



DCF 57 Advisory Council Meeting - MINUTES

August 28, 2024

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL Meeting Link: <https://dcfwi.zoom.us/j/86550012155?pwd=VTJpZ2s2OHFmMjhheVhyZ3FzUnlrZz09>

Meeting ID: 865 5001 2155

Passcode: 460986

DCF 57 Advisory Council Meeting

DCF Staff			
Name	Present	Name	Present
Jamie Gennrich	x	Elaine Pridgen	x
Katie Davis	x	Shelby McCulley	
Dana Johnson	x	John Elliott	
Kristie Buwalda	x	Amy Bryant	
Mary Morse	x	Emily Erickson	x
Rob Collins	x	Jeanette Paules	
Rachel Nili		Frances Bass	
Dustin Hinze	x		

Member	Present	Nominating Organization
Emily Coddington	x	WAFCA
Marye Beth Dugan	x	Nehemiah Group Home
Dave Fretz	x	Forward Home for Boys
India Hansen		Office of Lived Experience @ DCF
Brian Peil		DOC – Juvenile corrections
Dr. Maurice Johnson	x	Moe’s Transitional Living Center (COA)
Lisa Netterville	x	New Hope & Destiny Home II (COA)
Caylee Nichols	x	Positive Alternatives
Audra O’Connell	x	Walker’s Point GH (homeless program)
Jennifer Pester		Office of Lived Experience
Jill Collins		DMCPS
Lisa Pendleton	x	WAFCA (Winnebago County)
Stephen Bedwell	x	WAFCA (Racine County)

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

- II. **DCF 57 Physical Environment & Safety** - no additional comments on section which have been covered previously.
 - Q: Should universal precautions can be included in the safety section. – no comment

DCF 57.42 FIRE SAFETY

Q: Should smoke alarms be tested monthly or quarterly? Underwriters Lab is no longer the name and needs to be edited out of statute; now is UL Solutions who the federal government contracts with.

Response: Keep testing to at least monthly. Some parts felt a little “extra” in requiring both documentation and a particular manner to test. Perhaps requirements are in alignment with building code and could instead be up to the discretion of the facility.

Q: Would adding a requirement for persons with impaired hearing or vision be a burden to your group home? DHS 83.48(7) requires special equipment.

Response: It was originally believed that during the accreditation process, visual exits and flashing lights were required. Costly to install at a facility (a few thousand dollars). COA (accrediting body) said posters instructing evacuation or what to do in case of a fire, were sufficient. Cost is a deterrent to implementing this as a requirement in licensing rule. One GH (group home) said they would likely not accept a placement of a youth who is sight impaired, because they do not have specific training or visual/auditory signaling systems to safely care for that youth. Question raised: *Could GH's add installation of the special fire system to their cost assumption? GH's would still have to pay to install and maintain, but it is possible. This type of fire safety system did reduce the feeling of it being a home environment vs. an institution. Does it really create a safer environment for the youth to add this to the requirement?*

A similar question was raised regarding Automated External Defibrillator's: 3 GH's said they do not have an AED but are not opposed to having them. They partnered with a county agency for emergency services to purchase them but don't have onsite. They are costly. Most youth are healthy and do not require these devices. Staff may be in need of an AED and could be helpful.

Q: We have heard concerns about how and where extinguishers are stored. What are your suggestions?

Response: In 20 years of being in group home settings, the challenges have been violence and use of the extinguishers as a thrown or dangerous weapon. Several GH's shared similar concerns, and that the discharge of the extinguisher causes significant damage to the GH décor and furniture. The local fire department have said to just get residents out of the building instead of using the extinguisher. In Wausau they have to have at least 1 in their location, but it is in a breakable case, and another is loose. Residents know where the extinguishers are located so they can take them in the event of an emergency (or as a crisis occurs). Another GH agreed with having them in the open allows youth easy access to use as a weapon or discharge them.

DCF 57.43 FURNISHINGS AND APPLIANCES

Potential Changes: Two bed sheets requirement is not needed. Youth often do not use top sheets and is a waste of resources and licensing requirements. They will usually be available for youth, therefore not a licensing/safety concern.

DCF 57.44 SANITATION

Concerns if 57.44 (1 – 3) was moved to kitchen section? Concerns if 57.44(4) was moved to bedroom section?

Response: Single serve dinner wear was allowed during COVID so they could be disposed of after mealtimes. Could we add in “Except in these circumstances?”. If we took out the requirement about utensils what would happen in everyday practice? We should keep in mind what is considered normative and how we attempt to create a normative setting for youth. Instances where the dishwasher breaks down you use paper plates and plastic utensils (is this an ‘except in...’? Plastic utensils would be safer for youth, as sometimes forks or knives are used as weapons. Perhaps GH’s could have autonomy to make the decision on whether they can use metal utensils or plastic. Plastic can also present a choking hazard.

Additionally, eliminate the cleaning procedure, “this is how to do it”. Just have the requirement of requiring the utensils to be clean and sanitary.

Addressing an issue related to the type of beds and mattress types/sizes, it was recommended to be less prescriptive on how to meet the requirement. “Each bed shall be of such size.....and “suitable springs”. Instead, a clean comfortable mattress would suffice.

In reviewing the garbage/trash section, it indicates it shall be removed daily. While this seems like good practice, sometimes the garbage is not full and therefore wastes garbage bags. Comments indicated that this should not be a licensing requirement as GH’s are going to remove garbage as it accumulates. 57.40 could be an area to cut back on in order to align with the original Statement of Scope.

THESE SECTIONS ARE NOT CURRENTLY IN Subchapter V – Physical Environment and Safety but would it make sense to move them there? Yes.

- DCF 57.06 Emergency planning and preparation.
- DCF 56.09 Weapons
- DCF 57.10 Pets & animals
- DCF 57.11 Telephone
- DCF 57.12 Transportation: COMMENT: Place it under Personnel, Subchapter II, instead of physical environment. If GH is going to be required to do the background checks then it should be in personnel.
 - Vehicle maintenance would be better under physical environment.

Response: **57.06(4)** Requiring all those names and updating the requirements to be carried in the van (transport vehicle) can be easily forgotten. One agency has a travel binder. Is there ability to have information on Microsoft Office/Cloud-based in an electronic version for quick access, that meets this requirement? In case of an emergency, could there be a number for the group home visible for youth? *In which situations would the travel folder need to be utilized?* Have an emergency number in the van in case of emergency if the staff driver is not able to respond and provide this information. In some cases, the ‘Alternate Caregiver Authorization’ form from the medical provider is only valid every 30 days and one medical provider wants a newly signed form along with the DCF medical authorization form.

Disaster plans were discussed and guidance provided that under potential future rule, they only need to be provided to the Licensing Section when there is a change, instead of quarterly.

Question about what constitutes an emergency. This definition can be found here: [57.04\(12\)](#).

Response on: **Section 57.07** – Financial audits – no comments. Sub 4 may not be necessary. We don't request financial records other than payroll.

Response on: **57.08** – Insurance – if it is duplicative with another section where would you want it to be located. Transportation example.

Liability – Insurance for businesses is becoming more difficult. No protections for group homes. No statute of limitation on when a child/family can pursue a claim.

Response: **57.09 Weapons** is out of scope

Response: **57.10 Pets.** (1) "shall be appropriate" is a difficult standard for the vet to attest to. In some situations, therapy animals can be of an added benefit. An animal can add to the home like environment. It also can be a negative due to allergies or past trauma. As long as there is thought behind whether the placement would be a good match to a GH that has a pet. *Would an animal result in some kids being ruled out for placement?* One suggestion was to allow an animal be on premises "outside". Pets that are incompatible with residents may not be allowed. Some animals can be unpredictable and is a liability for the group home. One agency uses a short-term hypoallergenic therapy dog. DCF 251 childcare programs has regulations and perhaps we could incorporate those in this rule? [Wisconsin Legislature: DCF 251.07\(7\)\(b\)](#)

57.12 Transportation. *What if some of these requirements were removed?*

Response: (2) filed an exception to have a driver under 21 years old. Would save DCF some time if we did not require an exception. Their insurance required that the driver have a license for 2 years, therefore the requirement in our rule is considered overbearing to the requirements in daily experiences. Insurance also has requirements for drivers and believe this is a high enough threshold that licensing should not monitor. *Does DCF need to also have these rules?* Make more general in case requirements were to change in the future.

Q: *Would you want to add a tornado preparedness section?* DCF 52.56(23) and DCF 56 added this in their rule revisions draft. Response: Sure.

III. Next Steps

- Next meeting Dana will be absent.
- We are on track for the project timeline.

IV. Adjourn: 2:52 pm