

CWAC November 16, 2012

Alex Kamberis, Jack Ledden, Dorothy Hollahan, Phyl Parrish, Celest Williams, Denise Dickerson, Leila Hopper, Lori Battin, Therese Wolf, Jo Ann Harfst, Michael Metz, Tania White, Deborah Eves, Jennifer Behrens, Carol Wilson, Melanie Galloway, Denise Gallop, Sharon Linday, Courtenay Brooks, Tamara Temoney, Mattie Satterfield, Mindy Meeks

Jack Ledden called the meeting to order and the group provided self introductions. Mr. Ledden informed the group he has accepted a position with the Department of Juvenile Justice and his last day with Family Services will be December 14, 2012.

Mr. Ledden provided a brief history of the Title IV-E review and reminded the group that the next review will take place in August 2013. State staff is working though a second round of reviews in about 19 localities focusing on finding errors and making corrections as needed. The state can continue to review and make corrections up until the time the cases are pulled for the review; which should be in June 2013. A service request was submitted to DIS to automate eligibility determination in an attempt to try to determine things correctly from the beginning. Localities that use Thomas Bros can add in a tickler to update the system when changes occur. There is a Title IV-E oversight committee of state staff, OCS staff, and some League members that is meeting monthly. Title IV-E is not just a concern for foster care; adoption assistance cases also must follow Title IV-E regulations. There is an Adoption Assistance team at VDSS that is currently reviewing cases to find errors and make corrections. The AA team and the IV-E team are working together to create a seamless process that will apply to both foster care and adoption cases. The next area of focus will be the children with reasonable candidacy.

There was a question from the group about “putting eggs in one basket” by focusing solely on the Title IV-E review. Deborah Eves informed the group of a discussion that included the Federal Region Three staff and VDSS staff concerning continuous quality improvement. The federal focus is on more than just Title IV-E. It is a more comprehensive look at practice, administrative infrastructure, data collection, etc. At this time it is still unclear when the next round of the CFSR will be. If everything was on track, the next review in Virginia should be in 2014. However, it is unclear what the format of the next review will be so we are currently in “wait and see mode”.

Therese Wolf spoke to the group about Custody Assistance. Broadcast 7684 states: “Until such time as Virginia can ensure equal access to Custody Assistance regardless of a child’s funding stream, the Department will not be implementing this permanency option. Over the next year, the Department of Social Services and a group of stakeholders will continue to work together to address how Custody Assistance could become available for all eligible children in Virginia regardless of their funding source.” Custody Assistance guidance and training is in place and can be used immediately when the issue of equal access is addressed. There is a consideration of going to GA in 2014 to ask for a funding package

Jennifer Behrens updated everyone about the upcoming OASIS 3.11 release, which is scheduled for January 2013. User Acceptance Testing has been scheduled and should be completed before the end of the year. Included in the release is a field in a prevention case that will collect some domestic violence and substance abuse information. There will be a pop up to let people know to select the field if applicable (yes, no, unknown). In addition to OASIS 3.11, there will be a smaller release in late summer or fall of 2013 that will include several “housekeeping” issues. The next large release is scheduled for some time in 2014. The major focus of that release will be more streamlined assessments and case

planning for CPS, FC, and Prevention cases. The service plan changes will include making the plans look more similar as well as including more information (i.e. educational information, health information, etc.) to come into compliance with federal regulations.

At some point in the future there will be the need to add in an assessment tool to OASIS. The Permanency regulation that is now affective allows for the state to mandate an assessment. The decision was made to mandate the CANS for all foster care cases. There was a reminder from the group to build in a mechanism for kids coming into Virginia that may not have the CANS. There is also some work being done towards reworking the funding screens for Foster Care and adding a Disability screen. These changes have come about because of the AFCARS PIP. It is unclear in which release these changes will be included in at this time. There was a question from the group about the inclusion of psychotropic medications. Alex Kamberis and Vernon Simmons are the division's point people on psychotropic medications and have been looking into the topic. The new Disability screen was purposely designed to be very basic so more information can be easily added. The workgroup feels like this screen could be a place to capture the psychotropic medications. The AFCARS PIP workgroup has not yet tackled changes to the Adoption Subsidy funding screen because the new guidance has not been released. Therese Wolf, program manager, indicated that the adoption guidance will be posted in December 2012. Once social workers have had time to read through the guidance and start to digest the changes, the AFCARS PIP workgroup will try to tackle the changes that are needed.

Therese Wolf informed the group about two studies that the General Assembly asked the division to write up. The first study explored the possibility of expanding Foster Care (FC) to the age of 21 which is an option in the Fostering Connections legislation. If a state was to extend FC to the age of 21, there is a requirement to extend adoption subsidy and subsidized guardianship to the age of 21 as well. This is both extending services to children that are in foster care already and allowing people over 18 to begin foster care services. The report includes both legal and financial issues. If FC could be extended the state could drawn down Title IV-E federal money instead of CSA (state money) for eligible children to pay for maintenance costs; a potential cost savings of 6 million state dollars. Extending adoption subsidy to 21 would not be a cost savings. There is the potential for unintended consequences. For example there must be consideration of how to define child so that actions taken apply to foster children but do not affect other programs' definition of child as well.

The second study is concerning conducting credit checks on children in foster care under the age of 18. These checks are required by federal law and the code of VA. For people under 18, you cannot just go get your yearly free credit check from the three major credit agencies. The credit agencies don't have a protocol in place for conducting the checks. The credit agency believes the state is the custodian of the child; however, in Virginia the locality is the custodian. There is the potential of using Lexus Nexus to run the checks for everyone in the state. If the foster child has no history we can assume there is not fraud. If there is history there is an issue, fraud, and the local department must follow up.

Ms. Wolf also informed the group of work that has begun in conjunction with the Adult Services state staff around creating plans for kids in foster care that will transition into adult services. There is a draft

resource that was created that details the steps that need to take place to prepare for the transition. In April, the permanency staff will take a look at the document and see if it is strong enough and figure out how to get it in policy.

Mr. Ledden wrapped up the meeting with a round robin asking the group to share any thoughts or questions. Jo Ann Harfst has a request to share legislation as early as possible with directors and the League so they are informed as early as possible. Maddie Satterfield wanted to know if there is any guidance about emergency planning for local departments concerning children in foster care. The answer is yes, there is some information in the resource manual about the plan for resource families. There is not however, a formalized process for localities to notify the state office. Mr. Ledden asked if this could be a potential agenda item. Therese Wolf would like to have CWAC help to guide the creation of the next 5 year child welfare plan. This can also be added as an agenda item in the future.

The meeting was adjourned with well wishes to Mr. Ledden in his new position. There is no CWAC meeting in December. The next meeting will be held in January 2013.