

CWAC – November 13, 2015

Present: Carl Ayers, Tania White, Em Parente, Deborah Eves, Mandy Meeks, Ericca Facetti, Abigail Schreiner, Lori Battin, Katherine Lawson, Chauncey Strong, Latanya Hairston, Traci Jones, Bragail Williams-Brown, Robin Ely, Jennifer Jones, Melissa O’Neill, Phyl Parrish, Heather Davis, Rick Verilla, Rebecca Morgan, Laura Polk, Carey Natoli, Sandra Slappey, Amy Rice, Christie Marra, Cathy Pemberton, Carol Wilson, Tamara Temoney, Heather Davis, Denise Dickerson, Tiffany Gardner, John Daugherty, Amy Atkinson, Patience O’Brien

Carl Ayers, Director for the Division of Family Services, opened the meeting and the group provided self-introductions. After a review of the agenda Laura Polk, Program Manager for Quality Assurance and Accountability, reminded the group of the **Child and Family Service Review (CFSR)**. This federal review is a way to monitor states compliance with safety, permanency, and well-being measures. Virginia will participate in the third round of CFSR review in 2017. Beginning in 2016, Virginia will begin using the on-site review instrument for the CFSR as the official case review system for child welfare. Each local department will be reviewed in preparation for the federal review. Ms. Polk brought several questions to the group for feedback.

The first question presented to the group concerns recruiting community partners to help conduct the case reviews. The Children’s Bureau, for past reviews, has required states to train community partners in addition to local and state department staff to participate in the review. Because Virginia is considering conducting its own review, instead of the one-week intensive review of the past rounds, the training and recruitment would fall to the state. Ms. Polk asked if local departments would be able to recruit two community partners that could participate in the reviews. General consensus is that local departments could recruit community partners to participate in a review however they would not be able to participate for a full week. Suggestions from the group included:

- Find a way to show community partners “what would be in it for them”.
 - Possibly offer continuing education credit
 - Frame this as an opportunity for professional development
- Frame the request as “it’s all our work” highlighting the opportunity to work with kids and families.
- Contact other states that have already participated in the federal review to see how they recruited and trained community partners.
- Request the Children’s Cabinet and State Executive Council to encourage participation across state departments
- Consider exploring ways to connect quality assurance committees at the state level and utilizing the expertise of these committees.

The second question presented to the group concerns cross jurisdictional issues. The example presented to the group involved a case that began with one local department but subsequently transferred to another department. The child protective work took place with the first department but the foster care case is currently open in the second department. The review notes that the child

protective work was not done in a timely or appropriate manner but when the report is written, there currently isn't a way to indicate that the current department was not responsible for the deficient work. Ms. Polk's question is how should this issue be handled and should a case that transferred from one locality to another be included in the reviews in 2016. The feedback from the group was clear that these cases should be reviewed and the information on deficient cases should also be shared with the department that did not do a good job. Also, it is the state's responsibility to review the results and ensure that guidance and training are up to date and correct so that localities have resources to correct issues.

The final area of discussion for the CFSR concerns the report that localities will receive after a review. All CFSR reports will be posted so the information will be available to other local departments. Final reports from past reviews have been heavily strengths based with areas needing improvement not as detailed. A suggestion from the group was to include a chart of strengths but a more extensive narrative on areas needing improvement. Ms. Polk indicated that the report will include links to foster care and child protective services guidance to back up the findings.

Ms. Polk reminded the group that the federal Title IV-E review will be held the week of August 15, 2016 and the state staff is currently working hard on conducting new case validations and on-going reviews. If Virginia does not pass the review in 2016, a Program Improvement Plan will be required. Title IV-E reviews are held every three years. After the 2016 review, some of the IV-E reviewers may be transitioned over to help with the CFSR review in 2017. Ms. Polk informed the group that the team is considering conducting off site reviews for certain localities. Local departments that have less than a certain number of new cases validations within a certain timeframe may be asked to send the information to the reviewer. Each on going case will still be reviewed so reviewers will still be in local departments.

Mr. Ayers requested that each sub-committee report on activities conducted since the last CWAC meeting. There was not a report from the CPS sub-committee.

Rebecca Morgan spoke for the **prevention sub-committee**. Ms. Morgan reported the sub-committee met in October and reviewed the survey that was sent to directors on prevention activities. There were 38 responses and the major barrier to providing prevention services is funding. PSSF is the most common source of funds and home based interventions are the most common activities provided. It was also confirmed that there are some local departments that are not doing any prevention activities. The information from this survey will be sent to CWAC members. The prevention sub-committee will begin working with the continuous quality improvement (CQI) sub-committee to determine what data they could be collecting. The sub-committee will meet again in January.

Abigail Schreiner reported out for the **permanency sub-committee**. Ms. Schreiner reported that the sub-committee met after the last CWAC meeting and decided on three priority areas for discussion. They are barriers to adoption, implementation of requirements related to Sex Trafficking and the

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard, and fostering futures. This sub-committee is scheduled to meet after each CWAC meeting.

Sandi Slappey spoke for the **CQI sub-committee**. Ms. Slappey reported they have been meeting through conference calls. The group is still trying to determine the role of the sub-committee and how it can best be used to continue the goals of the Three Branch Initiative. The sub-committee could help generate research questions for the other sub-committees. It could plan implementation of monitoring or plan to evaluate effectiveness. The sub-committee decided on areas of interest including: permanency: who and where are children getting “stuck” in the system, kinship as diversion, mental health, and trauma informed care. The sub-committee will have another call on December 2.

Mr. Ayers asked the group if there are any actions that need to take place to support the sub-committees. The response was a request for guidance to focus their work. Each sub-committee is dedicated to continuing the work of the Three Branch Initiative and would like to provide helpful feedback and information to the full committee. Mr. Ayers confirmed that request and reminded the group that the family services program managers and other staff are part of the sub-committees and have been tasked with keeping the groups on the right track.

Mr. Ayers provided a summary of activities from this year as well as a look forward to 2016. The **Learning Collaboratives and Practice Profiles** have been a major focus this year. They were born out of the Three Branch Initiative and the need to move forward towards improving well-being for children and families. The Practice Profiles will be used as a guide to quality practice and interactions across 11 domains. With implementation of the Practice Profiles, workers will be encouraged to move away from supervision and move towards coaching. There is an expectation that the state will provide training and a requirement that supervisors be trained. There is a specific transfer of learning process that will occur over multiple meetings. Mr. Ayers stated that he expected the roll out of the Practice Profiles and coaching to take two years with approximately 50 localities trained in 2016 and another 50 trained in 2017. There were two questions from the group.

Q: Will the training replace the mandatory training that is already in place?

A: No. The mandated trainings will remain. Some of the coaching can be added into current training.

Q: Will the Practice Profiles be included in guidance?

A: Yes.

Mr. Ayers posed a question to the group when talking about permanency. He asked the group if children are better off as legal orphans or keeping them with less than perfect families. There has been a national conversation talking about differences between child welfare systems and child protection systems. There have been discussions at the federal level of potentially broadening Title IV-E funding to include prevention activities. There is a choice between the systems and Virginia will need to figure out how practice will reflect that choice within allowable laws and funding.

Mr. Ayers discussed the **divisional priorities for 2016**. Those priorities include:

- 1) Fostering Futures (including an expansion of foster care services to youth up to age 21);

(The Fostering Futures report to the General Assembly can be accessed here:

<http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/4d54200d7e28716385256ec1004f3130/14134f58efe0061385257e430063c26d?OpenDocument>)

- 2) Permanency – adoption barriers including use of AREVA/AdoptUSKids, adoption contracts, and the home study process;
- 3) Interstate Compact – examining why Virginia sends fewer children out of state for placement than we take in and working with the new case management system;
- 4) Sex Trafficking – changing the definition of abuse and neglect to include children and youth that are victims of trafficking;
- 5) Prevention – examining use of PSSF funds
- 6) Indian Child Welfare Act – ensuring we are asking families about their tribal status and working with Virginia’s federally recognized tribe;
- 7) OASIS replacement – work towards a replacement system including securing funding and development of that system

The meeting concluded at 1:00 pm. The schedule of CWAC meetings for 2016 will be:

February 19

April 15

June 17

August 19

October 21

December 16

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced to the group as they are made.