

# Child Advocacy Center – Multidisciplinary Team Advisory Board

Nydia Monagas, Chair  
John Esmerado, Vice-Chair

**June 7, 2019**  
**1:30 p.m. – 3:30 P.M.**  
**DCF Professional Center**  
**Room 104**  
**30 Van Dyke Avenue**  
**New Brunswick, NJ 08901**

## Minutes

### In Attendance:

Christine Beyer	NJ Department of Children and Families
Jacquelynn Duron	Rutgers University
John Esmerado	Union County Prosecutor's Office
Nydia Monagas	NJ Children's Alliance
Debbie Riveros	Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office
Elahna Strom Weinflash	Office of the Law Guardian
Maria Savattiere	Deirdre's House
Javier Toro	Hudson County Prosecutor's Office

### By Telephone

Julia Glass	NJ Office of the Attorney General
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### Staff:

Daniel Yale	NJ Department of Children and Families
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### Guests:

Joseph Pargola	NJ Department of Children and Families
Pete Boser	New Jersey Children's Alliance
Ayanna Thompson	NJ Department of Children and Families

### I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order and the Open Public Meetings notice was read.

### II. Approval of Minutes

The Board voted to approve the minutes from the April 5, 2019 meeting with the following edits:

On page 3 – Sentence should read “There will be a Team Academy in June in Atlantic, Cape May, Salem, and Cumberland counties.

### III. New Business

#### Review and vote on completed Annual Progress Reviews

Nydia reminded the Board that they reviewed two counties at the previous meeting, that there were eighteen counties to review at this meeting, and that there was one county that has yet to be reviewed

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due to scheduling conflicts. Nydia informed the Board that New Jersey Children's Alliance (NJCA) would be meeting with the remaining county the following Monday and would be reviewed at the next meeting in August.

- **Atlantic County**

Nydia informed the Board that Atlantic County is still in need of a facility and is planning on applying for funds through the FY20 Request For Proposals (RFP). Maria Savattiere stated that her main concern was that NJCA work with Atlantic County so that they have a successful proposal for the next RFP so that they can progress. Nydia stated that they met with Atlantic County a few weeks prior to this meeting to determine how they were progressing. Nydia informed the Board that Atlantic County has already had conversations with their Freeholders and is looking to develop a "Friends Of" board as well as an advisory board to help with that process. They are currently looking for a county building, but the location may be an issue. Their county seat is in Mays Landing, which is not necessarily where most of their population is located so accessibility may become an issue. Commissioner Beyer suggested that there may be an opportunity to work with the Department of Community Affairs to look at more home-like settings in Atlantic City.

There was a question about what level of support or guidance counties will receive on particular measures and if there is a standard for outcome measurements or standard survey that can be adjusted? Nydia stated that there are consistent areas: succession plan, strategic plan, community assessment plan. For accredited centers, these are new standards and they are just catching up. For developing centers, this will be a new requirement that they will be starting as they develop their centers. NJCA has resources to help them build community assessment plans including templates, but also hands-on technical assistance to help them develop these items. NJCA will hold an accreditation training on September 10th where they will be bringing people from the Northeast Regional CACs to do a training and provide direct technical assistance as well as provide an overview of what the standards are and what needs to be met for each.

Maria stated that the Outcome Measuring System (OMS) is a big push for the National Children's Alliance. Maria stated that Deirdre's House used capital funding from the previous RFP to purchase iPads so that clients can complete the surveys. Nydia stated that NJCA's resource and outreach coordinator has created a presentation to discuss the possibilities of how to incorporate the OMS into the intake and follow-up plan to determine what works best for each county.

Nydia stated that they are also creating an MDT orientation module for all of the standards and different parts of the work that is done. This module will be used as part of the onboarding process along with a resource binder and flash drive that are being created.

John Esmerado made a motion to approve Atlantic County. Maria seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Atlantic County.

- **Burlington County**

Nydia informed the Board the Burlington County was the first accredited center and has been accredited for many years. They are currently up for reaccreditation and are working on their application. Maria questioned their statistics, specifically the number of reviews. Maria felt that some counties have very low numbers in relation to their population. Maria felt that it should be standardized so that people know when a case should be reviewed. Nydia stated that NJCA is having that discussion with several developing centers as it was concerning to them as well. However, Nydia felt that with Burlington County, their numbers are representative. They are only required to review those cases that have Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP) and prosecution involvement. Maria stated that Deirdre's House affiliation agreement allows any member of the

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Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) to refer a case. Maria felt that this is helpful as some problematic cases that no longer have DCPD or prosecution involvement can still be referred back to the MDT for guidance. Nydia stated that some county-based programs are open to accepting other cases, but it becomes a question of capacity. Many prosecutor-based CACs are limited in their capacity to deal with other cases as they don't have the necessary staff.

Nydia felt that Burlington County has a lot of support and some of the programs are just developing. There are several items that were not required before but will be required moving forward. They are open to moving forward with the development of these documents.

John made a motion to approve Burlington County. Maria seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Burlington County.

- **Camden County**

The Board discussed that Camden County has come a long way in the past few years. Maria felt that Camden is a good example of how far you can go when you have a dedicated team and the necessary funding. Nydia informed the Board that Camden County was just accredited in January. A motion was made to approve Camden County. John seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Camden County.

- **Cumberland County**

There was an question about the number of interviews for Cumberland County. The Board discussed whether they have a physical log where they would log in specific case information to keep track of their interviews. John stated that a physical log has to exist to collect data to fulfill the requirements of the attorney general report.

There are other issues in Cumberland County as well. There is significant underreporting of sexual abuse. It is hoped that with the creation of a CAC, there will be more community education. NJCA will assist with community education, raising awareness, and ensuring that CACs are doing community assessment plans. NJCA has done presentations and attended community outreach events in Cumberland County which increases buy in from the prosecutor's office. Maria felt that they would need to create a position for community awareness and education.

Commissioner Beyer felt that because of the isolation of families and communities in the southern counties, the supports are almost nonexistent so there may need to be more community outreach beyond the traditional MDT partners. There are a few Family Success Centers in those areas but there may need to be more work done to develop communities in those isolated areas.

John requested that the Board table the discussion until August as he did not feel comfortable voting when the Board does not know the number of children interviewed by the MDT. John made a motion to table the vote until the August meeting. The vote was seconded and the Board voted to table the discussion until the next meeting.

- **Essex County**

Essex County is due for reaccreditation next year, so their application is due by the end of this year. Nydia stated that Essex is a nonprofit CAC so they review all of their cases but don't necessarily interview all of their cases. Nydia stated that they are working on helping them to streamline their case review process. Because they have so many different team meetings it becomes a challenge for all partners to be at the table all of the time.

Commissioner Beyer made a motion to approve Essex County. John seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Essex County.

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- **Gloucester County**

Maria asked Pete Boser about the numbers of cases reviewed in Gloucester as it seemed low. Pete stated that they are filtering the cases prior to review. Their MDT is only reviewing cases that intersect with DCPD and the prosecutor's office. He also felt that the culture of some MDT teams is that if there isn't a lot to say about the case, they may not review it. Commissioner Beyer felt that this may be an issue because, as was mentioned earlier, once everyone is at the table, you may find out more information that would not have been discussed otherwise. They are having conversations with DCPD to make sure that they are getting all of the cases referred properly.

John stated that the statutory mandate is to comply with the NCA accreditation and the grant is to establish a commonality. We need to get everyone to the baseline of reviewing cases involving DCPD and the prosecutor's office. Maria felt that perhaps that standard needs to be changed going forward, after everyone reaches that baseline, so that the CACs are servicing all the children that need services. Co-location could assist in the process as when DCPD and the prosecutor's office are in the same space, those conversations happen more frequently.

Gloucester also now has a specific Special Victims Unit (SVU) and assistant prosecutor dedicated this work. The structure and the commitment to a specialized unit continue to grow. They have just recently persuaded the county to rent the upper floor in their building so that they will now have dedicated prosecutor staff in the building. These steps will assist in regularizing their practice.

John made a motion to approve Gloucester County. Maria seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Gloucester County.

- **Hudson County**

Hudson County received funding and has begun their infrastructure work. They are currently renovating a facility. They will have a separate section of the building dedicated to the CAC. They have made improvements to the MDT within the last year. Hudson has really grown in the past few years in their MDT relationships and their commitment to the process. Historically Hudson has had an issue with funding, so with the next rounding funding, they should apply again to ensure sustainability. There was a question about how they have fewer MDT reviews than child interviews. Javier explained that they do a lot of exploratory interviews. If they suspect that a crime was committed, even if the child has not made a disclosure, they will go through the forensic interview process. If there is not a disclosure and there is not much substance to the case, it will not go to MDT review. Javier stated that they only review cases in which there is DCPD and prosecutor involvement. They will, however, do child interviews on cases involving domestic violence that don't necessarily involve sexual or physical abuse of a child. This is done to not only assist with the criminal case, but also to assist with services for the children.

Maria made a motion to approve Hudson County. John seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Hudson County. Javier Toro abstained from the vote.

- **Hunterdon County**

Hunterdon County has a facility that meets the standards but does not have a fully co-located space. John requested that the Board table this discussion as well as because their statistics include elder abuse and adult sexual abuse. John would like clarification with these numbers removed. Nydia explained that Hunterdon County reviews all cases across the spectrum.

Maria asked which Regional Diagnostic Treatment Center (RDTC) Hunterdon County uses. Nydia informed the Board that they use Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center. Nydia stated that there are some inconsistencies in relationships. There are quarterly RDTC meetings being held and they are beginning to explore these issues. NJCA has invited all of the RDTC medical directors to attend

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their meeting in September to address what the policy and protocol is regarding how families access the RDTCs. The meeting will address their referral process, what kind of cases are being accepted, who is paying for those cases, what is the output, etc. There have been large amounts of discrepancies across the 21 counties.

Commissioner Beyer explained that Mollie Greene has been working with the RDTCs regarding these issues. Commissioner Beyer informed the Board that Dr. Rachel Berger, a Fellow from Casey Family Programs, who will be working with DCF looking at the processes around the state and bring about more standardization.

Nydia stated that one of the challenges occurring is which cases are being seen by the RDTCs and who is paying for them. There are cases that don't meet DCPD requirements and there are children that are "falling through the cracks". They don't have the same level of care that a child who was abused by a caretaker would have access to. DCPD offices that have RDTCs in their county have better relationships with the RDTCs.

Maria made a motion to table the discussion regarding Hunterdon County to clarify the number of children actually reviewed. Debbie seconded the motion. The Board voted to table the discussion until the next meeting in August.

- **Mercer County**

Pete explained that stated that Mercer County has had a number of personnel changes, but they have good momentum. Their case review numbers are probably review and re-review but they have a busy county. They are applying for accreditation this year. Maria stated that her concern was that their MDT Coordinator felt that she was "spread too thin". Many counties do not have staff where their only role is the MDT Coordinator, so they can be overwhelmed. NJCA is working with counties to professionalize the MDT Coordinator position so that this would be a full-time role. Maria also suggested that counties apply for funding in the next RFP to hire full-time coordinators. It was also noted that there are additional federal funds that may be available to fund these positions as well as funding fringe benefits.

John made a motion to approve Mercer County. Debbie seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Mercer County.

- **Middlesex County**

John stated that Middlesex County has always had a strong program. Middlesex also has a high number of mental health referrals.

John made a motion to approve Middlesex County. Jacquelynn Duron seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Middlesex County.

- **Monmouth County**

John stated that Monmouth County has always had a strong program both in the MDT program and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. Pete stated there has been a large amount of growth in the past few years including a team expansion with additional disciplines. They have mental health onsite and they will be getting a therapy dog onsite. Debbie stated that they also have school staff on their MDT board as many referrals come from schools.

John made a motion to approve Monmouth County. Maria seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Monmouth County. Debbie Riveros abstained from the vote.

- **Morris County**

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Maria stated that the numbers listed only reflect the medical exams that took place at Deirdre's house, there may have been more done at Audrey Hepburn. The same applies for therapy services/mental health referrals. Morris County is the only county that has been successful with having medical exams conducted onsite. Staff from Audrey Hepburn travels to Deirdre's House on Tuesdays to perform medical exams. If a medical exam needs to be done on other days, the families travel to Audrey Hepburn.

Elahna made a motion to approve Morris County. Javier seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Morris County. Maria Savattiere abstained from the vote.

- **Ocean County**

Nydia informed the Board that Ocean County is up for reaccreditation this year, so they will submit their application later this year. A question was raised whether they have a physical space. The county rents a building but they cannot modify the building. They have discussed adding mental health services because their main provider isn't located in the same town.

Debbie made a motion to approve Ocean County. Maria seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Ocean County.

- **Passaic County**

Maria asked about Passaic County's review numbers. Pete stated that they are very interview heavy and that they probably filter their cases prior to scheduling an MDT review. They have a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Coordinator acting as an MDT Coordinator. Maria stated that Passaic has a very good relationship with their RDTC. Pete stated that they are also geographically located near St. Joseph's Hospital for medical exams.

Marie made a motion to approve Passaic County. Jacquelynn seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Passaic County.

- **Salem County**

Salem County has a lack of services, a lack of resources, isolated communities, etc. The county prosecutor is dedicated to developing a center and trying to build those community relationships. They haven't been able thus far due to lack of funding. They are looking at utilizing a county owned building next to the courthouse across from the prosecutor's office. At this point, they do not have adequate interview facilities. Commissioner Beyer suggested looking into provider agencies in the downtown area might have space and be more family friendly. Maria felt that if the Board doesn't approve them even though they are lacking, they will not improve. Nydia stated that since they have not received funds previously, the Board should consider them as first-time applicants when considering approval.

Maria made a motion to approve Salem County. Elahna seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Salem County.

- **Somerset County**

Nydia observed the case review process for Somerset County and informed the Board that they have the best-case review process that she has observed. They are very coordinated and do a lot of cross education and cross collaboration. Maria asked why their review numbers seemed so low. Nydia stated that, according to the CAC and DCPD, they are receiving all of the appropriate cases. Maria asked why their medical exam numbers were so good. Nydia stated that they have a strong relationship with Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center and Dr. Medina sits on their review Board.

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Maria made a motion to approve Somerset County. Debbie seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Somerset County.

- **Sussex County**

Nydia informed the Board that Sussex County has been through 3 executive directors in the past 6 years, so they have gone through frequent transition. One of the challenges that they have had is that they have a difficult time with Audrey Hepburn Children's House. Maria stated that she has offered to assist with creating a relationship with Audrey Hepburn Children's House, but it has not happened to this point. Nydia stated that they were having issues with DCPD attending MDT case review meetings. There were a lot of issues with relationships in the county when the current executive director took over. Nydia informed the Board that NJCA has been helping to build those relationships that will be make the CAC successful.

Maria stated that their mental health numbers were low as well. Nydia stated that these numbers reflect those cases in 2018 when they were short staffed and were having issues with DCPD. They were probably only counting the cases where they received mental health onsite and they did not have a clinician for a period of time. Nydia felt that these numbers are not reflective of the work that they are doing. Nydia stated that they now have two licensed clinicians that are acting as child advocates as well as a volunteer coordinator that does community outreach. They also recently hired an MDT coordinator.

Debbie made a motion to approve Sussex County. Jacquelynn seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve Sussex County.

- **Warren County**

Maria felt that their medical, mental health and interview numbers look good. Pete stated that their team has a very good mental health connection. They are able to overcome the geographic issues in that the county seat is not located where the majority of the population resides. Pete stated that they have switched to using Dorothy B. Hersh and have seen a large improvement.

Maria made a motion to approve Warren County. Commissioner Beyer seconded the motion. The board voted to approve Warren County.

Nydia informed the Board that NJCA will obtain further information regarding Hunterdon and Cumberland Counties and that the case review for Union County will take place the following Monday.

## **2019 RFP discussion**

Maria asked that the RFP be as broad as possible as different CACs have different needs. Maria felt that it would be helpful if the RFP can include funding for anything that satisfies any NCA standard. This would allow counties that can't utilize counseling services at this point but need to have an MDT coordinator just to keep the doors open and have a functioning MDT to apply for funding.

Commissioner Beyer stated that the preference should still be for capital funding if we want to stay on target to have all 21 counties have CACs by 2021. Nydia stated that they discussed the possibility of capping the capital funds at \$750,000. The Board discussed how much money would be reserved for capital and how much would be reserved for services. Maria suggested that the Board set aside \$3 million dollars for capital and \$1.5 million dollars for services. The Board decided that there would be a \$750,000 cap on capital funding and a \$200,000 cap funding for services.

Nydia stated that the final discussion topic would be tabled for the next meeting in August.

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## **IV. Announcements**

No announcements.

## **V. Adjourn**

Next meeting Friday, August 2, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. in New Brunswick.