

CWAC minutes August 20, 2010

Members present: Heather Jones, Kathy McElroy, Deborah Eves, Janine Tondrowski, Denise Dickerson, BJ Zarris, Mattie Satterfield, Jeff Felton, Lelia Hopper, Allison Lowery, Virginia Powell, Phyl Parrish, Kathy Sauter, Paul McWhinney, Charlotte McNulty, Tania White, Cheryl Williams, Letha Moore-Jones, Patrick Plourde, Kathy Froyd, Nelson Durden, Lori Battin, Suzanne Fountain, Pat Lewis, Martha Kurgans, Rita Katzman, Melanie Galloway, Betty McCrary

Paul McWhinney welcomed the group and provided a brief review of the agenda. The group provided individual introductions. Mr. McWhinney spoke briefly about the Division of Family Services reorganization. The foster care unit and adoptions unit were combined into one permanency unit with Therese Wolf as the program manager and Gary Cullen is now the Prevention program manager. Susan Taylor is no longer with VDSS and there are two other vacancies left by people retiring – interviews are being conducted to fill these, but with new functions. The request to fill the Family Placement Manager position has been submitted. Tamara Temoney is filling in as interim supervisor of the Resource Family staff.

Mr. McWhinney added a topic to the agenda: Resource Family approval. State staff has been conducting resource family guidance training and have been receiving questions. In particular, questions have arisen around the interpretation of individuals and co-habitation. There are a number of “unknowns” regarding this, for example, is this a barrier for relative placements, how will the guidance be implemented at the local level, etc. The division does not have data on the number of placements that would potentially be disrupted, or not, or how many families would not be approved if there is a very strict interpretation of “individuals or married couples.” Mr. McWhinney will be speaking with the commissioner about this topic and amended guidance may be published in October.

Patrick Plourde and Letha Moore-Jones talked about the roll out of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program provides flexible funding to states to provide independent living (IL) programs and help other youth in foster care transition successfully to adulthood. The Chafee Program is now beginning to collect data on IL services provided to youth as well as on outcomes related to those services. As of October 1, 2010 Virginia will begin capturing information on IL services provided to youth ages 14 - 21 in OASIS to be reported on a bi-annual basis to the federal government. This includes children in foster care as well as children over the age of 16 who were adopted but are still receiving IL services. In addition to basic demographic information, there are 13 broad categories of service data that will be collected. Those categories include: IL needs assessment, academic support, career prep, employment programs or vocational training, housing education, financial management, mentoring, room and board assistance, among others.

In addition to capturing those services, a separate co-cohort survey will be administered to those youth who will turn 17 years old between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011. The survey must be administered within 45 days of the child’s birthday and entered into OASIS. The youth that are surveyed at 17 will be asked to complete the survey again at ages 19 and 21. In 2014 a new co-cohort survey will be administered and so on every three years. The survey asks for basic demographic information and youth outcomes in these areas: financial self sufficiency,

experience with homelessness, educational attainment, positive connections with adults, high risk behavior, and access to health insurance. The federal government created the survey and states must ask the questions exactly as written. However, the state was allowed to add in additional information to clarify the questions.

Several questions were asked about the survey. One question was “if a child turns 17 before October 1, do they still have to complete the survey?” The answer is that they do not – only children who turn 17 between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011 will have to take the survey. Another question was “if the child is out of state, who administers the survey?” The answer is the sending state will be responsible for administering the survey and inputting the information into OASIS. In addition, if a child out who is placed of state receives IL services from the sending state and the state the child is living in, the child will be reported by both states as receiving services. There was a question about putting the survey online for children to fill out. This is currently being explored but at this time is too expensive to implement. Another question is what is the required response rate for the follow up surveys? The answer is that Virginia needs to get at least 60% of the surveys completed when the children are 19 and 21. If Virginia does not comply with data collection for NYTD, we could face up to a 5% penalty for Chafee funds.

Letha Moore-Jones spoke to the group about the NYTD workgroup. There are representatives from the Office of Comprehensive Services, VDSS, FACES, foster care alumni, Virginia Youth Advisory Council, Project Life, and local department staff. There are several subcommittees of the workgroup including: guidance, training, public relations, OASIS, and the survey. OASIS should have the updated IL screens by September 2010. The sample co-hort survey follows these minutes and a Spanish version of the survey is available upon request. The Transformation website (www.vafamilyconnections.org) has information about NYTD as well. The foster care guidance will be released soon and it contains a section about Independent Living and NYTD. If there are any questions, contact Patrick Plourde (patrick.Plourde@dss.virginia.gov).

Virginia participated in a Title IV-E review the week of August 2 – 5. Pat Lewis provided some preliminary information on that review. Title IV-E primary reviews are held every three years. If for some reason a state does not pass the primary review, there will be a secondary review conducted. In 2001 and 2007, Virginia passed the IV-E review. In 2004, Virginia did not pass the primary review and was required to create a corrective action plan which was implemented and successfully completed. This year our federal partners were impressed with the stability of children in placements, the reduction in residential placements, and the way the cases were presented for review. States must pass with 95% of cases being in compliance. This review examined 80 cases. If four or more cases are out of compliance, the state will not pass. The official report has not been received for this review, but it is likely that Virginia did not pass this review. There were 24 cases that are currently being reexamined but at first glance had errors. Many of those cases are being researched for appropriate paperwork and may not be in error. Some of the errors noted were inaccurate billing, inaccurate determinations concerning step parents, and issues surrounding placement with relatives and contrary court findings.

If Virginia does not pass the review, there will be a penalty. It is unknown what that penalty will be at this time since we do not know the number of cases that were in error. Virginia will

implement a Process Improvement Plan with a focus on training, accurate court orders, and updating the IV-E manual. In addition to creating a Process Improvement Plan, Virginia will go through a secondary review of 150 cases. We should receive the final report by September 3. If you are interested in working on the PIP team, please contact Pat Lewis (pat.lewis@dss.virginia.gov).

BJ Zarris led the group in a brief discussion about Family Partnership Meeting (FPM) allocations. Broadcast 6429 talks about some initial funding. VDSS has identified \$600,000 including local match this fiscal year as incentive for conducting Family Partnership Meetings. Beginning September 1, 2010, Division of Family Services (DFS) staff will publish statistics on the number of FPMs held in each locality. Based upon each quarter's aggregated statistics, DFS will determine the amount of money awarded for each FPM conducted. This money will be allocated to each LDSS via BL 829, Family Preservation and Support (SSBG), which allows for the purchase of services for vulnerable families. This budget line carries a 15.5 percent local match. Funding may be transferred to BL 854, Direct Services Staff and Operations, using the standard budget transfer procedures. The goal is to have contract/purchased services appropriately charged to BL 829 and local staff expenses charged to BL 854. When using this funding for expenses charged to BL 829, these activities related to conducting FPMs are allowable: transportation to and from FPMs, payments to trained facilitators for conducting FPMs, child care during FPMs, search activities to locate and include family members in FPMs, and payments to coaches for internal facilitators.

The broadcast caused some confusion with CSA money. Because CSA money is "the fund of last resort", this allocation should be used before asking for CSA funds for FPM activities or this money should be used for children who are not CSA eligible. If the money is transferred to BL 854, there is not an issue. It is suggested that local departments talk with their CSA coordinators and their CPMTs to make sure there is a plan for the use of this money.

In addition to talking about the FPM allocation, Mr. McWhinney asked the group to provide suggestions for a reinvestment plan because a decision brief is being drafted. One suggestion for reinvestment is to use the money for CSA carve out for development of community based services. There is policy already in place for the use of carve out funds, however there is no money to be used at this time. Another suggestion is to use some of the money to help private agencies adjust their business plans to become more community based and move away from residential services.

There were two questions from the group on topics that were not on the agenda. There was a question from the group about the status of Subsidized Custody. Mr. McWhinney informed the group that we are now using the term Custody Assistance. Mr. McWhinney, along with VDSS research and fiscal staff, has briefed the commissioner. In addition, a group of Directors from local departments also met with the commissioner to express their support. The commissioner requested more information and is yet to make a decision on whether or not to move forward.

The second question from the group concerned a federal grant for the reduction of long stays in foster care. Therese Wolf submitted Virginia's application for the grant. This is a 14 million dollar grant that will be implemented over 5 years. The first year of the grant is a planning year.

The grant fits nicely with work that is being explored by the division on older youth in foster care and the Process Improvement Team that is currently in place. We should hear by end of September.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm. The September meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 17th from 10:00 – 1:00 pm at the Tuckahoe Branch Library. If there are agenda topics you would like to see added, please contact Deborah Eves (Deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov).

National Youth in Transition Database

SAMPLE Baseline Youth Outcome Survey 2010-2011

As a youth in foster care, you have been selected to complete the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Youth Outcomes survey. All youth who are currently in foster care and turning 17 in the next year are requested to complete the survey. The information you provide will help develop and evaluate programs for you and other foster youth, so your participation in the survey is important. You will be asked about employment, job training, education, financial support, and other services you may have received during the year.

The questions in the survey ask about specific experiences. It is important to read or listen carefully to the instructions before each question so that you understand each question.

The survey will take approximately 25 to 30 minutes. All of the information that you provide will remain confidential, and your answers will not affect any services that you are currently receiving or that you may be eligible to receive in the future. You may decline to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Patrick Plourde at 804-726-7577 or email: patrick.plourde@dss.virginia.gov.

We appreciate your taking the time for the survey!

Employment and On-the-job Training

If someone is employed "full-time," they are working at least 35 hours per week at one or more jobs.

Currently are you employed full-time?

Yes

No

If someone is employed "part-time," they are working between 1 and 34 hours per week at one or more jobs.

Currently are you employed part-time?

Yes

No

This next question asks about programs that provide on-the-job training. This training might include trade skills such as carpentry or auto mechanics, or office skills such as word processing or the use of office equipment.

In the past year, did you complete an apprenticeship, internship, or other on-the-

job training, either paid or unpaid?

Ye s

No

Financial Support

Sometimes foster care youth receive social security payments. These are payments from the government to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter of a person with a disability. You may be receiving these payments because of a parent or guardian's disability, rather than your own disability.

Currently are you receiving social security payments (Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)), or dependents' payments?

Ye s

No

Students often receive financial aid to help with educational expenses. Scholarships, grants, and stipends are funds awarded to help with expenses related to obtaining an education. A "student loan" is a government-guaranteed, low-interest loan for students who have finished high school.

Currently are you using a scholarship, grant, stipend, student loan, voucher, or other type of educational financial aid to cover any educational expenses?

Ye s

No

Financial support can come from your family as well. This type of support could be from your biological, foster, or adoptive family. It could be child support that you receive or funds from a legal settlement. It does not include occasional gifts such as birthday or graduation checks. It also does not include small donations of food or personal items, child care subsidies, child support for your child, or other financial support that does not benefit you directly in supporting yourself.

Currently are you receiving any periodic and/or significant financial resources or support from another source not previously indicated and excluding paid employment?

Ye s

No

Education and Training

What is the highest educational degree or certification that you have received? (See below for definitions of each response)

High school diploma/GED

Vocational certificate

Vocational license

Associate's degree (e.g., A.A.)

Bachelor's degree (e.g., B.A. or B.S.)

Higher degree
None of the above

Vocational Certificate - a document stating that a person has received education or training that qualifies him or her for a particular job, e.g., auto mechanics or cosmetology

Vocational License - a document that indicates that the State or local government recognizes an individual as a qualified professional in a particular trade or business

Associate's degree - generally a two-year degree from a community college

Bachelor's degree - a four-year degree from a college or university

Higher degree - a graduate degree, such as a Masters or Doctorate degree

None of the above - the youth has not received any of the above educational certifications

Currently are you enrolled in *and* attending high school, GED classes, post-high school vocational training, or college?

Yes

No

Note: If you are enrolled in and attending school that is *currently out of session* (spring break, summer vacation), then you are still considered enrolled in and attending an educational program.

Personal Relationships and Living Circumstances

This question asks about connections to adults in your life. It refers to an adult that you can go to for advice or guidance when you have to make a decision, when you need help solving a problem, or when you want to share something good that has happened to you. The adult might be a relative, parent, or foster parent or someone else who is close to you (for example a minister or a teacher). *The adult must be someone that you can easily reach, either by telephone or in person.* The adult would *not* include: a spouse, partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, or current caseworker.

Currently is there at least one adult in your life, other than your caseworker, to whom you can go for advice or emotional support?

Yes

No

The next question asks about being homeless. If you are homeless, you have no regular or adequate place to live. Being homeless would include living in a car or on the street, or staying in a homeless or other temporary shelter.

Have you ever been homeless?

Yes

No

This question is about alcohol and drug abuse assessment and counseling. Alcohol or drug

abuse assessment is a process designed to determine if someone has a problem with alcohol or drug use. You could have decided to seek alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling yourself (self-referral) or someone else like a social worker, school staff, physician, mental health worker, foster parent, or other adult might have referred you to alcohol/drug abuse assessment or counseling.

Have you ever referred yourself or has someone else referred you for an alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling?

Ye s

No

Have you ever been confined in a jail, prison, correctional facility, or juvenile or community detention facility, in connection with allegedly committing a crime?

Ye s

No

The next question asks about giving birth or fathering children. If you are female, the question refers to giving birth to at least one child that was born. If you are male, the question refers to fathering at least one child that was born. If you are male and you do not know if you have fathered a child, answer "No."

Have you ever given birth to or father any children that were born?

Ye s

No

If you responded yes to the previous question, were you married to the child's other parent at the time each child was born?

Ye s

No

Not applicable

Health Care Coverage

The next question asks about Medicaid - a health insurance program funded by the government.

Currently are you on Medicaid?

Ye s

No

Don't know

The next several questions ask about other health insurance. Health insurance is when a third party pays for all or part of health care. You might be covered under your parents' health insurance policy. You might have health insurance such as group coverage offered by your employer or your college. You might have an individual policy that covers medical, mental health care, or prescription drugs. You could have access to free health care through a college

or other source.

Currently do you have health insurance, other than Medicaid?

Yes - continue to next question

No - end of survey

Don't know - end of survey

Does your health insurance include coverage for medical services? That is, does your health insurance pay for at least some medical services or procedures?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

Does your health insurance include coverage for mental health services? That is, does your health insurance pay for at least some mental health services?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

Does your health insurance include coverage for prescription drugs? That is, does your health insurance pay for at least some prescription drugs?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know