

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Department of Children and Families
Allison Blake, Ph.D., LSW, Co- Chair
Dr. Martin A. Finkel, Co- Chair
May 22, 2015
9:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Minutes**

In Attendance

Lorraine Augostini	Office of the Public Defender
Diana Autin	Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)
Marygrace Billek	Mercer County DHS
Lauren Carlton	Department of Law and Public Safety
Yvonne DeCicco	Office of the Law Guardian – Public Defender
Alfred Federico	Mercer County Superior Court
Martin A. Finkel	CARES Institute
Rita Gulden	CASA of New Jersey
Natasha Johnson	Department of Human Services – Division of Family Development
Donna Younkin	DCF – Director of Special Initiatives
Matthew Schwartz	Member of the Public

DCF Staff:

Ifeanyi Pole	DCF – Office of the Commissioner
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Introductions and Review of Minutes

Introductions were made.

The January 2015 minutes were approved without edits.

Updates from Commissioner Blake

Commissioner Blake provided an overview of DCF’s 2014-2016 Strategic Plan. She highlighted under the Strategic Plan’s, “Seamless System of Care” that DCF’s work with adolescents includes the Department’s submission of the 2nd phase of the Youth at Risk federal grant for homeless youth. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has also been involved with this project and awarded 100 housing vouchers for homeless youth. Based on DCF’S child protection data, housing voucher sites in this proposal are located in Mercer, Burlington, and Union counties.

DCF also applied for a federal Street Outreach grant targeting youth involved in human trafficking. Based on law enforcement data, DCF is focusing this project in Atlantic City. Once these youth are picked up during human trafficking raids, they have experienced survival sexual abuse and homelessness.

DCF will continue to meet with the statewide Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) and the Department recently hired a staff member in Legal, Regulatory & Legislative Affairs to help the Department revise our policy in moving toward normalcy.

DCF is recruiting two more staff that were former youth in our system; the first position is in our Central Office- Human Resources and the second at our Child Welfare Training Academy (also known as DCF's Professional Center).

Also, DCF is expanding opportunities to integrate the Department's Early Childhood Education programs. The Department launched a pilot in Burlington County within a program in one of our child protection services offices that created a triage system for new referrals of young children (ages 0-5) that may have multiple risk factors. Through this project, DCF provided a warm-line transfer to the home visitation programs and connected the families to early resources. This pilot was successful and the child protection staff members were very receptive to this approach. DCF is replicating this pilot in Essex County and six other local offices. DCF has partnered with the Casey Foundation to fund an evaluation of this project. Michelle Rupe spearheaded this pilot and will also oversee this work. The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) will be providing one year of funding of a staff member for this Essex County Collaborative project. Data shows that during the recession there was an increase in child fatalities in Essex, Camden and Passaic counties, especially with young mothers. Based on this data, this project will most likely expand into Camden and Passaic counties.

DCF began the transition of all in-patient substance abuse (SA) contracts from DHS to DCF; this transition will move youth SA patients on to the Medicaid platform. DCF's Children's System of Care (CSOC) and the County Inter-agency Coordinating Councils (CIACC) are working to communicate information about the availability of beds for adolescents with substance abuse disorders. For issues with substance abuse, parents can call the Perform Care line for assistance at 1-877-652-7624.

Commissioner Blake informed the Task Force that an RFP has been posted to expand the "Mommy and Me" program in Southern New Jersey; DCF will meet with DHS this summer and discuss a new strategy.

DCF continues to integrate supportive housing into its substance abuse programs. Last year, DCF began the "Keeping Families Together" pilot housing project in partnership with the DHS in Essex County. This pilot was based on similar housing programs in New York City and Connecticut that provided stable housing for the families in the welfare system. Research tells us that if you stabilize the housing and provide high quality "wrap around" services, there is a decrease in the families re-entering foster care and a decrease in the parents' substance abuse. The New York City pilot is seeing an increase in the closure of their cases. This structure designates that the voucher stays with the parent. This pilot in Essex County started with ten beds which are now full and the families are doing well. DCF has 4 pilot apartments for this project in Monmouth County through our partner agency provider, and 180 is Turning Lives Around. Also DCF has 4 pilot apartments in Passaic County through the Department's partnership with Family Connections; DCF is also working with this agency in Hudson County. DCF also partnered with DCA on this project and awarded 25 additional housing vouchers based on data for Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem, and Camden counties. Youth and adult housing vouchers stay with the clients and will renew.

Commissioner Blake referenced back to DCF's 2014-2016 Strategic Plan and discussed the partnership priority to continue participation in Pediatric Partnership beyond its long-term recovery efforts following Superstorm Sandy. Additionally, the Commissioner

updated that the federal supplemental funding will end this state fiscal year. On July 31, 2015, there will be a shared learning and community engagement opportunity. DCF, in partnership with DHS, Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DOE). and over 200 service providers have been invited to discuss children's recovery from natural disasters and create break-out groups for shared learning. A research team led by Rutgers, including Columbia and NYU, has helped put this together.

Task Force and SORS Annual Reports – Martin Finkel

Dr. Finkel informed of the Task Force and SORS previous submission schedule for their reports. The Task Force approved amending the reports' submission date to August 2015.

NJTFCAN Business – Action Items

Dr. Finkel reviewed committee applications. The Task Force approved the following new committee members:

- Protection: Steven W. Kairys, M.D.; Donna Pincavage, MSW, MPA; Patricia Lynch, RN, FN-CSA; Sylvia Snyder; Lorene Wilkerson
- SORS: Sara Munson; Mary Jane Awrachow

Subcommittee/Committee Update

Communication Committee – Yvonne DeCicco

Yvonne presented the Task Force with two proof options for the Task Force logo. The Task Force approved the logo that referenced its acronym and requested that the full name of the Task Force be added to its design for final approval. The Task Force discussed unveiling the logo at the conference in September. The Communication Committee's project to create an interactive calendar of meetings on the webpage was also discussed. A drafted memo regarding this project was forwarded to the co-chairs. Commissioner Blake informed the Task Force that DCF is exploring alternative communication vehicles in an effort to meet the goals of the Task Force web calendar project; this will be discussed at a future meeting. Yvonne also shared the Committee's additional goals for new membership and marketing through social media.

Prevention – Maura Somers Dughi

Maura discussed that the Prevention Committee has been working on broadening public awareness of their standards through webinar trainings and getting the Prevention Plan out to the community. With regard to (CTF), the Committee discussed and recommended that the next funded project should highlight their goals. The use of e-voting to approve CTF funds to pay for a staff member for the Essex County Collaborative Project for one year was also discussed. The Task Force was also informed that the introductory webinars were conducted on March 30th and May 18th, were recorded, and sent to DCF to post on website. The Task Force discussed that the Advanced Standards webinars were for administrators and the training teams were capped at 200 participants. The Committee discussed who received notice of the webinar trainings and recommended it be open to a broader group of people. The Committee formed a workgroup to assist in the implementation of the New Jersey Prevention Plan and identified 20 State agency program directors to interview about their familiarity with the Plan.

Protection – Donna Younkin

Donna informed the Task Force that John Esmerado presented at the Committee's May 13th meeting on the inconsistency between DCF's child abuse and neglect and sexual abuse data when compared to what is reported to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). John partnered with Amanda O'Reilly, Director of DCF's Office of Research, Evaluation, and Reporting, to confirm that these differences were due to technological issues. John will draft a report of his findings and recommendations for the Committee's July 15th meeting. The Committee's Batterer's Accountability (BA) Workgroup continues to discuss the following issues: the need to acquire more information on the activity of the batterers, the outcome of the kids who witness violence in the home and how they are affected. The Committee's The Human Trafficking (HT) Workgroup consulted with other states on their guidelines and drafted a New Jersey Human Trafficking County Guidelines document. This document will be emailed to the Task Force for review and approval. Once approved, the Guidelines will be sent to the AG's office for their review. The Protection Committee will be addressing the issue of child pornography and how it relates to trafficking and child abuse investigations. A representative from the FBI is scheduled to speak on child pornography cases and what they are seeing and doing out in the field at the Committee's July 15th meeting. Dr. Finkel stated that the issue of Child Pornography is extremely important because it exposes the child to pornography and introduces child on child sexual behavior.

SORS – Task Force Discussion

Members of SORS discussed updates on the Committee's recent initiatives. It was discussed that SORS has been working on a survey and Sara Munson was helpful in moving this project forward. Additional discussion included the Committee's work of family time and educational stability. The Task Force discussed the use of a new survey for the comparison and the quantitative analysis. Additionally, the Task Force also discussed that California recently passed a law to require schools to integrate services around trauma for children especially in foster care; this was to ensure that children in foster care did not have any disruption in their education. Commissioner Blake informed the Task Force of DCF's recently completed Trauma Needs Assessment and will schedule a presentation of this project at the next meeting.

2015 Biennial Task Force Conference

Commissioner Blake informed the Task Force that the 2015 Biennial Task Force Conference will be held on Wednesday, September 9, 2015 at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick, NJ and is entitled, "Kinship Care and Family Connections." The keynote for the Conference will be Dr. Joseph Crumbley. The Call for Presentations (CFPs) was sent out via email with a deadline of May 31, 2015. The CFP Review Committee will be contacted in late June for the final review process. The 2015 Task Force Conference will feature three, new, full-day invitational workshops. In addition, Rush Russell, Executive Director of PCANJ, will do a half-day workshop at the conference on "Safe Child Standards: A Guide for Youth-Service Organizations."

Announcements

Diana informed the Task Force about the 2015 NJ Cultural Competence Conference on November 9, 2015 at DCF's Professional Center; the focus of this Conference is trauma and trauma informed approaches with the overlay of culture. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2015-nj-cultural-competence-conference-registration-17316902321?ref=ecal>

Dr. Finkel invited the Task Force to register for CARES Institute's free lecture on child abuse fatalities and abusive head trauma on July 14, 2015. For more information, visit http://www.caresinstitute.org/education_register.php

Commissioner Blake informed the Task Force that her office and staff will be moving to 50 East State Street in Trenton, NJ this summer.

Next Meeting – July 24, 2015 (New Brunswick)

