

**MILWAUKEE CHILD WELFARE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL
MINUTES DRAFT
Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services
Friday, February 11, 2022
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the meeting was conducted by Zoom rather than in-person. The Zoom meeting information was made available on the DCF DMCPs Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council webpage on Monday, February 7, 2022 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/mcps/partnership-council>).

Members Present: At the request of Chairperson Christine Holmes, a roll call was taken to identify the Partnership Council members present for the meeting.

Present were Ms. Libby Mueller, Judge Laura Crivello, Ms. Carmen Pitre, Ms. Christine Holmes, Mr. Tony Shields, Ms. Santana Lee, Mr. Victor Barnett, Supervisor Patti Logsdon, Ms. Bria Grant, Representative David Bowen, Senator LaTonya Johnson, Mr. Steve Gilbertson, and Ms. Rachel Keith (representing for Senator Alberta Darling).

A quorum of the Council was present on the Zoom meeting.

Notice of Meeting – Chairperson Christine Holmes reviewed compliance with Open Meetings Law requirements.

First, the notice of the meeting was published on the DCF and DOA websites on February 7, 2022, and in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on February 7, 2022. Second, the notice was faxed to the newspaper of record for the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Journal, on February 3, 2022.

The notice was emailed to the Partnership Council stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on February 7, 2022. Finally, the agenda was posted on the front door of the DMCPs building at 635 N. 26th St. on February 7, 2022.

This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Review and Approval of Past Minutes, Christine Holmes, Chair

A motion was made by Mr. Tony Shields to approve minutes from November 12, 2021, meeting. Senator LaTonya Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

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Open Meetings, Records Retention and Public Records Training, Mary Burke,
Deputy General Counsel, Department of Children and Families

Presentation materials can be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/mcps/partnership-council>

Mary Burke presented on three Transparency Laws relative to the Partnership Council members. Some key points of each law presented were:

The Wisconsin Open Meetings Law Wis. Stat. §§19.81 –19.98–

- Requires that all meetings of governmental bodies be publicly held in places reasonably accessible to members of the public and open to all citizens at all times unless otherwise provided by law.
- Members do not have to be simultaneously gathered in the same place at the same time. A virtual meeting, conference call, and walking quorum are considered meetings.
- Be careful of mail or electronic communications chains. Discussion among members of the governmental body through these forms of communication can be considered a meeting.

The Wisconsin Records Retention Law Wis. Stat. §16.61–

- Requires preservation of certain records
- Materials members receive from the Boards, Councils and Commissions (BCC) such as the Partnership Council or DCF about Council business are not public records subject to retention. DCF staff will keep the official public record.
- Correspondence or notes shared with others outside of meeting are probably public records.

The Wisconsin Public Records Law Wis. Stat. §§19.31 –19.39–

- Provides access to records that exist at the time a request is made
- It is the content and use of a document that makes it a record subject to the Public Records Law, not where it is located. Materials on personal devices and accounts can be constituted as public records subject to disclosure.

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- If a Council member receives something that might be a public records request, they should forward immediately to DCF staff contact and DCF Office of Legal Counsel.

Question regarding presentation:

Chairperson Christine Holmes asked if this presentation could suffice for the Open Records training that was supposed to be completed by December 31, 2021, or do Council members need to complete the training online?

Mary Burke answered that members should complete the online training, but hopefully the presented information puts in context the training for Council members.

Child Welfare Staffing, Retention, and Recruitment

Sarah Henery, Division Administrator, expressed that front-line staff retention is a challenge in Milwaukee, but also is a national challenge. Ms. Henery stated that this metric is important because families get the best outcomes when they are engaged with the same knowledgeable child welfare professionals. The work is emotional but the desire to do right by the children and families keeps people in this work. Sarah Henery shared the need to focus on building a strong and supportive culture. She stated staff need to stay in this work to become the next generation of creative and motivated leaders; this will benefit the community in the long term. Sarah Henery expressed her gratitude for the work of Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development.

**Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD)
Becky Antle, The University of Louisville, QIC-WD Milwaukee Evaluation
Specialist**

Becky Antle explained that the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) is dedicated to understanding how to improve child welfare workforce outcomes. Milwaukee was selected as one of eight sites to be a part of this national project. In the past five years, QIC-WD has been engaging in a rigorous needs assessment project to identify the most important needs for Milwaukee Child Welfare and in an evidence-based selection process for interventions and evaluation of the outcomes.

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Information was gathered from several different sources to identify Milwaukee's (DMCPS) primary workforce needs including:

- Recruitment, hiring, and retention metrics and processes
- Organizational culture and climate
- Other workforce processes and initiatives, such as onboarding, mentoring, supervision, performance management, and employee recognition.

From January 2016 to mid-January 2018 data from DMCPS showed the average length of time people were in their positions was 19.2 months. The Organizational Social Context (OSC) baseline survey and in-depth discussions on culture and climate showed areas in need of improvement. Based on the needs assessment, the QIC-WD team engaged in an intervention selection process based on several criteria. Availability, Responsiveness and Continuity (ARC) intervention was determined to meet the needs of DMCPS.

Lilia Figueroa, Policy Initiatives Advisor, DMCPS

Lilia Figueroa presented that ARC is a repeatedly proven organizational change intervention developed by researchers at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. ARC is proven to develop work environments with less turnover, work effectiveness, and higher job satisfaction. In terms of child and family outcomes, ARC helps improve positive work around mental health, well-being, hospitalizations, family functioning and behavioral issues. ARC helps streamline barriers DMCPS staff face for them to better serve the community.

The guiding principles of ARC are being mission-driven, results-oriented, improvement-directed, relationship-centered, and participation-based. ARC team leaders and members work together using component tools to build effective teams and to identify service barriers. Teams will use tools such as consensus decision making, brainstorming, and effective team behaviors that emphasize listening, working closely together, and being able to foster strong relationships. Psychological safety is a big gain in ARC team building by being able to have difficult conversations around barriers and moving forward to come up with a solution. ARC has been something passionate and close to DMCPS staff who have participated, helping them develop different leadership skills that they did not have a lot of time to develop in the past.

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Becky Antle, The University of Louisville, QIC-WD Milwaukee Evaluation Specialist

Becky Antle highlighted some key takeaways for the survey, administrative, and qualitative data collected in the form of focus groups and interviews. The Organizational Social Context (OSC) is a standardized measure used to evaluate culture, climate, and morale in child welfare. The OSC data collection has been administered four times in Milwaukee: January 2018, February 2019, March 2020, and May 2021. From the Milwaukee OSC data of January 2018, improvement was shown to be needed in functionality, engagement, proficiency, and job satisfaction. Organizational commitment was within normal range of data collected nationally. Across the four years of data collection, DMCPs data for every OSC category improved each year. By May 2021, all data was within the normal range. Becky expressed that it is important to celebrate, it is remarkable to see consistent change in every dimension. She credited Lilia Figueroa, Sarah Henery, ARC Team members and the people of DMCPs.

In 2020, QIC-WD administered an electronic COVID-19 survey. The research showed that staff were able to remain productive in their work and positive outcomes within well-being. Staff felt like they were getting adequate support from their supervisors. The survey did show staff had less feeling of peer support. There was an overall positive perception and satisfaction from agency response of telework. Some feedback from staff is that it feels empowering, respectful, allows more flexibility, and shows recognition of the professional nature of the work that they do.

Becky Antle expressed that QIC-WD is thankful for their partnership with DMCPs, and it has been a great five years. Lilia Figueroa recognized the hard work of Initial Assessment Supervisor Kim Paige, Initial Assessment Specialist Hilary Honsa and Community and Policy Development Specialist Isaiah Bond who were present in the meeting.

Questions/Comments

A question was asked regarding if the Council would receive information about the sustainability of the work. Lilia Figueroa answered that conversations are being had around what sustainability looks like moving forward. ARC Team Leaders pilot projects for about a year and then have discussions on if they

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should continue the project and make it a permanent program. The discussions are on where the project needs to shift within the organization, so it is not solely a topic for the implementation teams but also engaging other leadership within the organization. Sarah Henery added that future sustainability in the next coming years may look like expanding this to other areas of the organization outside of front-line staff.

Becky Antle stated QIC-WD has one more year of funding to learn from Milwaukee about how some of what was learned is sustained and document how it impacts data. She stated she was unaware of any other studies specifically on sustainability regarding QIC-WD and Milwaukee could become a leader in what processes can make it sustainable.

Chairperson Holmes commented on being mission driven versus rule driven. She stated for a child welfare agency to make that shift, it could not have been easy and that is a huge shift. Lilia Figueroa commended Initial Assessment Supervisor Vanessa Ramirez for tying every barrier and solution to their mission and how to align it within the ARC Teams she was a part of and through mentoring new team members. Sarah Henery added the DCF Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) has been doing a welfare workload study and they interviewed every director statewide. Each director commented it is difficult for staff to complete work when trying to comply with all laws. Sarah Henery gave her appreciation to the work being done on the statewide level to contribute to children being safe and families being successful.

Lisa Merkel-Holguin, QIC-WD Milwaukee Implementation Specialist, shared a link in the Zoom chat to a six-minute video about ARC. The link is <https://www.qic-wd.org/organizational-change-action>

Questions/Comments

A question was asked regarding how the evaluation was facilitated for leadership. Sarah Henery answered that QIC-WID does gather some leadership and management OSC data from frontline-staff and supervisors. She added that an ARC Team wanted to pilot a process where frontline staff review their own supervisors, and this is potentially something that could be rolled out in other spaces of leadership. Sarah Henery stated this will be discussed more moving forward.

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Children’s Wisconsin, Susanna Leggio, Director of Child Welfare

Susanna Leggio spoke about the staff patterns with Children’s. There have been staff shortages with staff being offline due to quarantining. At the time of the meeting, Children’s had 69 case managers. Children’s Wisconsin has a need of 80 case managers who carry full workloads to accommodate current program census. Susanna Leggio shared that Children’s has been successful in their hiring efforts. In January 2022, six case managers and two paid interns joined their team and there are five more hires with February 2022, start dates.

Children’s has been working closely with a dedicated Human Resources recruiter and implemented strategies to be more competitive in the current job market. Some of the strategies are enhancing the employee referral bonus, providing sign-on bonuses for case managers, and having discussions on having a joint recruitment event with Wellpoint Care Network and DMCPs. Because retention has been a challenge, Children’s is prioritizing managing workloads, building a sense of community with staff within the virtual space, and compensation.

Wellpoint Care Network, Ann Leinfelder Grove, President & CEO

Ann Leinfelder shared a reflection that in her 24 years of attending Partnership Council meetings, there has been discussion of employee recruitment and retention. She stated staff turnover was one of the elements in the Jeanine B. Settlement and it is something that is always in the work of child welfare in Milwaukee. She highlighted that this time is different because of the pandemic. It is an unprecedented time, and the child welfare agencies are navigating the best way they can to serve the families and the community.

Lisa Vega, Wellpoint Interim Director of Family Case Management, presented updates on hiring of case management at Wellpoint. She stated as of the past week, there were a total of 60 case managers including seven new hires that were onboarded as of January 1, 2022, leaving 20 vacancies. Wellpoint’s hiring managers are working closely with a Talent Acquisitionist and Retention Specialist to develop a strategic plan to hire at minimum five case managers each month with a goal to be fully staffed by early summer. Initiatives to reach this goal include targeted radio campaigns, targeted job fairs, and providing internships to universities.

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Wellpoint will continue to offer employee referral bonuses and sign-up bonuses for case management positions. There will be a job fair from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on March 1, 2022, at Sherman Phoenix with on-site interviews. Wellpoint redesigned their Child and Family Wellbeing Department interview questions to recruit “hungry, humble, and smart candidates.” These are three key virtues identified in successful longstanding employees that share passion and commitment to their organization.

To increase retention, a second round of salary equalizations have been conducted to manage employee compensation and Wellpoint continues to offer scholarship funds to commit to the academic advancement of employees. Their mentorship program and multiple committees give staff a sense of purpose outside everyday tasks and connects them to the mission and their peers. As of February 2022, Wellpoint changed to a hybrid model within their Restoring Connections: Return to Work Plan. Staff have been able to combine in-office work with remote work.

Bylaws Update and Subcommittee, Chris Holmes, Chair

Chair Chris Holmes called for a nomination and vote to approve Senator LaTonya Johnson and Supervisor Sequanna Taylor to step into the Chair and Co-Chair positions within the Health and Education Committee. Tony Shields motioned to nominate Senator Johnson and Supervisor Taylor for the Chair and Co-Chair positions of the Health and Education Committee. Ms. Carmen Pitre seconded motion. No oppositions were made, and vote carried. Senator Johnson and Supervisor Taylor became the Chair and Co-Chair positions of the Health and Education Committee.

Chairperson Holmes stated that there will be a call for new members to join the Out-of-Home Care Committee. She asked for volunteers for the committee. There were no volunteers in the meeting. Chairperson Holmes stated the Council will go through a recruitment process for members to participate in the Out-of-Home Care Committee.

Chairperson Holmes called for a need to change the Bylaws; the Bylaws have not been changed since March 2017. She stated an Ad Hoc Committee is needed to

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review and recommend updates to the Bylaws. She asked for volunteers to be a part of the Ad Hoc committee.

Tony Shields asked if someone could speak to the nature of where the anticipated changes might be directed to?

Sarah Henery gave suggestions of some Bylaws that may need changes such as the Bylaws reference meetings as in-person and phone calls, not video. Another example she gave was the potential to restructure some of the Council committees. She also stated there may be a couple of changes in Statutes needed within the Bylaws.

Libby Mueller, Tony Shields, and Carmen Pitre volunteered to be a part of the Ad Hoc Committee. Chairperson called for someone to nominate the members who volunteered. Senator Johnson nominated Libby Mueller, Tony Shields, and Carmen Pitre to work on the Ad Hoc Committee. Supervisor Patti Logsdon seconded motion. No opposing votes, motion carried. Sarah Henery stated someone from DMCP's Ongoing Service Section will be in touch with the volunteers about meeting.

FFPSA Update, Sarah Henery, Administrator, DMCP's

Sarah Henery stated in the next Partnership Council Meeting there will be more designated time for the Family First Prevention Service Act (FFPSA) update on how staff are approaching it in Milwaukee. The State has a lot of resources at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first> and people can sign up for the DCF FFPSA newsletter through the website at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/news>.

Sarah Henery gave a brief update that in this transitional period, DCF has been working through the Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP) certification process. DMCP's has not yet placed a child in a QRTP since the change but are looking forward to working through the process. Ms. Henery stated there will be an update on prevention programming next meeting. A request for proposal was submitted to place program funds to help support families. There was an acceptance bid and Sarah Henery shared the hope to have the program started in April after contract negotiation is finalized. Sarah Henery also shared she anticipates giving an overview on the Stronger Families Program and DMCP's collaboration with Casey Family Programs in a future

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meeting. There has been a focus on gathering and unpacking data about Family First and looking to find ways to prevent child removals at all.

A question was received regarding who won the Stronger Family's MKE bid. Sarah Henery expressed that there will be an announcement regarding the winners of the bid. It is a consortium of providers in Milwaukee. Community Advocates is the lead organization and will be working with Parenting Network and Neu Life Community Development using a targeted case management model. Sarah Henery expressed being hopeful to get a successful contract put in place by the next meeting.

Community Input, Chris Holmes, Chair

Earlier in the meeting, Dr. Patricia McManus expressed her interest to be a formal member of the Council instead of a community member. Chairperson Holmes thanked Dr. Patricia McManus for her interest in serving on the Council and stated that they will make sure someone follows up with her regarding her interest.

Concluding Remarks, Chris Holmes, Chair

Chairperson Holmes wished for everyone to stay healthy and that the year continues to go well for everyone.

Adjourn