

WEST VIRGINIA CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

I. Summary of Activities

The West Virginia Citizen Review Panel is comprised of individuals representing a diverse mix of concerns, interests and professions. The Panel meets on a bi-monthly basis in a centralized location that is easily accessible for everyone.

Specific activities that have occurred in the past year include the following:

- X Evaluation of sources of information for use by the Panel, including the Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.
- X Continual review of cases.
- X Identification of concerns within the Child Protection system.
- X Increase in the availability of statewide cross disciplinary training for those involved in the child protection system.
- X Addressed capacity/staffing issues in CPS that resulted in legislative budget for salary increases for CPS staff.
- X Review practices, policies and procedures used by the state for Child Protective Services.

II. Recommendations of the Panel

Based upon the review of federal and state statutes, child protective services policy and review of cases, the Panel makes the following recommendations for the state of West Virginia:

1. Support the establishment of an independent system to assure quality and compliance with federal and state laws, rules, policies and practices within the broader child protection system such as an Ombudsman program, to be housed in an independent facility.
2. Provide funding to assure that the multi disciplinary process mandated by WV Code 49-5-D is fully implemented statewide with the provision of independent facilitators for the multi disciplinary treatment teams.
3. Expand participation in cross-disciplinary training statewide on child maltreatment issues, including family violence issues.
4. Incorporate a system of record checks for prospective employees of provider agencies that recognizes that people can change. The current system the Department uses does not allow an individual to ever “come off” the database.
5. Provide refresher training and advanced training for tenured Child Protective Services Supervisors and Workers.
6. The Department needs to award funding to Child Advocacy Center programs to enhance the MDT process..

7. Incorporate training requirements into the contracts the Department holds with provider agency staff. There needs to be core training that these individuals attend, such as MDTs, safety, Child Abuse indicators and reporting, domestic violence, substance abuse. The provider agencies are bringing in staff and giving them caseloads within a few days of the hire date.
8. Hire a part-time person for the Citizens' Review Panel.
9. Expand the pool of eligible Medicaid service providers to include licensed professional counselors and licensed independent clinical social workers.
10. Re-establish part time collaborative coordinators to evaluate ways to fill the gaps in services that have resulted from the loss of funding and in how the state sets spending priorities.
11. Expand preventive services for children and families and services that help maintain intact families (i.e. Family Options, CAPS).
12. Codify the existing Citizen Review Panel into West Virginia Code.
13. Recruitment of new members for the Panel.
14. Participation in the development of the Program Improvement Plan revisions that will occur after each Child and Family Service Review.
15. Change the CPS notification letters to make them more understandable to clients.
16. Train CPS supervisors about how to hold pre-hearing grievance conferences. They should know how to proceed to avoid having to have the hearing, such as when to request documentation changes in FACTS, how to elicit help from program staff to determine if policy was followed before filing a grievance with the hearings officer.
17. Establish an independent body that will assess the effectiveness of ASO, and these individuals will become part of the retrospective review process. There are several issues that need brought to the attention of Department staff, such as: recruitment of providers is being required on the field level and the field staff have no control over this system; payment system needs adjustments due to the difficulties for rural communities who have no providers housed there; CON process is too lengthy; no reimbursement for court performances for providers.

III. Panel Membership

The following individuals serve as members of the West Virginia Citizen Review Panel;

Kathryn A. Boylan
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