





Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W., Co-Chair  
Martin A. Finkel, DO, FACOP, FAAP, Co-Chair

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## **Updates from Commissioner Allison Blake**

Commissioner Allison Blake provided NJTF CAN with updates from previous discussions:

- The Family Success Centers (FSC) have been one of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) key strategies at engaging at risk families in their communities before they become involved in the formal child protection system. DCF has engaged in a partnership with the National Implementation Science Research Network (NIRN) and Rutgers University. This partnership will develop a practice profile model that will generate data collection to understand what is working, where technical support is needed, and what it should look like so that programs in the expansion areas can be successful moving forward.

DCF has received a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. DCF has assembled an evidence based practice advisory group (researchers and practitioners) and a consultant that will define a framework for evidence supported services, scalability and training. The group will focus on developing an understanding of what types of programs and services are effective by reviewing interventions with keeping families together through pilots and scaling-up. Staff is requesting more resources to accommodate servicing children in their homes. Commissioner Blake will continue to update NJTF CAN about this topic at future meetings.

- Commissioner Blake also announced DCF's trauma training in April 2016 called "Taming Trauma" which will focus on workplace stress. The trainer is Eric Arauz. Some of the training will involve breathing techniques, how to ask for help, and how supervisors are connecting with staff coming back from visiting some of the most difficult cases. There is an online component (pre- and post-test) for staff; system partners will be trained at the same time as DCF staff.
- Commissioner Blake informed NJTF CAN that Casey Family Programs is launching the "The Casey Leadership Fellows" initiative. New Jersey has been selected to send a team to take part in this initiative. Commissioner Blake will continue to provide NJTF CAN updates on this initiative.
- Linda Holland, Director of the Office of Information Technology for DCF, attended the meeting to present the "New Jersey Child Welfare Data Hub" test site. Linda informed NJTF CAN that DCF created this website, in partnership with Rutgers University, to house data available for the public to access and run reports on New Jersey's child welfare and general census data in real time. NJTF CAN was informed that no password is needed to access this website and the landing page explains how to navigate the site. Also, Linda stated that monthly reports will be



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provided to Rutgers to generate the reports on the site and requests can be made of any information not available. Linda informed NJTF CAN that the site is fun, user friendly and will feature future videos. NJTF CAN was informed that DCF is working toward having data available on this website for all of its divisions. Linda informed NJTF CAN that the live site will launch in April 2016 and an email will be sent to NJTF CAN and DCF various email distribution lists with the link to access the data. Sara Munson stated that Rutgers would be available to meet with different groups and organizations to demonstrate how to use and navigate the site.

### **2015-2016 NJTF CAN and SORS Annual Reports Review and discuss 2016 Timeline**

Ifeanyi Pole provided NJTF CAN an update on the annual NJTF CAN and Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS) reports timeline. NJTF CAN was informed that these reports were historically submitted to the New Jersey Governor, legislature, and posted on DCF's website by June 30<sup>th</sup>. However, NJTF CAN voted in 2015 to change this timeline to a November 30<sup>th</sup> submission date. Ifeanyi stated that NJTF CAN will receive the draft contents for both NJTF CAN and SORS reports for their review, feedback and vote in September 2016. Once approved, the content of both reports will be forwarded to DCF's graphic designer, Juan Serrano, for design, layout and formatting.

### **Subcommittee/Committee Updates**

#### **Communication – Seetha Holmes**

Seetha informed NJTF CAN that the Communication Committee met on February 23, 2016 and the members were enthusiastic about developing their goals and projects. The Committee will be assisting the Prevention Committee with their efforts in marketing the Children's Trust Fund (CTF). The Committee will be assembling a workgroup to draft a CTF marketing proposal to present to NJTF CAN at a future meeting.

Seetha informed NJTF CAN that the Committee received a link to view DCF's awareness YouTube videos. Ifeanyi will email NJTF CAN and its subcommittee/committees a link to DCF's YouTube channel.

#### **Prevention Committee**

Dr. Martin Finkel provided the Prevention Committee's updates in the chairperson, Maura Somers Dughi's absence:

- Prevention Curriculum Development for Higher Education: The Workgroup, chaired by Kerrie Ocasio, completed a literature review and has a conference call scheduled for later this month.
- Prevention Plan Workgroup: The Workgroup, chaired by Diana Autin, will summarize feedback from agencies outside of DCF.



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- **Prevention Standards Workgroup:** A self-assessment tool for providers is now available on-line. Work is proceeding on a Parent Handbook and another round of trainings will begin at the end of April (four dates have been confirmed and two more dates await confirmation). The Workgroup is starting to recruit parent leads and is seeking ways to increase parent participation and discussed the response rate for training is highest when the information is disseminated by DCF program leads.
- **Report on County Council on Young Children Training Project:** This grant was awarded to Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN). There are County Councils in every county under Early Childhood Race to the Top (ECRTTT) funding; it is a two generational approach and provides direct technical assistance to parent leaders, project coordinators, and community stakeholders.
- **Improving Outcomes for Families of Infants and Young Children:** This is a pilot project for which the Prevention Committee recommended and the Task Force approved \$100,000 funding from the Children's Trust Fund. This project is located in the Newark DCF local office, is a combined effort of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) and Family and Community Partnerships (FCP) and is in its eighth month of operation. The project has provided 150 referrals and 60 of the cases have been moved to Permanency. The project is comprised of a randomized control group of 75 families. The Prevention Committee receives updates about this project at each of its meeting. DCF's FCP requested an additional \$100,000 to continue the pilot for another year and \$100,000 to begin the project in another county. The Committee discussed the project's successes, implementation, and high regard for the staff and program concept. The Committee requested additional information about the project from FCP. The Committee will further discuss this topic prior to providing a recommendation to NJTF CAN.

#### **Protection Committee – Commissioner Blake**

On behalf of the acting Chairperson, Commissioner Blake informed NJTF CAN that the Protection Committee did not have any new updates.

#### **Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS) – Rita Gulden**

Rita Gulden informed NJTF CAN of the survey outcome and the positive feedback received in the areas of training and support. The survey will be sent to Rutgers for additional analysis before the final report is sent to NJTF CAN. Rita thanked Linda Porcaro for her outstanding job in finalizing the survey. NJTF CAN was also informed that SORS' strategic plan should be completed by July 2016.



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### **NJTFCAN Business-Action items:**

#### **Discuss NJTFCAN Bylaws – Joseph Ribsam, DCF Deputy Commissioner**

Joseph Ribsam discussed the NJTFCAN Bylaws and the following proposed amendments:

- Page 2: formatting changes
- Page 5: clarifying upfront that NJTFCAN is a Citizen's Review Panel.
- Page 6: formatting changes; and to include the Chief Financial Officer for the grant making decision and the Ethics Officer for the ethics standards.
- Page 7: under Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee, recommending reinserting the statutory language back into the section for consistency; and under Funds, solicitation, use recommending inserting the statutory language specifically to the Children's Trust Fund.
- Page 8: clarifying the numbers of Ex-Officio members to eleven (11) as the Office of the Child Advocate no longer exist and the separating the number of Senate and Assembly members.
- Page 9: formatting changes and replacing Division of Youth and Family Services with the Division of Child Protection and Permanency.
- Page 10: NJTFCAN expenses recommending removing as it deem necessary from this section; and insert the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circular and under Resignation should be brought to the attention of the Co-Chairs and filed.
- Page 15: removing the 16 of 30 as the total number is 29; and to have a voice vote to make that the standard method
- Page 16: changing the Vice-Chairperson must be approved by NJTFCAN.
- Page 17: each member of a committee/subcommittee shall be approved annually by agreement of the NJTFCAN. NJTFCAN agreed to change the minimum requirement for the committee/subcommittee membership.



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- Page 18 – Add an addendum regarding the ethics rules and changing Division of Youth and Family Services to Division of Child Protection and Permanency; and Section 6 noting that the SORS serves as a citizen’s review panel.

Ifeanyi Pole will make the amended changes to the bylaws and uploaded it to the Task Force portal for the members to access and review within the next thirty days. NJTF CAN will vote on the amended Bylaws at the May 2016 meeting.

NJTF CAN discussed the process of awarding CTF grants to public and private agencies and the conflict level experienced by some members involved with the decision making. Joseph Ribsam will contact the State’s Ethics Commission regarding their availability to attend a Task Force meeting to address members’ concerns on how to structure NJTF CAN’s CTF grant award process.

### **Subcommittee/Committee Elections**

#### **Protection – Chairperson**

Commissioner Blake informed NJTF CAN that the election of the Protection Committee Chair will be postponed for vote at May 2016 meeting because Marygrace Billek was not able to attend the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting and she was pondering the Chairperson position. Commissioner Blake invited NJTF CAN members to consider serving as Chairperson for the Protection Committee.

#### **Communication Committee– Vice Chairperson**

NJTF CAN voted and approved Cheryl Mojta as the new Vice-Chairperson of the Communication Committee.

### **Subcommittee/Committee Application Renewals**

NJTF CAN voted and approved the applications for the following subcommittee/committees:

- Communication Committee – Cory Cassar, Jason J. Dickinson, and Cheryl Mojta
- Prevention Committee - Diana Autin, Christine Baker, Jeannette Collins, Diane Dellanno, Andrea Breitwieser, Maura Braun Scalera, Gina Hernandez, Cheryl Mojta and Rush Russell

Protection Committee - Greta Anderson, Joyce Applegate, Douglas Behan, Eileen Caraker, John Esmerado, Francesca Gervasi, Linda R. Jeffrey, Cynthia Lischick, Patricia Lynch, Clinton Page, Nora P. Pearce, Donna Pincavage, Megan Price, Debbie Riveros, Judy Spinney, Jennifer Underwood, Lorene Wilkerson and Donna Younkin

- SORS – Mary Jane Awrachow, Amy Fischer, Mary Hallahan, Lori Morris, Linda Porcaro, Aubrey Powers, Senator Joseph F. Vitale and Lisa von Pier



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### **Discuss Time of Day of 2016 NJTF CAN Meetings**

NJTF CAN voted to keep the dates and locations already established for their 2016 meetings. The revised 2016 meeting dates will be sent to NJTF CAN and its committees. This meeting document can also be accessed on NJTF CAN's webpage.

### **Announcements**

Ifeanyi Pole informed NJTF CAN that the Biennial Skilled Building conference will be held on Friday, September 9, 2016 at DCF Professional Center from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm and the conference's theme is "The Digital Realm of Child Abuse"; the conference is free and registration is required.

Dr. Finkel announced that on April 20, 2016, CARES Institute will host its "Experts in Child Abuse 10th Annual Best Practices Symposium" in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month at the DCF Professional Center in New Brunswick. Two featured symposium topics are "The Impact Helping Can Have: Building Resiliency in Child Welfare Organizations" by Dr. Debra Anderson and "What's New in Youth Violence and Resilience" by Dr. Christine Marie-Antoinette Wekerle; the symposium is free and members can register at [www.CARESInstitute.org](http://www.CARESInstitute.org).

Dr. Martin Finkel informed NJTF CAN that Maura Somers Dughi asked him to share information about the documentary screening event called "Paper Tigers" on April 26, 2016. Ifeanyi will email NJTF CAN information about this event.

Dr. Martin Finkel informed the NJTF CAN that the Pakistan edition of his book is now being published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Finkel also informed NJTF CAN about the Oscar winning documentary called, "A Girl in the River".

### **Next Meeting May 20, 2016 – Trenton**