

CWAC notes 4-20-12

**Participants:** Jack Ledden, Phyl Parrish, Lelia Hopper, Lori Battin, Deborah Eves, Dorothy Hollahan, Cathy Pemberton, Emily Gambill, Christie Marra, Melissa O'Neill, Michael Metz, Elizabeth Hutchens, Carol Wilson, Heather Jones, Kathy McElroy, Courtenay Brooks, Alex Kamberis, Jennifer Behrens, Allison Lowry, Tamara Temoney, David Bringman, Tania White, Denise Dickerson, Vernon Simmons, Mindy Meeks

Jack Ledden called the meeting to order and the group provided introductions. The Child Welfare Advisory Committee's monthly meetings are public meetings. The minutes and agendas are posted on the VDSS website. While the meeting is public, there is not the opportunity for public comment and the group follows the agenda.

Jennifer Behrens, program manager for Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis (OBRA) introduced a new staff person, David Bringman. David will be assisting the division with data requests and reporting, among other things. He was most recently working with Norfolk Department of Human Services. Ms. Behrens also announced that Tania White will be shifting her job duties to focus more on performance based contracting for the division as well as working with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA). Broadcast 7420 outlines what changes are being made in the 3.10 version of OASIS. That version includes updates to court forms and the requirement to include the child's court number, a relationship closure edit that prohibits someone from closing and investigation if there is not a relationship established between the abuser and victim, SDM discretionary override approvals, other CPS related changes, and changes to support the implementation of Custody Assistance. OASIS 3.10 was made available on April 16 for shared support agencies. All agencies will have until close of business on May 4, 2012 to change to this new version of OASIS. The 3.11 version of OASIS is still on schedule to be deployed in the fall of 2012. It is anticipated that the focus will be on prevention activities, tracking domestic violence in all cases, and updates to the characteristics, medical, and dental screen as part of the AFCARS PIP and to meet the requirement to track psychotropic medications for children in foster care. Ms. Behrens updated the group on the progress of the DSS/Court interface. The first phase is nearing completion and includes DSS sending portions of the DC552 (Foster Care transmittal) to the Courts. The second phase of the interface will include sending court information to DSS; including dispositional data, change of goal, and change of custody information. The second phase of the interface is still in the planning stages.

Ms. Behrens talked about a project that is helping to draw together data from DSS and the Office of Comprehensive Services (OCS) in a statistically significant way to help Virginia to become more fiscally sound. DSS and OCS, in conjunction with Casey Family Programs, is working with a company, SAS, to develop a common identifier between OCS and DSS data and then perform advanced analytics on the data. Phase one of the project is a proof of concept that is pulling data from OASIS, the VEMAT tool, the CSA data set, CANS data, and local payment files from Thomas Brothers for the last three fiscal years. Part of the proof of concept is that SAS is going to tell us what kinds of information we can obtain from this data integration. For example, can we match up CANS and VEMAT data? Also, can we determine if there are financial mismanagement issues? This proof of concept is due to be completed and presented by July 2012. The second phase could include more analytics and analysis on well being issues.

Phyl Parrish provided the group with an update on the Family Services legislation for 2012. DSS was tracking 91 bills, of those about 50 were assigned to DFS. Adult services legislation centered around

financial exploitation failed. Two bills passed (HB1211 and SB596) which allow assisted living facilities and adult foster care providers to accept third party payments made on behalf of an auxiliary grant recipient. These payments should not cover services already covered under the auxiliary grant rate. The agency consolidation legislation is moving along. This legislation will, in part, create a new department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services. The DSS adult services program (including AS, APS and Auxiliary Grant) will be joining this new agency in 2013 and the implementation of this process will be worked on over the next year. As part of the consolidation legislation the Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect has been merged into the Family and Children's Trust Fund.

The CPS bills were consolidated into 5 bills on mandated reporters and two on substance abused infants. There have been several changes designating who is a mandated reporter. Now, any person 18 or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children; any person employed by public or private institution of higher education; and administrators or employees 18 or older of public or private day camps, youth centers and youth recreation programs are to be considered mandated reporters and require training. When an initial report of abuse is made to the person in charge (or designee) of an institution or department – the person in charge (or designee) must notify the individual making the initial report when the report is made to the LDSS or the hotline; the name of the dss person; and must forward any communication and information to the person who made the initial report. Language and timing related changes were made related to the reporting of substance exposed infants. The language changes were made to conform with CAPTA. Additional language changes on timing of the reporting of abuse include from “within 72 hours” to “as soon as possible, but not longer than 24 hours after having reason to suspect”. Also, there has been a change in the fine for a subsequent failure to report to not less than \$1,000 and failure to report certain sexual acts is not a Class 1 misdemeanor. Finally, language was added that no person shall be required to report abuse if they have actual knowledge that the matter has already been reported to a LDSS or the hotline

Bills impacting foster care include HB 500 which requires credit checks on foster kids 16 and over – and procedures to protect their credit; and SB299 which addresses variances for children placed with relatives and some exemptions to certain barrier crimes – (some drug offenses and arson) provided 10 years have elapsed for approving relative homes. There were two bills on ICPC HB744 and SB 366. SB 366 was signed and the Governor amended HB744. The impact of the governor's amendment is that when custodial parent is placing a child across state lines into Virginia – the facility and the parents can determine if the placement is urgent which will allow placement prior to ICPC approval.

Lelia Hopper and Christie Marra briefed the group about an additional piece of legislation: SB 217. This legislation speaks to relatives with information custody enrolling children in school. In some instances, these relatives are caring for the children as a way to avoid the children being placed in foster care. SB 217 was an attempt to keep families from having to go to court to get legal custody of the children to enroll them in school. This legislation is currently in the governor's office. Local departments may be asked to provide a letter certifying the family is caring for the child as an alternative to foster care and should be allowed to enroll the child in school. Local departments that have no knowledge of the family or the situation can refuse to certify the situation.

Deborah Eves updated the group on progress of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) for the Child and Family Services Review. Representatives from the Children's Bureau joined CWAC in February and reviewed progress made at that time. Ms. Eves was happy to announce that all but one item specific measurement was taken off the table, including all the national standards, because Virginia has met it's

negotiated level of improvement. Virginia will select a new baseline and continue to review cases for that item. The Children's Bureau will set a new level of improvement for that item and we will have until the end of our non overlapping PIP year (until Sept. 2013) to meet that level of improvement.

Ms. Eves and Tania White began a discussion about a new PIP. This PIP is for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS). In the summer of 2010, Virginia participated in an AFCARS assessment review. This review evaluates the state's capacity to accurately collect, extract, and transmits AFCARS data to the feds. There are two main areas that are under consideration: AFCARS general requirements and data elements. There is a three step process to complete an AFCARS assessment review. First, sample cases were submitted into the OASIS test database and then extracted using AFCARS logic and sent to the feds for review. The review team then comes onsite and a paper case review is conducted on randomly selected cases. The information submitted from AFCARS is compared to what is in the paper file and differences are noted. The final part of the review is an in-depth look at the foster care and adoptive data elements and mapping that Virginia has put in place. Virginia was not in substantial conformity with the review and is now required to complete a PIP. Virginia delayed implementation of this PIP due to resource and man power issues but feels that now is the time to begin work to help correct some of the issues. Issues include search and merge, training and data entry, characteristics/diagnosed disabilities, placement screen/placement issues, additional circumstances of removal, and funding screen/adoptive assistance. There is an AFCARS PIP workgroup made up of state and local staff. The workgroup has met once and has begun to pull together suggestions on how to address the topics mentioned above. If you are interested in participating with the AFCARS workgroup, please contact Deborah Eves ([deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:deborah.eves@dss.virginia.gov)) or Tania White ([tania.white@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:tania.white@dss.virginia.gov)).

Alex Kamberis spoke to the group about Adoption Assistance, Custody Assistance and a IV-E waiver. The guidance for adoption assistance was about to be posted when the Attorney General's office requested posting be postponed. Within the last few months, VDSS has lost two court cases specific to adoption assistance. There is a need to revise the guidance and the Attorney General will provide language to assist with that task. Custody Assistance is still on track to begin implementation on July 1, 2012. If there is an approved IV-E plan, families of those children that are IV-E eligible will have no issues with the subsidy. Those children that are non-IV-E eligible will have to go through the local CPMT and FAPTs to determine if there is funding for the subsidy. It will be up to the locality where the family lives and not the county of origin of the child as to if they will allow the Custody Assistance subsidy for the family. Training for Custody Assistance is planned to begin in July 2012. Virginia is considering applying for a IV-E waiver. The waiver would allow for creative use of IV-E money. There is a workgroup meeting scheduled for May 7<sup>th</sup> 2012 to begin the discussion about what avenues Virginia wants to pursue with a waiver. Please contact Alex Kamberis for more information ([alex.kamberis@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:alex.kamberis@dss.virginia.gov)).

Vernon Simmons reviewed the changes that have occurred over the past few months concerning the delivery of training. As part of the Transformation and included in the CFSR PIP, reengineering the training system became a priority for the division of family services. Training planning and other activities have come "in house" within VDSS and there is no longer a contract with VCU/VISSTA. The training unit is housed under VDSS Organizational Development and Vicky Murphy has been hired as the training manager. Vernon Simmons continues to be the DFS training manager and there are now curriculum developers that are dedicated to family services and adult services courses. Also, there are now regional training centers instead of area training centers. There are several action steps in the CFSR PIP that will be coming due in the last two quarters. Those activities include incorporating the

Supervisor and Child Welfare Competencies into curriculum, providing ongoing training for both supervisors and case workers, conducting needs assessments, and enhancing the evaluation process.

Mr. Ledden asked those in the room to share information with the group. Highlights include:

- Statewide CASA conference November 2 – 3, 2012 in Roanoke (Melissa O’Neill, DCJS)
- CSA conference June 5-6, 2012 (Carol Wilson, OCS)
- CIP is offering a free training for attorneys representing parents on May 8, 2012. (Lelia Hopper, OES/CIP)
  - Three regional dates for repeat of training: June 7, 15, 19
- Fairfax Co. DSS was selected by the Annie E. Casey group to participate in the Agents of Change program. It is one of only two localities nationwide that was selected.
- Va Poverty Law Center, FACES, and Voices for Virginia’s Children are partnering to hold a conference on child welfare and housing. (Christy Marra, Poverty Law Center)
  - The conference will include a panel discussion, keynote speaker, and three breakout session on how to improve housing opportunities

Jack Ledden concluded the meeting at 1:00. The next meeting will be held on May 18, 2012.