

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect  
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee  
Ceil Zalkind, Esq, Chair  
September 13, 2011  
Minutes**

**In Attendance**

|                        |                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Allison Blake          | Commissioner - DCF                   |
| Marygrace Billek       | Mercer County Human Services         |
| James Chester          | FAFS                                 |
| Maura Somers Dughi     | Child and Family Advocate            |
| Amy Fischer            | Administrative Office of the Courts  |
| Rita Gulden            | CASA of New Jersey                   |
| LaTasha Holmes         | DCF-Office of the Commissioner       |
| Debra Lancaster        | DCF-Child Health Services            |
| Laurie McCabe          | Senate, District 19                  |
| Patricia Meyers        | Legal Services of New Jersey         |
| Nancy Parello          | Advocates for Children of New Jersey |
| John Ramos             | DYFS - Director's Office             |
| Barbara Rusen          | DCF                                  |
| Mary Weglarz           | DCF-Child Health Services            |
| Clarence Whittaker     | DCF-DCBHS                            |
| Cecilia Zalkind, Chair | Advocates for Children of New Jersey |

**Staff**

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| Adrienne E. Jackson | DCF-NJTFCAN |
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**Introductions and Review of Minutes**

Introductions were made. May meeting minutes were approved.

**Update on the Department of Children and Families – Commissioner Blake**

Commissioner Blake provided an update on DCF. Kara Wood is serving as acting DYFS Director. Together with Kara and DCF executive staff, the Commissioner will continue the strategic planning process and the department will partner with a consulting firm to guide the work. DCF is looking at its structure and seeks to integrate the work within the department. Given the direction of the department, it is looking at ways to communicate more effectively and exchange information with large systems for a more holistic approach. Additional updates are forthcoming around this initiative, service array through out the state and other priorities.

**NJTFCAN Update**

Adrienne provided an update on the progress of DCF and NJTFCAN Biennial Conference- Opening Doors: Partnerships for Prevention and Healing. The conference is October 21, 2011, in New Brunswick. Conference tracks: Bullying and Cyber Bullying; Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Behavioral Health; Family Support Engagement and Advocacy; Child Abuse and Neglect; Trauma-Informed Care. Members were reminded that registration opened September 1, 2011 and all were encouraged to attend. Task Force retreat is scheduled on September 16, 2011 and

will also be held in New Brunswick. Committee Chairs and the role and function of the Task Force are just a few agenda items to be discussed.

### **SORS Annual Report**

Commissioner Blake's discussed DCF response to SORS. One of the recommendations highlighted was the one-page handout providing youth information on the benefits of remaining under DYFS care beyond age 18. A draft of the one-page handout was distributed to the members. Generally speaking, the group agreed that the document is a good starting point. Discussion ensued around exploring a more appealing way to reach youth. The group related that this population typically accesses information electronically and/or by other commonly used technology. The Office of Adolescent Services (OAS) is finalizing the document and SORS members were encouraged to share their ideas. SORS offered appreciation and thanks to Commissioner Blake.

### **Presentation on Child Health Programs/Units – Debra Lancaster and Mary Weglarz Office of Child Health Services**

A PowerPoint presentation was provided by Debra Lancaster and Mary Weglarz. They began by giving an overview of the scope and work of the unit. The Child Health Program (CHP) is a partnership between DCF and UMDNJ. The CHP supports the work of DYFS by managing 47 Child Health Units (CHU) co-located within each of the DYFS Local Offices. The unit provides health care case management for children involved with DYFS with extra attention to children in out-of-home placement. The CHU's are comprised of nurses and nurse practitioners with 50 children per nurse. The main purpose is to provide a health care plan specific to each child's health care needs. Some of the highlights of the units are the prescribing parameters and medication monitoring guidelines. CHU's are charged with knowing who is on psychotropic medications through a process involving Medicaid. In addition, the CHU's are working with adolescents to help inform and provide assistance with navigating the health care systems. The units are incorporated into the Case Practice Model in which nurses attend meetings such as Family Team Meetings. It is also designed to meet the needs of the children in need of behavioral health care. Discussion ensued around how the nurses have been a valued addition because they offer appropriate and clear communication. Nurses were identified as true partners in the DYFS local offices. A copy of the Health Care Map was distributed to the members and Adrienne will send an electronic copy of the PowerPoint presentation following the meeting.

### **DYFS Survey Results**

An update was provided on the DYFS survey. Overall, the survey highlights common themes such as services, training and agency resources. The group recognized their partnership with DCF. The committee acknowledged they would like to refine and redo the survey again. Commissioner Blake noted the survey offered valuable information. Issues around gaps in services were discussed. Relative to this, mapping of service array through out the state is being developed by the department. Moving forward, work around this initiative and exit interviews is an area SORS would like to explore.

Conversation ensued about next steps. The SORS workgroup will meet in October to discuss the summary report and recommendations. A conference call will be scheduled following the meeting and members agreed to submit their comments, next steps and recommendations related to the survey to Adrienne. Thank you letter will be issued to staff.

**Next Meeting & Announcements**

November 1, 2011 - members agreed to begin at 10:00A.M. SORS is interested in a presentation on DCF Training Academy.

**Adjournment**