

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council

Friday, July 24, 2009

Minutes

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Present:

Pastor Archie Ivy, Judge Mary Triggiano, Linda Davis, Judge Michael Skierawski, Teri Zywicki, Mike Boeder, Kathy Elertson, Dr. Michelle Urban, Francine Feinberg, Mary Sowinski, Cathy Swessel, and Wanda Montgomery.

Minutes:

Minutes from April 24 meeting approved as read.

Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to advise Governor Doyle to recommend that incoming Children's Court Judge Marshall Murray become part of the Partnership Council.

Pastor Ivy expressed the appreciation of the Partnership Council to Judge Triggiano for her work with the Council and families at court.

Saleem El Amin was officially welcomed as the newest member of the Partnership Council.

Department of Children and Families Update – Secretary Reggie Bicha

The Department of Children and Families has celebrated its first year anniversary. Some of the accomplishments during the first year include:

- First State budget passed and signed and effective on day one.
- The Bureau has been released from 2 additional settlement agreements
- A performance review evaluation section has been created that will help provide better, more timely reports.
- St. Aemelian's has joined the Bureau.

The new state budget includes:

- Graduated licensing structure.
- 18 new IA staff and supervisors.
- Career ladder for ongoing staff.
- Support training for staff supervisors.
- 5 percent rate increase for foster parents, funding for foster parent training and public information campaign regarding recruitment and retention.

Quarterly Milwaukee Child Welfare Ombudsman Report, Pam Matthews

- Pam explained the new spreadsheet format and asked for suggestions about how the report looks and what other information may be needed or changed. The Ombudsman's office will be working with Martha Johnson on this.
- Need to find a common understanding of how we use the word "systemic" in these reports.

OPQA – Office of Performance and Quality Assurance, Judie Hermann, Melissa Wavelet

Bureau Director Melissa Wavelett and Section Chief Judie Hermann provided an overview of the OPQA:

- Three major areas of responsibility: performance management, budget, and strategic and resource related information.
- OPQA will be monitoring programs and performance and will ensure objectivity and neutrality of information.
- The next Quality Service Review will be held in Milwaukee in October.
- OPQA will play a secondary level review role in child death investigations.

Child Welfare Accreditation, Linda Davis

- How will staff work on accreditation process?
- Will need to determine how we will pay for this process – what resources are available?
- CSSW and St. Aemelian's are accredited. CFCP will be accredited when CSSW is re-accredited in 2010.

Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously that the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and its contract agencies become accredited through the Council on Accreditation.

Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to recommend that Accreditation Reports and CAP reports come back to the Partnership Council for review.

Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously that the Department of Children and Families hold exit interviews for any departing Partnership Council members.

Strategic Direction

Secretary Reggie Bicha asked the Partnership Council to take on the task of developing a long-term set of strategic recommendations:

- This will involve input from the community – what are our priorities?
- Need to set a direction and move away from the tendency to react to the “issue of the moment.”
- If necessary, we may need to bring in a consultant to help with this.
- Process will involve gathering information and prioritizing what our strategic direction is.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to provide a set of strategic

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directions to the Secretary's office by the end of the year.

Supervised Visitation Program Presentation, Wanda Montgomery, Teri Zwicky and Paul Moeller

Paul Moeller of PSG (Professional Services Group) provided a history and overview of its supervised visitation program. The Partnership Council had the opportunity for questions and discussion.

Monthly Child Death/Egregious Incident Report, Mary Pat Skelly Bohn

Mary Pat presented the child death information for the months of April, May and June.

BMCW Update

Protective Capacity

As of August 3, Initial Assessment workers will have 10 days to complete assessments. The new timeframe will allow workers additional time to gather more in-depth information regarding the services a family needs.

- The language of court reports will be more focused on corrective capacities and behavior changes that need to occur as opposed to compliance.
- We are attempting to move away from being compliance based and are taking a closer look at why children are being removed from their homes in the first place.
- The 18 new positions provided by the new budget will be able to help keep staff workloads from increasing as workers are able to spend more time working on assessments.
- We are looking at Initial Assessment staff workloads – and not just focusing on numbers of cases. There is a difference between workloads and caseloads.

Training

- UWM partnership with the Bureau is working to ensure that there is consistency around the training provided for state staff and contracted staff as well.
- Workers are being cross-trained and are shadowing positions different from their own. This process is helping workers gain an appreciation for the jobs their counterparts do.

Kathy Elertson

The Bureau is working on developing screenings/assessments for mental health evaluations. Individuals with a positive screen will be referred for mental health assessments, and those with negative screens will be rescreened in 30 days.

The Health Care Committee is working on getting mental health professionals added to the Bureau team.

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CEO Updates

Wanda Montgomery reported on activity at CFCP:

- Accreditation process is ongoing.
- Working on a family engagement pilot.
- Currently has an RFP for Home Management, Housing Assistant and Parenting Assistant.
- Working on their strategic plan.

Wanda also reported on five “shining stars” – youth aging out of foster care who have done well.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Zellner