

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council

Friday, April 24, 2009

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Present: Pastor Archie Ivy, Janel Hines, Cyrus Behroozi, State Senator Alberta Darling, representative for State Representative Tamara Grigsby, David Hoffman, County Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr., Judge Michael Skwierawski, Judge Mary Triggiano, Dr. Earnestine Willis, Mary Pat Bohn, Colleen Ellingson, Francine Feinberg, Maria Rodriguez, Cathy Swessel, Frank Gaunt, Bill Fiss, John Bradtke for Wanda Montgomery, Teri Zwicky and Mike Boeder.

Pastor Ivy opened the meeting with greetings and introductions.

2008 Annual report for the Office of the Milwaukee Child Welfare Ombudsman's Report

Pam Matthews presented the 2008 Annual Report for the Ombudsman's office which is an overview of the activities of the Ombudsman's office for 2008 and includes suggestions and recommendations for improvement. Ms. Matthews explained the role of the Ombudsman and the process used to review complaints.

The report identified four main areas for improvement in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and includes six recommendations to help in improving these areas. The recommendations and full report are available at:

<http://ombudsmanmilw.org/resourcesandreports/reports.htm>

Office of Program Review and Quality Assurance (OPQA)

Nikki Hatch, Director of the Office of Program Review and Quality Assurance presented an overview of this new office. The OPQA will be responsible for settlement agreement and reporting; quality assurance; and program monitoring.

New appointments in the OPQA include Dianne Jenkins – Strategic Initiatives Advisor; Melissa Wavelet, Director of the Bureau of Performance Management; Judith Herman Performance Review and Evaluation Section Chief; Bob Nikolay, Director of the Bureau of Budget and Policy.

As part of its work, the OPQA will be focusing on:

- Assuring objectivity and neutrality, providing unbiased information
- Performance review and evaluations
- Consolidating QA functions and settlement agreement monitoring
- Remaining enforceable items in settlement agreement
- Supporting the Quality Service Review.

Transition Update

Integrated Family Services will begin its work with the Bureau on May 16. Bill Fiss presented an update on the process. Focus has remained on ensuring the safety of children since the beginning of the transition in January. Bill reported that the public/private relationship of the transition team “worked to its best”, and helped to make the transition seamless and professional. Thank you to Frank Gaunt, Darlene Kuhn, Hugo

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Cordona, George Torres, Cyrus Behroozi, Reggie Bicha, Mary Pat Bohn, John Bradtke, Cathy Swessel, and Partnership Council members Linda Davis and Pastor Archie Ivy.

Frank Gaunt thanked LaCausa staff for their work in maintaining continuity during the transition. Workers kept focused and “performed admirably” while ensuring the safety of children.

Integrated Family Services (IFS)

Teri Zwicky and Mike Boeder reported on the transition process at Integrated Family Services. IFS is working to ensure continuity of care through a thorough, professional hiring system. Offers to new staff have been made, and IFS continues to recruit for open positions. IFS is looking at what is working well and will continue to build on the successes of LaCausa.

Medical Evaluations

Mark Campbell updated the Partnership Council on the recent medical evaluation done for Bureau children in out of home care:

- 572 children were evaluated, 305 needed follow up.
- 40 referrals were made to 220-SAFE, and four of these were substantiated.
- Spreadsheets are being developed to track follow-up information and ensure medical care.
- All LaCausa children were evaluated.
- Kathy Elertson walked through each evaluation.
- The Bureau will be able to use this review as an opportunity for monitoring and teaching.

Department of Children and Family Updates

Transition

Secretary Bicha expressed the Department’s gratitude for the work on the transition and the “incredible” cooperation of everyone involved and noted that the process could not have happened as effectively as it did without the help of Bill Fiss.

Settlement Agreement

The Bureau has been released from two more (documentation and shelters) of the original 16 enforceable items in the Settlement agreement. Four enforceable items remain.

Budget Proposal

Funding requests still part of proposed budget include:

- Funds for OHC placements
- 18 full time social workers and 3 supervisors
- BMCW nursing positions
- 5% increase each year for foster parents.
- Funding for mandated training for foster parents.

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- Graduated licensing for foster homes
- Regulation of rates of higher level care for foster care facilities.

BMCW training teams

As part of the Bureau Safety Plan, training teams and mentor positions have been created for Initial Assessment staff. The purpose of the training teams is to ensure that new staff get the time and training to learn their jobs. This is a two-phase process. Each worker must “graduate” from phase one into phase two and undergo satisfactory three and six month evaluations to complete phase two. Mary Pat Bohn thanked Initial Assessment supervisor Catherine Dupar for her work with the training teams.

Comprehensive Assessment Process

Work on the Comprehensive Assessment process continues.

- BMCW and the Judiciary have been working to develop a relationship that will help to move consistently to the same outcomes and ensure that the process is seamless from open to close
- Process needs to identify capacities of caregivers that keep their children from being safe.
- Developing safety enhancing systems and court reports aimed at protective capacities.
- The process is a collaborative effort with judiciary, private partners, GALs, etc.
- Bureau will provide training on the comprehensive assessment process.

Bureau Directors

- Interviews are starting for remaining Bureau Directors
- Recruitment for BMCW Director is moving forward. There have been numerous postings nationally and regionally for this position. Recruitment will be open until May 11. Ratings of candidates will begin the second week of May, and interviews will begin in June.

CEO's

CSSW, Cathy Swessel

May is foster care month, which provides us with the opportunity to get out positive messages about foster parenting. CSSW currently has 700 licensed foster homes.

CFCP, John Bradtke for Wanda Montgomery

- CFCP will be part of a third annual health fair with Aurora and other agencies. The fair will be May 23 at the Aurora facility at 32nd and Highland.
- Screening, interviewing and hiring process is ongoing. March 23 career fair was very successful.

Egregious Incident/Child Death Report

Mary Pat Bohn presented the report for February, March and April of this year.

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BMCW Quarterly Reports

Mary Ellen Barone presented the quarterly reports. The Bureau will be presenting monthly reports from now on.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Zellner