

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council

Friday, October 23, 2009

Region 1 Office

Minutes

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Present

Present: Pastor Archie Ivy, Cyrus Behroozi, Arlene Happach, Secretary Reggie Bicha, Deborah Blanks, State Senator Spencer Coggs, State Senator Alberta Darling, Colleen Ellingson, Saleem El Amin, Francine Feinberg, David Hoffman, Christine Holmes, Judge Marshall Murray, Judge Michael Skwierawski, Dr. Earnestine Willis, Pat Kenney for John Chisholm, Judge Mary Triggiano, Quinton Cotton, Pam Matthews, Melissa Wavelet, Judie Hermann, Kathy Elertson, Dr. Michelle Urban, Wanda Montgomery, Cathy Swessel, and Teri Zywicki.

Pastor Ivy opened the meeting with greetings and introductions. New Partnership Council members, Colleen Ellingson, Christine Holmes and Judge Marshall Murray were introduced.

Minutes

Minutes from the July 24, 2009 meeting approved as corrected.

2010 Meeting Dates

Dates for 2010 Executive Partnership Council and full Partnership Council meetings were distributed.

DCF Updates, Reggie Bicha

The Bureau has been released from the Maltreatment in Out of Home Care provision of the Settlement Agreement.

We have reached a new agreement for CAP 6.

On October 21, Partnership Council member, Judge Michael Skwierawski received the Milwaukee Bar Association's inaugural Pro Bono Publico Award. The award recognizes local groups and individuals for their efforts to provide free legal help in the public interest. Judge Skwierawski is a founder of the Milwaukee Justice Center at the Milwaukee County courthouse that provides free legal help from volunteer lawyers.

Legislature

The Indian Child Welfare Act has passed both houses unanimously.

CPS disclosure bill

The Legislature has been working on a bill that changes current law to allow the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to disclose certain information regarding child abuse/neglect. Enactment of this bill will allow for greater transparency.

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Child Care

Reggie Bicha explained how the Department of Children and Families has been working to fix problems with the childcare system. The new department has processes to identify, prevent and detect fraud and to hold people accountable.

- The Department will be working together with the District Attorney, Department of Revenue, the Sheriff's Department, MPD, and US Marshalls.
- Payments have already been suspended to over 100 providers.
- Language of the law has been changed and passed in the current budget bill to allow for changes in the system.

Strategic Planning

The Bureau will be meeting with consultants, Connie Flower and Jess McDonald to discuss with strategic planning. A meeting has been tentatively scheduled for the week of November 9.

Quinton Cotton, The Planning Council for Health and Human Services, Inc.

Mr. Cotton provided an update of the work of the Planning Council and distributed a copy of the Planning Council's Report, "A Community Conversation About the Safety of Children in Foster Care".

Ombudsman's quarterly report, Pam Matthews

- Ms. Matthew presented the quarterly report.
The top two concerns for this quarter have been placement and visitation.
- Question was raised regarding how we know when we are making progress on recommendations. A process for tracking recommendations has been developed. Items get checked off when recommendations are met. Responses to Ombudsman's office recommendations also include dates for completion.

Judie Hermann, Office of Permanence and Quality Assurance (OPQA)

- Ms. Hermann presented the CAP 5 Summary Report as of September 2009.
- Concerns were raised regarding the length of stay for adolescents in out of home care. Arlene Happach explained that it is our goal to identify reasons why children stay in out of home care as long as they do. Some strategies are already in place or near in place to deal with this issue.
- During the first six months of this year, the Bureau has achieved more permanency than in any time point so far, but there is still more to be done.

CEO Reports

Teri Zywicki - Integrated Family Services

- IFS has completed strategic plan for 2010.
- Theme is innovation and integration.

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- All IFS employees will receive six month reviews.

Wanda Montgomery – CFCP

- CSR review has been completed for Regions 1 and 2. CFCP be working on recommendations
- Pilot program regarding supervised visitation. Ongoing case managers will have fewer cases, but will be providing supervised visitations as part of their jobs. There are currently two teams working on this. Wanda will report further on this pilot as information is available.
- Turnover is down at CFCP. More staff has been hired.
- Reminder about the Black Child Development Institute coming up
- Wanda recognized My Home Your Home for achieving accreditation.

CSSW – Cathy Swessel

- Reminder that Adoption Day is November 20. Ceremonies start at 8:45.
- CSSW is working on television and radio recruitment ads that will be starting on November 9.
- A foster parent has been hired to help with its monitoring program.
- CSSW has received a federal grant for Family Finding Services.

Settlement Update, Cyrus Behroozi

Diane Welsh explained the provisions of the Settlement Agreement Corrective Action Plan 6.

- The Settlement Agreement stated with 16 enforceable provisions and is now down to just three.
- Primary focus will be on completing the settlement agreement.

Legislative Update, Cyrus Behroozi

Public Disclosure Bill

- Allow for more transparency.
- Widens the scope of what information can be released. The bill is still a work in process.

Indian Child Welfare Act

Legislative action regarding the codification of the Indian Child Welfare Act has passed unanimously.

Monthly Child Death and Egregious Incident Report

Arlene Happach presented the monthly report.

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BMCW Update, Arlene Happach

BMCW has finished taking part in the Quality Service Review (QSR). The Bureau will be participating in the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) in April of 2010.

A question was raised regarding when the analysis of the CART recommendations be ready. This will be helpful in helping us to identify what we need to know, what we have learned and what needs to be addressed. This will be put on the agenda for the next Executive Committee meeting.

DSP Updates, Cyrus Behroozi

- Dondieneita Fleary Simmons has been hired as the new Director of the Bureau of Permanence and Out of Home Care. The Division's executive staff is now complete.
- Cyrus recognized Mary Pat for taking on extra duties for the past several months.

Families Come First pilot project

Families Come First is a pilot program that allows mothers and their children to be together during treatment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Zellner