the timeliness of health screens for children coming into out of home care.
- The Health Committee co-chairs and BMCW leadership have been working with the Department of Health Services regarding improving Birth to Three screenings and services to children coming into out of home care.
- The Adoption and Out-of-Home Care Committee researched post-termination of parental rights contact between a child and a birth relative: The committee developed recommended language for continued contact between a birthparent and their child after the legal adoption. Both the birthparent and adoptive parent would have to agree to the contact. Continued contact could be waived based on best interest of the child and any modification of the contract would occur in Family Court.

- The Adoption and Out of Home Care Committee began to explore standards for guardian ad litem.

Describe any challenges or difficulties the panel encountered in 2008:

Recommendations to improve child protection services at the local level:

Recommendations to improve child protection services at the State level:

The Health Committee recommended a statewide requirement that all children in out of home care be provided with well child checks based on the EPSDT periodicity table. That recommendation has been forwarded to the Secretary and Division Director and awaits discussion.

Recommendations to improve State support of local CRPs:

Indicate if training and/or technical assistance is needed or desired in 2009. Specify the areas in which you would like to receive training or assistance.

Please send an electronic copy of the completed annual report to Paula Brown at PaulaL.Brown@wisconsin.gov . Thank you.