

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council Meeting
Friday, September 25, 2015
BMCW 635 N. 26 St.
MINUTES
Page 1 of 4

Members Present: Linda Davis, Representative for Senator Alberta Darling, Christine Holmes, Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr., Kim Kampschroer, Senator Nikiya Harris Dodd, Mallory O'Brien, Tony Shields, Judge Mary Triggiano, Representative for District Attorney John Chisholm, Representative LaTonya Johnson.

Linda Davis opened the meeting with greetings and introductions.

Notice of Meeting:

First, the notice of the meeting was published in the Monday, September 21, 2015 edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Second, the notice was faxed to the newspaper of record for the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Journal, on Monday, September 21, 2015. Finally, the notice was emailed to the Partnership Council stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on Thursday, September 17. This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Presentation of Settlement Data, Hanna Knouse

Placement stability continues to be the only remaining provision of the settlement agreement. Currently, we are at 88 percent. Ninety percent is the target number.

Question: How do we analyze changes that occur to provisions from which the Bureau has already been released? For example, at an earlier time, criteria for one (or more) of the provisions was met, and the Bureau was released from that particular provision. Since the time the Bureau was released from the provision, we have subsequently fallen below the established the criteria.

Answer: DCF routinely monitors the data on lawsuit settlement measures from which it has already been released. Program analysis of that data is done to determine where we have been successful and whether the data is really reflective of trends in practice.

Question (regarding health checks): Does Care4Kids need help? How do we track this?

Answer: We have an internal process for quality control. We need to consider whether or not the current numbers are an anomaly. We can watch the numbers and continue to ask questions.

It was suggested that at future community meetings we look at which issues are becoming trends.

Discussion was had regarding how we do a better job of determining what a good placement is. It was noted that multiple placements for children is a national trend.

Response to Settlement Data, Eric Thompson

Keeping kids safe in out of home care has greatly improved. There has been a "remarkable" sustained effort to put emphasis on child safety. The Bureau and its partners can take pride in these results. Counsel has confidence that reported numbers are accurate. It is worth making the point that kids are now safer than ever before.

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council Meeting
Friday, September 25, 2015
BMCW 635 N. 26 St.
MINUTES
Page 2 of 4

Placement stability is defined as three or fewer placements over the last three years. We need to get these numbers down to ten percent of children. Too many young children are being moved around; however, we are headed in the right direction.

Medical/dental screening numbers are lower than we would like them to be. We need to do a lot better in this area.

The Bureau is doing much better doing initial health screens as compared to 2014. Initial health screens set the baseline for children's health information and need to be done immediately.

We are headed back in the right direction regarding caseload size. We are doing better with turnover, but not great. Turnover rate is 22 percent for 2015 so far, and not where we want it to be. We seem to have stemmed the exodus of workers. Kudos to those who have made this happen.

Transparency and accountability helps to ensure we are looking at the status of outcomes that have been previously reported.

The Bureau continues to monitor and report at KIDSTAT meetings every other month.

Question: Is it true that the entire population is not being reported on in the statistics?

Answer: Yes, measurements of statistics in the reports are based on the lawsuit. The fine print on page nine explains how numbers are determined.

It seems like the Bureau has come a long way. Are we confident that we have measures in place to continue to see a positive change? There are always new ways, different ways of doing things. The work is not about the lawsuit...but about families and children and about serving kids and families the best way we can.

State of the Bureau, Mary Pat Bohn

The Quality Parenting Initiative has changed its name to Quality Parenting Milwaukee. Mary Pat explained the work and history of the group. Additionally, DCF has created an interagency workgroup to look at first placements and how placement stability can be improved through front end decision making.

Sojourner Peace Center has a new building with many community partners. One Bureau Unit Supervisor and staff will be located in the building.

Mary Pat thanked our partner agencies as well as Julie Brown and her staff for their help and support.

Question was asked whether the Bureau has done a qualitative analysis regarding hiring licensed social workers versus degreed individuals.

Response: This is something we do not look at. Workers are looked at/evaluated based on the quality of their individual work. Quality reviews are done internally for every employee. The hiring of individuals from a range of disciplines has brought us a variety of knowledge, skills and talents, which has resulted in making our teams better. Certification does not make the worker.

Discussion was had regarding the cultural diversity of Bureau staff. Concerns were raised that workers do not always resemble the families they are serving and that DCF needs to focus on more cultural diversity. The plan is to have a presentation on cultural diversity at a future Partnership Council meeting.

From the Agencies

David Whelan, CHWCS and Ann Leinfelder-Grove, Saint A

Saint A and CHWCS discussed some of the challenges and initiatives around youth who are frequently missing from care. Some of the initiatives discussed included focusing on developmental brain science and adverse childhood effects as well as CHW is working to reinforce the importance of developmental brain science and looking at the impact of childhood adversity on brain development. Saint A is working with Wraparound to help kids with complex needs and has developed an ongoing task force to help better serve teens.

From The Bench, Judge Mary Triggiano

Judge Triggiano discussed kids in the judicial system. The public perception is that bad behavior equals bad kids. We are noticing emerging themes with the kids we see in court: CHIPS history, mental health diagnoses, alcohol, drugs and childhood adversity. These are our kids and we need to figure out a way to help them. Judge Triggiano invited the community to come and sit in on court proceedings to see how they work.

We are seeing really strong results from the family drug courts and are hoping to launch a safe baby court very soon.

DCF Updates

We are still in the process of hiring an Administrator for the new Division. October 4, 2015 will be the official start date of the new Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services. Secretary Anderson has met with staff and explained the reorganization. Mary Pat Bohn has been named the Deputy Administrator for the Division. For most of the current Bureau staff, day-to-day operations will not change. There will be no loss of staff. Recruitment for leadership positions in the Division will be taking place. Deputy Secretary Hunt discussed the new organizational chart for the Division.

Committee Updates

Health and Education Committee Report tabled until next meeting.

Community Questions

Community member asked for an explanation of the children placed who do not need to be in out of home care. It was explained that the Bureau is not aware of children in these circumstances and it was also stated that when children are removed the Court reviews each family case. The community member was also given contact information for Mary Pat Bohn and Sarah Henery.

Another community member raised the issue of the importance of hiring licensed social workers. It was suggested that the Bureau look at ways to partner with schools with Social Work programs and look at different models that exist.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Zellner