

State Advisory Council Minutes

Monday, January 5, 2015

Members in attendance: Elisabeth Cannata, Claudia Carbonari, M.D., Jacquelyn Farrell, Donna Grant, Deb Kelleher, Patricia Lorenson, Regina Moller (via conference call)

Also in Attendance: Irma Camacho, Susan Smith

Members Absent: Janice Andersen, Erica Kesselman, M.D., Regina Roundtree, Susan Sherrick,

Welcome & Introductions

Patricia Lorenson

Meeting was called to order at 9:30a.m.

All in attendance introduced themselves.

SAC Minutes

Discussion was carried regarding a quorum to accept the minutes presented. Six members are present and meet the requirement.

Donna Grant moved to accept the April 7, 2014 minutes as presented, seconded by Dr. Carbonari. Motion carried with one abstention (Deb Keller).

Donna Grant moved to accept May 5, 2014 minutes as presented, seconded by Jacquelyn Farrell. Motion carried with two abstentions (Claudia Carbonari, M.D. and Deb Keller).

Donna Grant moved to accept the minutes of June 2, 2014 as presented, seconded Dr. Carbonari. Motions carried with two abstentions (Deb Keller and Jacquelyn Farrell).

Jacquelyn Farrell moved to accept the July 7, 2014 minutes as presented, seconded by Dr. Carbonari. Motion carried with two abstentions (Donna Grant and Deb Keller).

Deb Keller moved to accept the October 6, 2014 minutes as presented, seconded by Dr. Carbonari. Motion moved with two abstentions (Donna Grant and Jacquelyn Farrell).

Deb Keller moved to accept the November 3, 2014 minutes as presented, seconded by Jacquelyn Farrell. Motion carried with two abstentions (Donna Grant & Elisabeth Cannata).

The minutes will be posted on the DCF website.

RAC & Community Update

Deb Keller - Region 5, the recommendations cannot be submitted to SAC because the meeting was cancelled and approvals have not been granted.

Donna Grant- Region 3, last met in November and a RAC meeting is scheduled for the coming Thursday, January 8. Speakers have been presenting at the RAC meetings focused on specific topics. We are looking at ways that other agencies agendas are connected with the work we are doing that is DCF focused. They include Dr. Stephen Tracy, Office of Early Childhood, and this month, Erica Bromley from CT Youth Services Association is scheduled to present on the new DCF grant in Region 3 that is supporting juvenile review boards, DCF priority on JJ and how that funding- filtered through the State Youth Service Association to community boards need to connect the provider networks in those communities to enhance services JJ for kids with the hope to prevent entry into DCF. From a RAC perspective we are looking at how the providers that are a part of that group are connected to services to promote family stabilization throughout the region and more from a prevention perspective. Discussions continue about how to keep families out of the department instead of working with them after they have entered the department. Membership is another priority for discussion in January

-Clarification requested about juvenile review boards and funding.

There are 21 boards but are not funded with any state dollars. Several are funded through the youth service bureaus and the dollars that come through the department of education for a minimal infrastructure but there is no service dollars.

It has been very difficult for agencies lacking the YSB designation to see a child in the juvenile unable to help them. Lacking the YSB designation also means they don't have those education dollars. Some town halls have picked this up because they have a resident state trooper and feel it is a priority but without dollars connected to this community process. These dollars coming through DCF were an effort to bring services, specifically case management and individual services to youth and families at the recommendations of the JRB board to intervene with kids to right their path before extensive department involvement. The CT Youth Services Association was the awarded grantee of about \$200 thousand, are overseeing those dollars and distributing them throughout the twenty one JRBs in Region 3. There were three regions that received these grants and expects it to be a discussion point departmentally to see if an investment there is worth funding to make dollars available to other regions too.

The RAC is also revisiting a mission they started to pilot. The RAC Education sub-committee has worked to implement an out posting in the Putnam community. Dr. Tracy has been very involved, and is working with the superintendent to create a different way for the DCF worker to be in a school district. Allon Kalisher has worked to change the case load of this worker so it is community centric. What is being done now is that she has had half a school year to function in the district with a community centric case load. We will conduct a review of the data to see if the worker has been involved in cases that have

ultimately kept them from department involvement because of the support they received. The sub-committee will be looking to determine if this out-posting philosophy would make sense in other places.

Ms. Cannata asked how the sources and referral process works. How do families get identified, are they self-identified, do teachers identify them. By referral she means whether a family would actually speak with a DCF worker although this sounds like it is faculty. Also noted that from a systems perspective, it would be advantageous if those families would go through the FAR route to have access to community response for families. CSF Team if underutilized may be a way to get referrals to them without going to the care line.

Donna Grant responded that what has happened is a tremendous bolstering of the relationship between the school district and the department because now the worker is in the school and is one of them. A lot of conversation occurs between school personnel and the DCF worker that pre-empts a referral. What they are trying to figure out is how many of those referrals would have been substantiated. She thinks there have been several. This method has reached these families prior to the call to the hotline because DCF has a presence in the community. The worker serves as a buffer for those school teachers uncomfortable with being a mandated reporter that holds them back from picking up the phone. They now have someone to go to explain the situation—consider options. The worker in turn has the ability to problem solve with the teachers and ultimately the family prior to the phone call. She does not know about family self-referral through this process and does not know if the worker has been there long enough for us to see if that is something that can happen but does know it has made a marked change in relationship with the school district which is the first step to success. With regard to inclusion of the CFS Team it would be awesome to not be stigmatized by that phone call to get those services in place.

Jaquelyn Farrell- Region 2-RAC met in December and the focus has been on family representation on RAC, foster care, and kinship care.

Irma Camacho-Region 1, was not present at the last meeting but it was Maria Brereton's last meeting after thirty one years of service and introduced the new Regional Director for Region 1, Ken Cabral.

Pat Lorenson also reported that Maria will join the SACWIS project as the project lead utilizing her child welfare background to help.

Region 1 RAC are interested and requested the SAC results of the retreat. (*SAC Retreat Theme Clusters 9.12.14* document was reviewed-attached to minutes) Pat Lorenson plans to include this in her report of her eight months as chair in order for SAC to move forward in a way they want to proceed.

Elisabeth Cannata-Region 6, met in December and continued to work on the sub-committee brainstorming tasks of expanding recruitment of adolescent families for foster care and DCF messaging/imaging in the community. In addition, while they still have great family attendance at the meeting, some of the voting members that were selected and appointed in September have not been coming with consistency. If they follow the legislative structure of three consecutive non-attendance, there would be many who would no longer be eligible voting members. Because the first Thursday was New Year's Day, no meeting will be held in January. A sub group will meet to consider new recommendations to replace voting members (but does not include family members), perhaps expanding family member representation. Their youth also have not been able to attend consistently. The focus will be to revive membership.

Great synergy between the CONNECT grant, the family work in that domain and the RAC. The membership of both organized an event for the CONNECT grant in New Britain, Region 6, which was a Fatherhood celebration and brought together the community at CCSC to talk about what is needed to improve the system with emphasis on father perspective. A panel of fathers talked about their experiences with the system identifying the gaps, where things worked and where they could be improved. The timing of the funds availability determined that it be held in December.

Susan Smith addressed questions regarding the initiative and stated that there continues to be ongoing work on fatherhood related initiatives. The intent is to integrate it throughout the work of the department rather than it be standalone.

It was recommended that the RACs should pursue the topic around fatherhood issues to get a better sense of how the department wide integration of the fatherhood initiative was translated down.

Deb Kelleher- Region 5: reported they continue to meet around the Fatherhood Initiative and held a statewide event in September with a 5K race that was well attended. Expressed some surprise to learn of a directive not to meet from one and half years ago because they have met monthly over the past year and still maintain the Facebook page.

Susan Smith indicated that as part of leadership activities, some folks have chosen this topic as a project.

DCF Updates

Susan Smith

It is status quo since our presentation at the last meeting in December. Deputy Commissioner Muñoz and Kristina Stevens reported about some of the activities the department is working on for the coming year related to legislation 13-178, updates related to the budget, and some operational strategies. In terms of the budget nothing has changed since December. As SAC is aware there had been some rescissions that we were absorbing so there is no change related to that. Regarding budget options, we have not heard back on any of those. There were some cuts in some programs in the community but we were able to absorb very small amount to offset it. It has not really impacted the programs as we were able to cover most everything. The real focus is with the operational strategies which were reviewed at the last meeting. There are five core strategies and a variety of measures underneath those related to racial justice, Juan F measures, APPLA adolescents, administrative assistance types of

updates in order to move forward the initiative that the commissioner has articulated in the past four or so years. We are in the process of developing some operational strategies as to how we will meet some of these objectives.

Ms. Smith reviewed the 2015 Performance Expectations that were presented at the December meeting noting that everyone is moving forward in the five areas, along with the sub-titled topics underneath. (*Attachment 1 to the minutes*) The regions have already submitted their strategies which are being reviewed by the department.

The reason behavioral health is not specifically stated in the strategies is because when reference is made to Outcome Measure 3 (case planning) and 15 (meeting the child's needs-physical & mental health) it is inherent to these measures. Rather than compartmentalize mental health, it is included in all five core strategies. The same holds true for the racial justice piece.

All the RACs will receive a copy of the 2015 Performance Expectations when they are finalized.

There are no changes to the organization chart since December.

SAC Membership

Patricia Lorenson

Reviewed the *SAC membership Issues* document in detail (*Attachment 2 to minutes*).

Briefly updated the members on her communications with the Governor's Boards and Commissions office and Attorney Michael who handles the department's legal issues.

On December 31, a conference call was held with Susan and Josh. Four main areas of concern were identified; namely, number and categories of SAC members, Governor's appointment process, legislation requirement on "income," and recruitment of SAC members. To date no solution, although Josh was going to contact them to address these.

Ms. Lorenson is asking for SAC input and for ways to move forward and handle some of these items.

Attorney Michael recommended not increasing the numbers because the group would be too large and the more restrictive that would make it harder to find candidates. However since this group wants to diversify the base to assure consumer representation and adding a pediatrician and an educator, it may be difficult to hold to a smaller number on SAC.

Regarding the appointment process and the cumbersome Background Information Questionnaire, Attorney Michael clarified that this process is not exclusive to this SAC and is the vetting process used by the Governor's office. With regard to the RAC members, it is understood that each RAC have their own vetting process and that all appointees to SAC are viewed as a public officials. Ms. Lorenson questions the public official designation for this body since it does not apply to advisory boards in the Ethics legislation. Was this form arbitrarily extended from being used to hire appointed members of the administration or those with authority to make budget decisions to also include the Boards and Commissions? A clarification is still needed. Discussions were carried regarding the questionnaire and the barrier it poses to obtaining the consumer voice at this table. It was noted that numerous discussions have been carried about meeting the tenets of the legislation around membership but until the process of membership and the requirement of membership come into alignment it will not have the consumer voice we are looking for. Past discussions on this topic have also led to several considerations from amending the legislation to include the Commissioner in the vetting process or to have the additional members appointed through the RACs. The best way to address the vetting portion or concern may be increasing RAC membership appointments.

Region 3 addressed participation and obtaining parent voice at the RAC by creating the RAC/FAB (Family Advisory Board). The FAB meets on Saturdays when families can meet, in a place that is conducive to families and child-care and then a rep from that group attends the RAC. They now have authentic parent voice in a process that is not built and designed around inclusion of parent voice.

SAC needs both community and parent voice but both cannot be accommodated by the one process we have.

Although SAC is considering the legislative changes to facilitate membership and recruitment, the question is what is the urgency? It seems that the voice of SAC has shifted. An example is the public act community meetings where feedback from multiple stakeholders on multiple issues were heard. The urgency that might have come through SAC was addressed at those meetings. Is it that there is no urgency for SAC because there are other forums where this is happening.

In the course of our regional update reports, does SAC miss the opportunity that there may be a solution in one region that the other are unaware of. An example that was brought up this morning is the community support for families a venue that helps keep families out of DCF involvement, yet it is not tied into the schools. Another is the whole issue of IRBs that the Child Youth and Family Support Center (a CSSD funded program) is targeting all of the FWSN kids to keep them out of court involvement. We should be assuring that there is no duplication of two different groups working on the same problem.

Is part of the lethargy SAC is experiencing an indication that it is living beyond its need and a result that the regions are now working cohesively in community, between CONNECT and LIST and the systems of care, and the RAC meetings. For a while a lot of the RACs were floundering but are now robust which may negate people's sense of urgency to bring matters to SAC.

The responsibility of SAC recruitment was discussed. Is it SAC, the RAC or DCF? Since SAC wants statewide representation and people willing to put their voice forward, can the department put a request out to the DCF area directors to identify some key constituents in their areas who are interested in participating in this kind of forum to lend their voice to a larger conversation-whether they be involved parents or providers. The area directors across the state know their areas and who the "movers and shakers" are. Once identified, that the area directors help them with the process.

Shifting SAC focus to identify the mission, priorities and projects that will be covered is crucial. Immediate topics could be the CFSR coming up, operational strategies, and creating a SAC schedule to outline what SAC wants to accomplish at each meeting, and to schedule presentations.

Change the structure of the SAC meetings to be held quarterly in different parts of the state since SAC is a statewide appointed commission. Have a standing agenda to include giving the RAC a chance to share their work, set aside a portion of the meeting for public forum, a case presentation, and a presentation from whatever strategy or initiative is the focus of the central office at the time. In addition the meeting structure should also take into account the Citizen Review Panel requirements.

Donna Grant asked for an additional topic to be added as a standing item on the SAC agenda. A state level conversation to discuss a high profile case of that current month. Without breaching confidentiality, the purpose would be to identify the process by which that case was involved, where that case touched the community and where we can improve whatever resulted as the breakdown. The beneficial value of this case review discussion would be to weigh in and recommend process improvement. This would provide some congruency as to the role of SAC as an advisory council instead of our focus on process all the time. She offered an example of how a breakdown was handled at the regional level. Ms. Grant noted that Region 3 has been successful in working with the community on issues such as child fatalities that led to the Regional Administrator meeting with local hospitals. This resulted in profound hospital process changes. It didn't need to get to the SAC level. It got to the community and they had a chance to weigh in. They were invited and well respected in advising that process that has led to some great changes at many of the hospitals in the region.

Election of SAC co-chair

She had hoped that elections could be done at this meeting but lacking a quorum it is not possible. In addition, the co-chairs for election must be identified. Patricia Lorenson recommends that the membership consider having co-chairs for SAC leadership. It would offer a lot of support in the sharing of leadership.

Regina Moller applied for consideration as SAC co-chair. Ms. Lorenson will send out an email to the membership asking for a second person to join the new leadership team as co-chair and that we hold an election in February and proceed from there. A transition period to obtain a co-chair is not possible.

It was noted by members that the co-chair request has been open and have only had one application.

They recognized the challenges of time commitment, the decreased number of members and the focus of this body as impediments.

The purpose of the February SAC meeting will be to plan a yearly calendar and create a standing agenda. The calendar would also reflect compliance with CRP legislation on meeting requirements. The use of technology and webinar (a web base broadcast) to expand participation at future meetings will also be discussed.

The SAC priorities mentioned in the *Theme Clusters from SAC Retreat 9/12/14 (Attachment 3 to the minutes)* will be sent out by Pat Lorenson with a cover memo to all SAC and RAC chairs. Some of the issues around communications and accountability is being address by SAC's proposed restructure.

Ms. Kelleher moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting ended at 11:30a.