

CWAC September 19, 2014

Members present: Rita Katzman, Judy Gundy, Lytricia Toler, Lisa Linthicum, Deborah Eves, Tania White, Lelia Hopper, Lori Battin, Phyl Parrish, Carol Wilson, Melissa O'Neill, Phyllis Savides, Pat Lewis, Allison Lowery, Alex Kamberis, Traci Jones, Carl Ayers, Denise Dickerson, Sharon Lindsay, Emily Womble, Lytricia Toler, Laura Polk, JoAnn Harfst, Andy Crawford, Cathy Pemberton, Shannon Brabham, Jennifer Cooper, Kevin Grindhelm, Melanie Galloway, Denise Gallop.

The meeting was called to order by Carl Ayers and the group provided self introduction. There was one change to the agenda. Sub-recipient Monitoring of Budget Line 829 was not discussed due to time constraints.

### **Commission on Youth Update**

Amy Atkinson, Executive Director for the Commission on Youth (the Commission), shared the 2014 Commission studies and initiatives. Ms. Atkinson informed the group that this year the Commission has had a larger than normal number of studies they have been tasked with researching and writing. Senate Joint Resolution 358 (2003) directed the Commission to update biennially its publication *Collection of Evidence-based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs*. The Commission is currently working on the 6<sup>th</sup> edition to include the changes made to the categorization of disorders included in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-V). This publication's purpose is to identify effective treatment modalities for children with mental health treatment needs. It is written in a way that families will have a better understanding of what may work for their children. This publication can be found at <http://vcoy.virginia.gov/collection.asp> and should be updated by the spring of 2015.

Senator George Barker requested a study about court appointed attorneys in child welfare cases. The study will review Virginia's existing system for providing counsel in these cases and ascertain whether changes or improvements to the system would advance Virginia's efforts to increase permanency. House Joint Resolution 196 directs the Commission to examine the use of Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) and Medicaid funds for private day and private residential special education placements. The Commission is currently holding meetings and gathering information on the extent to which youth are placed in settings that are segregated from nondisabled students and determine the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of more integrated alternatives to provide special education services to students. House Bill 1106 directed the Commission, in consultation with the Department of Education and Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, to review statewide policies and regulations related to seclusion and restraint in public and private elementary and secondary schools and methods used in other states to reduce and eliminate the use of seclusion and restraint. The Commission was directed to study the provisions set forth in Senate Bill 411. That bill provided that any parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the care of a child who transfers physical custody of a child with the intent to do so permanently without following established adoption procedures is guilty of a Class 6 felony. The bill was passed by indefinitely, however, the members of the Senate Courts of Justice Committee determined further study was needed.

The Commission convened a workgroup to assess methods for improving quality in Virginia's early childhood education programs on June 17, 2014. This work group was well attended and an update on the progress will be reported to the Commission prior to the 2015 General Assembly Session. The Commission is collaborating with the executive and judicial branches for participation in the National Governors Associations' Three Branch Institute on Child Social and Emotional Well-Being to improve the social and emotional well-being of children in foster care in Virginia.

There are three meetings of the Commission scheduled through the end of this year. Those dates are: October 20 at 1:00 pm in House Room C, November 17 at 10:00 am in House Room C, and December 2 at 1:00 pm in House Room C. The Early Childhood study will be up for vote in October. It is possible the restraint and seclusion study will be voted on in October as well. The unlawful adoption study draft findings and recommendations will be presented at the October meeting. The Three Branch Institute data will be presented in December and they will be taking legislative suggestions. The Commission on Youth's website is <http://vcoy.virginia.gov> and the email is [coymail@vcoy.virginia.gov](mailto:coymail@vcoy.virginia.gov).

### **Adoption Update**

Traci Jones, Adoption Program Manager, provided an update on adoption activity. Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed Deborah Johnston as Virginia's newest "Adoption Champion". Ms. Johnston is the owner of a Midlothian-based home health care agency. She is passionate about helping children find permanent families, and in her new role, will work to support the Commonwealth's permanency efforts statewide. Last year's VAdopts Campaign for 1,000 successfully resulted in 1,041 adoption matches and 695 finalized adoptions. There are currently 828 foster children available for adoption in Virginia. Ms. Johnston will serve as spokesperson for adoption in Virginia, and will work to engage and educate the public in support of Virginia's adoption program goals and objectives.

The Adoption through Collaborative Partnerships (ATCP) grants cycle began August 1, 2014 with 12 contracts awarded and over 75 LDSS as partners. (see chart below) There has been a concerted effort to provide move technical assistance for this contract and a 20 day technical assistance meeting was held on September 3, 2014. There were over 50 persons in attendance at that meeting with great participation.

There was a request from the group to provide an update concerning the new adoption assistance negotiators. Interviews have been held for the five positions but no offers have been made yet. It is anticipated offers will be made in October. After training and certification, the adoption assistance negotiators will pilot the new process in two localities per region. The state has requested technical assistance from Casey Family Programs to help ensure these negotiators will have the proper training. There were several questions from the group about the workload, the process of how the negotiators will work with local departments, and appeals of decision made by the negotiators. Families have the right to appeal any decision related to services and that process is already in guidance. The other issues including how a local department appeals decisions have not yet been decided.

## Virginia Department of Social Services Localities by Regions

### ATCP 2015 Proposal Summary

*(Red are partner agencies. Asterisk \* means agency is partnered with more than one proposer)*

<u>Central</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Northern</u>	<u>Piedmont</u>	<u>Western</u>
Amelia	Accomack	Alexandria	Albemarle*	Bland
Buckingham	Brunswick	Arlington**	Alleghany-Covington	Bristol
Caroline*	Chesapeake	Clarke	Amherst	Buchanan
Charles City	Dinwiddie	Culpeper	Appomattox	Carroll
Chesterfield	Franklin City	Fairfax County (Falls Church)*	Bath	Dicke4son
Cumberland	Gloucester	Fauquier	Bedford	Floyd
Essex	Greensville-Emporia	Frederick	Botetourt	Galax
Fluvanna	Hampton	Fredericksburg	Campbell	Giles
Goochland	Isle of Wight	Greene	Charlotte	Grayson
Hanover*	James City	Harrisonburg-Rockingham	Charlottesville*	Lee
Henrico	Mathews	King George	Craig	Montgomery
Hopewell	Newport News*	Loudoun	Danville	Norton
King & Queen	Norfolk*	Louisa*	Franklin County	Patrick
King William	Northampton	Madison	Halifax	Pulaski
Lancaster	Portsmouth*	Manassas City	Henry-Martinsville	Radford
Lunenburg	Prince George*	Manassas Park	Highland	Russell
Middlesex	Southampton	Orange	Lynchburg	Scott
New Kent	Suffolk	Page	Mecklenburg	Smyth
Northumberland	Surry	Prince William	Nelson	Tazewell
Nottoway	Sussex	Rappahannock	Pittsylvania	Washington
Petersburg	Virginia Beach**	Shenandoah	Roanoke City	Wise
Powhatan	Williamsburg	Spotsylvania	Roanoke County	Wythe
Prince Edward	York-Poquoson	Stafford	Rockbridge-Buena Vista-Lexington	
Richmond City		Warren	Shenandoah Valley (Staunton-Augusta & Waynesboro)	
Richmond County		Winchester		
Westmoreland				
Total: 26 LDSS	Total: 23 LDSS	Total: 25 LDSS	Total: 24 LDSS	Total: 22 LDSS
<b>16</b> of 26 = 62%	<b>11</b> of 23 = 48%	<b>7</b> of 25 = 28%	<b>14</b> of 24 = 58%	<b>17</b> of 22 = 77%

## **Foster Care to 21**

Alex Kamberis provided the group with an update on the progress of expanding foster care and adoption assistance in Virginia to youth up to the age of 21. In July 2015, VDSS received funding from the General Assembly to develop the implementation plan for expanding foster care and adoption assistance. By October 15, 2014, DSS shall provide this plan to the Governor, Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees, Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget. There is the potential that the money set aside in the current budget will be reallocated, but until that happens right now there is \$4,838,071 in the second year of funding from the general fund and \$8,382,412 the second year from non-general funds available for the expansion of foster care and adoption assistance in accordance federal Fostering Connections provisions per the final implementation plan. There are three assumptions that were used when trying to figure out how much this program extension might cost. The first is the assumption the federal Title IV-E penetration rate will be 75%. The second is that up to 1,400 youth could choose to participate. The third is there will be a need to increase funding to cover administrative costs.

Mr. Kamberis clarified that youth that are special needs already qualify for adoption assistance to age 21, but this change will include those youth adopted after the age of 16 with or without special needs.

In order to be eligible for services, the young adult meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential.
- Enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education; full-time or part-time in a university or college, or enrolled in a vocational or trade school.
- Attending classes or in a program to promote or remove barriers to employment (Job Corp)
- Employed for at least 80 hours a month – can be multiple jobs
- Incapable of doing any of the previously described educational or employment activities due to a documented medical condition.

Youth over the age 18 must agree to follow all rules and sign a voluntary services agreement. A juvenile court judge must sign and agree this is in the best interest of the youth. After the services agreement is signed and approved, Title IV-E eligibility can be determined on the youth's income which should increase the amount of Title IV-E monies that can be claimed by the state. Workers are required to make monthly worker visits with the youth but the location is flexible. Six month periodic reviews are required and these reviews can be judicial or administrative. It is recommended that the youth must live in Virginia or in a contiguous state due to the monthly worker visit requirement. ICPC does not cover visits to youth over the age of 18. Someone in the group pointed out that this might deter a youth from attending college out of state and that is true. Other youth that would not be eligible to participate in foster care to 21 are those youth that are residing in a group home or a residential facility. There is not a recommended residential restriction, outside of not living in a residential facility or group home, for youth who are extending foster care. Youth can stay in the foster home they have been in or live on their own. These youth could live in a dorm room or even return to their birth families. It is recommended that youth can be married but cannot be active duty military.

Someone in the group questioned if a youth in a therapeutic foster home could participate in foster care to 21. The recommendation is that the youth may participate but that foster home must agree to a board rate. CSA Service dollars are estimated to be \$6,000 per year under the current Department of Planning and Budget fiscal projection. Mr. Kamberis reminded the group that the implementation plan has recommendations, not final decisions. There are several committees that are working on legislative changes, changes to guidance, youth engagement and outreach, and training.

### **Training Update**

Judy Gundy provided the group with the training update and began her update with information related to extending foster care to 21. The training unit is working with BJ Zarris on trainings related to older youth. In addition to training around extending foster care to 21, there is a need to complete more transitional living plans with youth. A course is being designed for youth about transitional living plans. All new-worker training is being revised. Exploring Child Welfare is being revised to include more about Family Engagement. The VEMAT rater e-learning has four of five modules completed with the fifth module very near completion.

### **LDSS presentation**

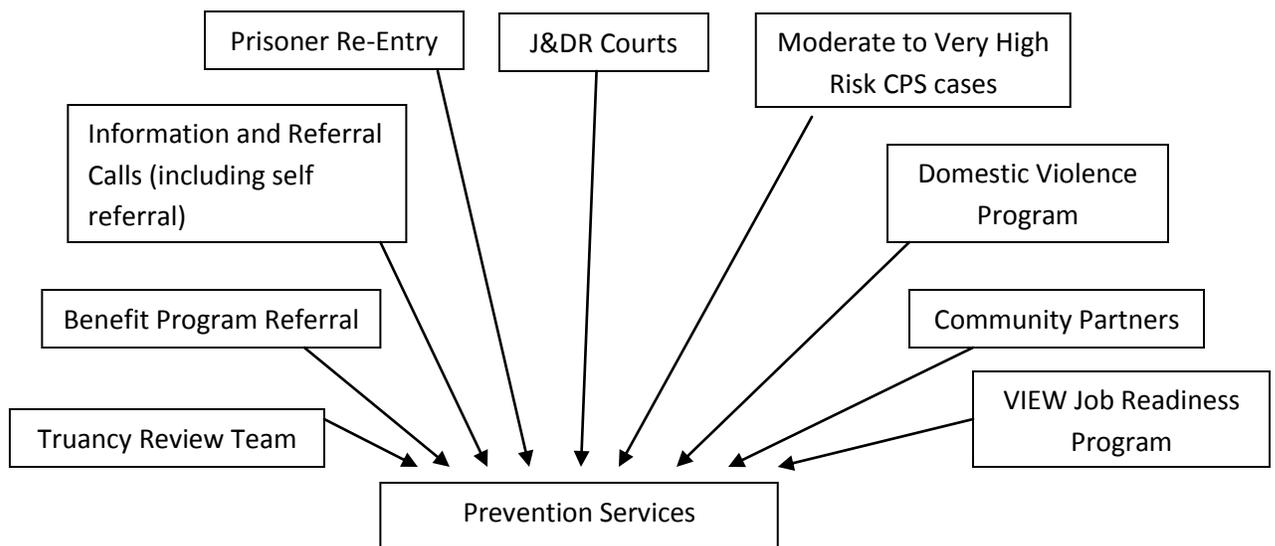
Andy Crawford, Director of Bedford Department of Social Services graciously agreed to talk to the group about his local department's focus on prevention activities. Mr. Crawford began the discussion by sharing how prevention activities became such a major focus of the organization. In the 1990s there were a very high number of children in foster care. Some were there because of abuse and neglect and some were there for other issues like truancy. Focusing on prevention helped decrease the number of kids in care and has led to a department philosophy where prevention is a part of each area: foster care, CPS, benefits, etc. Mr. Crawford shared the organizational chart, highlighting the CPS ongoing and prevention unit, the domestic violence unit, and other staff that work in conjunction with prevention. The CPS unit focuses on investigations and transfers cases that are moderate to very high risk assessment to the CPS ongoing and prevention unit.

The ongoing and prevention unit is made up of two therapists, several truancy workers, ongoing workers, and a Nurturing Parent worker. In addition to this unit, there are two staff that report directly to the Family Services Manager that are involved in prevention activities. The Services Intake Specialist works with families coming to the department for many reasons (benefits, CPS, DV etc) connecting them with services. The Family Partnership Facilitator conducts all FPMs for the agency. The therapists provide therapy as well as clinical supervision and clinical consultations with staff. Truancy remains an issue in the locality so there is one supervisor and two staff dedicated to working with families. The two workers have a combined case load of around 150 and attend weekly truancy review team meetings. The Nurturing Parent program is an early intervention program that includes a parent/child nurturing class and family coaching. Assessments include Nurturing Skill Competency and Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory Scale. All Family Services workers (including foster care, adoption, and CPS) are trained in this program and this skill can be used in groups as well as individually during home visits.

In addition to child welfare staff, Bedford has a domestic violence unit that includes a director, a therapist, a court advocate, hot line/intake worker, and the DV shelter manager. The unit is supported by grand funds. The shelter can accommodate four families or up to 10 people at a time. Families can reside in shelter for free for up to 90 days and receive case management services as long as needed after discharge. The therapist can conduct trauma assessments and can identify and make any recommendations to address issues related to trauma. Assessments are completed on children ages five and up. Caregivers are given domestic violence assessments. Bio-psycho-social assessments are completed on victims and batterers in order to obtain insight into past and current behaviors related to domestic violence. This unit also provides two educational courses: “Domestic Violence 101” and “In Touch with Teens” which is a co-ed teen dating violence prevention/healthy relationships group.

The VIEW Job Readiness program is another program area that provides prevention services. This program is supported by VIEW funds. The VIEW program provides support needed to overcome barriers to finding and maintaining employment. Services they provide include resume development, mentoring, communication and self regulation skills, budgeting, access to clothing, and limited transportation services. In addition, the VIEW program provides parenting supports.

The prevention unit receives referrals from many different areas.



There are joint unit meetings weekly with CPS Investigations, Ongoing/Prevention, and Domestic Violence to triage cases and determine case assignments/needs. Also, there is an attorney staffing with all Family Service staff prior to Court that includes the Family Services Manager and all four Family Services Supervisors; even Adult Services. There are different service avenues for prevention staff. They include:

- FAPT;
- Nurturing Parents;
- Therapy;

- Community-Based Services;
- Domestic Violence; and
- VIEW Job Readiness Program

Community-Based programs include:

- Community Service Board and Private Providers to include Therapeutic Day Treatment, Intensive In-Home Services, and Mental Health Support;
- Fatherhood Initiative;
- Parent Café;
- Child Care Services;
- Psychiatry/Medication Management;
- Psychological evaluation;
- EDCD Waivers;
- Infant and toddler connection;
- Child Development Center;
- Faith-Based and Local Community Resources;
- Free clinic;
- Pregnancy Center; and
- Community Action

Mr. Crawford pointed out that there are not many emergency removals. The majority of children that come into foster care have been triaged through the process mentioned above. If a case is open to Prevention/CPS and the children are placed in foster care, the assigned Prevention/CPS worker helps the foster care worker find a placement and writes the majority of the first Foster Care Service Plan. If a foster child is returned home and monitoring is needed, cases are moved back to the prevention unit.

#### **OASIS update**

Mr. Kamberis provided a brief update on progress made towards developing a new service plan in OASIS. The service plan will be web-based, similar to SDM, and will be accessed through OASIS. Both CPS and Foster Care will be using the new service plan and the information will transfer from both cases. The service plan will include education and health information, reasonable efforts made to contact and work with families, basis for child welfare involvement, and a plan to capture services based on assessment results. There will be an OASIS release in November that included a reasonable candidacy screen and updated court forms. It is anticipated that service plan will be released in the summer of 2015. There are opportunities for workers from local departments of social services to help with user acceptance testing for service plan. If you are interested please contact Tania White ([tania.white@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:tania.white@dss.virginia.gov)) or Deborah Eves ([deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov)).

Mr. Ayers wrapped up the meeting and requested the group suggest agenda items and issues to be discussed. He also requested volunteers from local departments to present best/promising practices. Any agenda items or suggestions can be sent to Deborah Eves ([deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov)). The meeting adjourned at 12:30. The next CWAC meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2014.