

CWAC minutes April 16, 2010

Members present: Deborah Eves, Gary Cullen, Janine Tondrowski, Denise Dickerson, Charlotte McNulty, Vernon Simmons, BJ Zarris, Lelia Hopper, Allison Lowery, Matt Wade, Dorothy Hollahan, Martha Kurgans, Virginia Powell, Melody Galloway, Hayley Brooks, Rita Katzman, Paul McWhinney, Natalia Pereira, Mary Nedell, Rebecca Hjelm, Cate Newbanks, Elizabeth Hutchens, Heather Jones, Kaylin Chandler Howell, Suzanne Fountain, John Freeman, Wilhelmina Davis, Cheryl Williams, Betty McCrary, Doris Dodson, Jane Crawly, Kathy Froyd, Nelson Durden, Clark Earl, Sharon Harris, Lisa Linthicum, Christie Marra, Mary Dunne Stewart, Lyndell Lewis, William Shackelford, Sr. Celest Williams, Mattie Satterfield

Paul McWhinney called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda. The group provided individual introductions. Lelia Hopper assisted Mr. McWhinney with a legislative update and highlighted some of the major legislation concerning the department for this session. Delegate Chris Peace sponsored legislation that requires the Department, along with its partners, to develop a plan for the safe reduction of foster care by 25% by 2020. Delegate Bell sponsored legislation that would require local departments to keep records related to sexual abuse for 25 years. This is an increase of 7 years and would include up to 600 cases that would need to be held for this longer period of time. Another piece of legislation calls for increased dissemination of information about Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Four bills related to adoption that came up during this session. The adoption assistance legislation included clarifying language around non-recurring expenses and US citizenship for eligibility for adoption assistance. The clarification helped the state become compliant with Title IV-E guidelines. Another bill requires local departments and licensed child placing agencies to provide an explanation and information about the adoption process to parents. Another piece of legislation was focused on the Post Adoption Contract Agreement. This legislation clarified that the agreement can be considered at the permanency planning hearing and incorporated into that order. Delegate Toscano sponsored the adoption legislation and has been an ally for the department in the General Assembly when it comes to adoption issues. Mr. McWhinney and Ms. Hopper both shared their appreciation for the work Delegate Toscano has done over the last few General Assembly sessions.

Christie Marra with the Poverty Law Center brought an information request to the group. Ms. Marra is exploring a proposal where Legal Aids can partner with local departments to send referrals for families that are involved with family preservation activities but not involved with the juvenile courts. This proposal is based on an existing partnership in Detroit where Legal Aid works with departments of social services to help clients receive services and supports that can help to stabilize families. Referrals to Legal Aid could be for civil issues such as dealing with access to benefits, domestic violence, or sub-standard housing. This could be a potential resource for departments that are trying to work with kin placements in the future. Contact Christie Marra (804) 782-9430 x 16 or christie@vplc.org if you are interested in the project and/or can provide information regarding need for such a project.

Mary Dunne Stewart with Voices for Virginia's Children mentioned the Campaign for Children's Mental Health. The Campaign for Children's Mental Health is a 3-year sustained effort to make mental health services more available and accessible to the children in Virginia

who need them, regardless of where the children live or what “system” identifies their needs. Family members, treatment professionals, mental health service delivery organizations, child advocacy organizations, and policy experts are partnering together in a broad action coalition to:

- recruit and mobilize parents as partners, advocates, and campaign leaders;
- cultivate key legislators and members of the McDonnell administration to champion this cause;
- persuade state and local mental health officials to advocate for needed reforms;
- mobilize the grassroots to support the cause; and
- educate the public about the importance of reforming the children’s mental health system.

The Campaign for Children’s Mental Health and the Children’s Services System Transformation are co-hosting a series of regional forums to hear from people on their issues related to children’s mental health. Below are the locations, times and addresses:

Lynchburg - April 21, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. - Lynchburg Public Library Community Room, 2315 Memorial Avenue, Lynchburg, VA 24501

Roanoke - April 21, 5:30 p.m.- 7:30 p.m. - Carillion Roanoke Memorial Rehab Auditorium, 2017 S. Jefferson St, Roanoke, VA

Richmond - May 3, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. - Fifth Baptist Church Auditorium, 1415 West Cary Street, Richmond, VA 23220

Richmond - May 3, 6 p.m. -8 p.m. - CJW Chippenham Hospital, Boshier Conference Center, 7101 Jahnke Road, Richmond, VA 23225

Loudoun - May 12, 7 p.m. -9 p.m. - Loudoun Mental Health- Aspen Room, 906 Trailview Boulevard, Leesburg, VA 20175

Fairfax - May 13, 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. - Inova Fairfax Hospital Physicians Conference Center Auditorium, 3300 Gallows Road, Falls Church, VA 22042

Williamsburg - May 19, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. - James City/Williamsburg Community Center, 5301 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, VA 23188

Forums in Abingdon, Hampton Roads, and Southside Virginia will be added soon. The website is in5kids.org. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Paul McWhinney provided a Children’s Services System Transformation building block update. Charlotte McNulty is now the training team lead and is working with Vernon Simmons and Hayley Brooks. Virginia continues to work with the Institute for Human Services (IHS) in developing the competency based system. IHS is also visiting the Area Training Centers (ATCs) to examine capacity. The Training Steering Committee continues to meet and is currently working towards creating child welfare competencies. Nan Beeler, a consultant, is helping to integrate the Transformation Academy into the VISSTA curricula. The ATCs are planning to hold special events to focus on issues relevant to their regions. Some of the events have been planned and others are still in the works. Mr. McWhinney mentioned the budget cuts to VISSTA. The introduced budget had a 50% cut in funding. With some supplemental funding from the Division of Family Services that had been earmarked for training, that cut will not be 50%, but there is still a significant cut in funding for training.

The managing by data building block continues its activity with Applied Safe Measures Trainings and meetings of the Managing by Data work group. Family Engagement is rolling out in phases

and phase one of training is currently in progress. VISSTA is close to having the Family Engagement trainings completed. The Court Improvement Program, through a grant process, is funding facilitator training and 20 Family Partnership meetings for 5 localities: Chesterfield, Chesapeake, Henrico County, Hampton, and Franklin County. The Resource Family regional peer cooperatives continue to meet with 72 local departments meeting with the regional consultants. They have been discussing issues, providing technical assistance, and training around resource family recruitment, retention, and development.

Mr. McWhinney informed the group that Annie E. Casey Strategic Consulting Group has taken a new name and is reengaging with Virginia around permanency issues. The new name is Casey Child Welfare Strategy Group. Lisa Payne-Wells is the new team lead. The group brings experts in family finding, family support, and kinship to the table. Through 2010 and part of 2011, Virginia will continue to roll out initiatives around Family Engagement and Kinship care. Casey continues to support the Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis unit, the Resource Family unit, and Family Engagement activities.

Dorothy Hollahan invited everyone to attend an information session about the development and implementation of the Quality Service Review (QSR) on Friday April 30. Paul Vincent, the director of the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group, will be the speaker at this session. Virginia will shift from the Child Welfare Quality Review to the QSR beginning in January 2011. A contract, made possible by Casey Family Programs, will assist Virginia in the development of an instrument for quality reviews that measures practice reforms based on the Virginia Practice Model and provides a better mechanism to measure and improve practice. The contract will also involve the implementation and use of a QSR instrument in local reviews and provide training for state and local social service professionals on the use of the instrument. The two organizations that will be providing services include the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group and Human Systems Organization. Mr. Vincent will provide information on the QSR, how it is developed and how it has been utilized in other states to provide outcomes for children and families. The information session will be held from 10:00 – 12:00 Friday April 30 at the Dumbarton Branch Library. The library is located at 6800 Staples Mill Road, Henrico VA 23228. Please contact Dorothy Hollahan at 726-7534 or Dorothy.hollahan@dss.virginia.gov with questions or for more information.

Charlotte McNulty provided an update on the CSA policy on Family Engagement that was approved by the State Executive Council (SEC) in March. There are seven items, six of which deal directly with the CPMTs. The seventh is optional for localities that want to integrate CSA practices with Family Engagement activities. The guidance for the policy is currently in the final draft stages and should be approved by SLAT early in May. The guidance is based in the Practice Model. The first item is the focused expectation for CPMTs to develop policy for FAPTs or multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) to increase family involvement. The second item speaks to the inclusion of youth and families in the process. Youth should be able to include anyone they deem family or important to them in their treatment. The third item requires written policy for FAPT or MDT promoting family participation in the development of treatment plans. Notification of the meeting is not enough to qualify as participation and CPMTs will be reminded to be mindful of the family's time and transportation issues. The fourth item streamlines redundant processes across agencies. The fifth item requires that the process is

driven by youth and family and the family must be prepared to participate. The sixth item details the Code on how CPMTs are responsible to families. The optional seventh item concerns the integration of CSA and Family Engagement facilitated processes, like Family Partnership meetings but are not limited to DSS processes. Currently MDTs are granted waivers from the FAPT meeting. Those waivers usually take about three months to issue. This seventh option would provide a blanket waiver for family engagement processes. There was one question from the group about the time line to implement the new policy. The guidance is effective July 1, 2010 but there has not been an expected date of implementation set.

Matt Wade updated the group on the Division of Family Services Foster Care Diversion Study. The study has been finalized and shows that between 8.3% and 11.6% of referrals are being diverted to kin placements before coming into foster care. That is approximately 2,100 to 3,000 a year. Of those children that are diverted, local departments report that 57% of those children are receiving some services, including TANF only money for the child. 70% of the cases are being monitored by the local department as well. Mr. Wade will continue this study, pulling information every six month. In May and November, the Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis Unit (OBRA) will send CPS referrals for February and August to local departments for follow up. They will also be looking to see if children are coming into care within that 6 month time frame from a kin placement that was a diversion from foster care.

Mr. Wade gathered qualitative data from three departments with the highest percentages of children diverted from foster care and documented some best practices related to diversion. The three departments are Washington County DSS, Wise County DSS, and Virginia Beach DHS. In all three departments there is a family first philosophy where relative placements are valued and family first curriculum is trained. In one department, cases are staffed with both CPS and foster care staff if the child is at risk of removal. None of the three departments use special software or technology for family finding. They cite engaging the biological families as the best method for obtaining information about relatives. Family Partnership meetings are cited as the primary reason for two department's success at diversion from foster care. One department is proactive in approving relatives as foster parents if there are financial issues that would disrupt the placement.

There was discussion around expected changes to OASIS in the near future. Prevention activities are being considered for OASIS edits in the near future. OBRA is currently gathering information on which screens in OASIS would need to be updated. Diversion related changes may occur as early as 2012. The National Youth in Transition database will be in the summer 2010 release of OASIS. Fall of 2010 updated Safety and Risk Assessments will be included. Subsidized Custody may be in the spring 2011 release and there will be efforts made to "clean up" the Resources and Adoption Assistance Screens. Service plan updates are scheduled for fall of 2011. OASIS and the CSA dataset have been linked up and over four thousand clients have been identified. This will allow for an examination of services provided. MOUs with DMAS and DOE are also in the works. There was a question from the group about sharing information with DJJ. This is being explored, but there is a reluctance to share information in some cases due to confidentiality.

Lyndell Lewis made a presentation about planning for Subsidized Custody in Virginia. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act was enacted in October 2008. Part of that legislation supports IV-E funds for children to leave foster care to live with relatives. The language in the Fostering Connections Act is Subsidized Guardianship; Virginia does not have guardianship for children so the language used is Subsidized Custody. There are eligibility requirements for the child and the caregiver associated with receiving a subsidy payment. Families must be approved foster families and the child must live with that family for at least six months prior to discharge. The Division of Family Services created a workgroup on May 2009 to work through issues and questions related to Subsidized Custody. The recommendation from the work group was for Virginia to implement Subsidized Custody for children who are eligible for Title IV-E funding and children who require state pool funding. The next step for the work group has been to create a work plan for implementation of Subsidized Custody.

Ms. Lewis presented a draft version of the Subsidize Custody guidance to the group. The guidance will link to foster care guidance in the “choosing the goals” section. The definition of relative in this guidance is “anyone related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption.” There has been much debate about this definition of relative. There is a desire by some to include “fictive” kin, or people that are closely linked with the child but are not related by blood or adoption; such as god parents, neighbors, or family friends in the definition of relative. At this time, Virginia will not be able to expand the definition. One reason for the reluctance to expand the definition is the potential cost associated. If fictive kin were counted, VDSS could be paying up to 36 million dollars in maintenance payments for subsidized custody. Also, within the current statutes, the courts would not be able to approve a placement with relative goal if the definition of relative is expanded to include fictive kin.

There is discussion around the selection of or ruling out of certain foster care goals as related to subsidized custody. As it stands now, foster care guidance lists the order of goals as 1) Reunification, 2) Placement with Relative, and 3) Adoption. With the addition of Subsidized Custody, Placement with Relative would have two options: one being with subsidy and one without subsidy. The Fostering Connections Act requires that Adoption be fully assessed before Subsidized Custody is granted. Currently in Virginia, Adoption is seen as a goal after Placement with Relative. This brings up a significant issue that needs resolution – should Virginia change the order of its permanency goals.

Ms. Lewis shared several tools that are in various stages of completeness. The Permanency Planning Checklist is a tool that is designed to provide support for selection of the goal of placement with relative with subsidized custody. There is a Caregiver Permanency Planning Checklist that explores caregiver capacity and a Child Agreement Form that indicates understanding of the process by the child. Another form is not finalized but could be used to assess whether adoption is the best option. There is a draft Subsidized Custody Assistance Agreement. This form must be signed before the subsidy is finalized.

There were several general questions from the group. One question was around the use of the VEMAT and maintenance payments. A subsidized custody payment cannot be more than the maintenance payment was in foster care, unless there are additional daily supervision needs. In that case, workers will be required to use the VEMAT to determine the level of need and the

additional payments. There was a question about follow up with children after they are discharged from foster care. The proposed answer is that there will be required yearly visits. The follow up question was “what happens when the child moves out of state?” The answer is two fold: if the child is eligible for title IV-E payments, the payment can follow the child, if the child receives his/her subsidy from the state pool funds, there may be an issue for the payment. There are some local CSA offices that currently do not transfer payments across localities or state lines. Charlotte McNulty indicated this is an area that needs to be explored further. There was a question about how children with a subsidy will be counted in OASIS. Matt Wade indicated that there is the potential to activate a discharge option that would cover placement with relative with subsidized custody.

Ms. Lewis indicated the goal of the implementation plan is to have Subsidized Custody implemented in January 2011 but there are several steps that need to be completed for this to occur. Virginia’s Title IV-E plan must include subsidized custody as an option and the plan must be approved by the Department of Health and Human Services. New budget lines need to be added to capture expenditures related to subsidized custody. OASIS screens need to be updated or changed to capture subsidy cases. Training must be developed and implemented for local workers. ICPC, CPS and Adoption guidance must be updated. In addition CSA guidance needs to be updated to include information about subsidized custody.

Deborah Eves reviewed comments from the draft PIP that was submitted in February 2010 to the Children’s Bureau. The PIP comments were provided by Christine Craig, region III representative, and Misty Carlyle, Children’s Bureau representative. In general, the amount of work that went into the PIP development was recognized. Our federal partners noted there are “a number of major initiatives that will take an extensive amount of time to develop and implement. It is important for Virginia to be realistic about the scope of the PIP.” Virginia needs to be realistic about the timing of activities reported in the PIP. There needs to be an adjustment in some of the timeframes that are currently in the documents. VDSS program managers and building block leads have had the opportunity to provide some feedback and proposed changes based on the comments the feds provided. There have been clarifications added to the narrative section. One such clarification is to indicate that Virginia will be incorporating SDM risk and safety assessment tools into guidance. Additional information has been added about the QSR process as well. There have been several edits to the matrix of the PIP. Under Primary Strategy 1, Objective 1 has been rewritten to be clear about Virginia’s use of Family Partnership meetings as a way to involve families, youth, and significant others in the process. In addition, Subsidized Custody has been removed as a strategy under Objective 2 and is not its own objective. In Primary Strategies 2, 3, and 4 have clarifications to the strategies to be more specific in what is to be accomplished. The next step in the process is to complete the edits and resubmit to the Children’s Bureau. Ms. Eves has had regular communications with Christine Craig and Misty Carlyle.

Besides the PIP matrix, Virginia is being measured on improving outcomes related to the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). In addition to any national standards Virginia did not meet with its data profile, Virginia will have to address CFSR items that were not substantially achieved. Virginia will need to show improvement on items 3, 4, 7, 10, 17, 18, 19, and 20. One item can be captured with a report but the rest must be captured by a case review. At least 25%

of the cases reviewed must come from Fairfax County, because it is the largest metropolitan area in the state. The monitoring unit has been reviewing cases across the state since before the CFSR and have data that could be used as a baseline for determining level of improvement. It is hoped that by July we can submit data to set those baselines. As mentioned before, Virginia is planning on using the QSR as a monitoring tool. We are still working out how the QSR can be incorporated into the data measurement part of the PIP.

Deborah Eves asked the group to provide feedback to the Agents of Change program around promising practices. See flyer below. The meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2010, and will be held at the Tuckahoe Library.

Transformation Promising Practices

Since the Transformation began in 2007, there have been numerous innovative practices implemented across the Commonwealth and in every child serving agency that are reshaping the way we work with children and families. The Agents of Change program is interested in pulling together examples of these programs and strategies that can be shared across all child serving agencies. These promising practices will be compiled over the next several months and will be posted on the Transformation website: www.vafamilyconnections.com.

This is an opportunity to share new practices, strategies, and approaches in support of Virginia's children and families. You are encouraged to share positive outcomes from your locality or innovative strategies/practices that could be helpful to share with your peers. Please be as specific and concrete as possible.

In thinking of your "promising practices", you may want to think of:

- *Techniques you have used to promote managing by data,
- *Ways that you have effectively partnered within your locality as well as with other partners,
- *Communication tools you have used to garner support internally or externally,
- *Strategies used to develop wraparound/community based services and improve resource family recruitment and retention,
- *Any examples of concrete changes you have made in support of this Transformation that promote increased permanence for kids.

We are interested in programs or initiatives that are effective – show progress toward achieving a goal, are replicable and sustainable.

If you have a promising practice you would like to share please email Mary Nedell (mary.nedell@dss.virginia.gov) or Deborah Eves (deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov) with the following information:

Name:

Agency:

Contact Information:

One or two sentences about your program:

We will follow up with you to learn more about your program or initiative.