

## **Region 3 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

November 7, 2013 - 9:00am-12:00pm

**In Attendance:** Dianne, Breton, April Brenker, Justin Carbonella, Mia DiMarco, Terri DiPietro, Ashlyn Ellsworth, Chris Gardner, Nancy Gentes, Ann Grabowski, Trinice Holden, Jon Jacaruso, James Jutras, Allon Kalisher, Eileen Lader, Andrew Lavallee, Matthew LeMaster, Tim Marshall, Bill Martin, Regina Moller, Jennifer Nadeau, Kyle Parkinson, Sean Rose, Susan Rumanoff, Lisa Sedlock-Reider, Wendy Rein, Laureen Sheehan, Jennifer Shimer, Sarah Skinner, Ronnie Zoback

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Allon Kalisher

### **Review of Minutes**

09/05/13 minutes approved without change.

### **DCF Update**

#### **Region 3 Dashboard and RBA Report Cards**

April reviewed the RBA Report Card for the quarter that ended September 30, 2013.

April discussed the considered removal meeting process. Each office has a facilitator that oversees these meetings. They are just starting to look at statistics to see trends and outcomes. This is information recorded at the conclusion of these meetings. This quarter for two of the offices there was an increase of children remaining with the parents after a considered removal meeting. The other trend that has continued is that region three is holding more meetings than any other office in the state. They are still looking at entries into foster care and why they are not entering into kinship care.

A new firewall process has begun in Middletown that will be duplicated in the other two offices. The purpose is to ensure that all attempts to place with kin have been exhausted prior to seeking foster care.

April reviewed the "Region 3 OM3 SharePoint Results" and also reviewed the dashboard for the region.

Laureen addressed the kids in congregate care. The number of kids in congregate care has dramatically decreased. Numbers have increased for kids returning to Connecticut that have been in out-of-state congregate care placements, we were at 18 and are now at 4. The hope is that within 18 months all kids that are currently out-of-state care will be returned to Connecticut. need to ensure that the proper work is done with the families

Allon reviewed the "2013 Program Report Card: DCF Region 3 Case Planning".

Jon described the new setup of FASU there will be specific assigned staff to work with Core families (adoption) and specific assigned staff to support kinship placements. Jon also discussed the firewall which is the new process to make sure that all efforts were made to place a child with family. FASU will be stepping in and partnering to make sure all of these efforts have been made.

### **Leadership Changes**

Allon discussed his and Dianne's efforts to make some changes in the region, in particular was Dianne and Kyle switching offices to best utilize their strengths. Due to Dianne's decision to retire effective 02/01/14, they will both remain in their current offices. Kyle will spearhead on intake practice and Dianne on community systems

There have been some recent moves in order to create flexibility for people to move around the system by eliminating the Office Director positions. Current Office Directors will become Program Managers. This will provide opportunity for career development. As many as 20 people have already switched jobs.

Donna commended Allon for making tough changes and expressed her regrets at losing Dianne in the region.

### **SOC Systems of Care Planning and Expansion Grant - CONNECT (Connecticut Network of Care Transformation Initiative)**

The CONNECT grant is similar to Kid Care and although certain components were never implemented it did cause one of the biggest explosions of in home care in the country. Commissioner Katz participated on The Three Branch initiative which Annie E. Casey funds. Nine states were invited to participate in the initiative to improve child wellbeing. The focus is kids in the child welfare system but there is a set mandate to be broader than just those children. The Three Branch Initiative comes with lots of technical assistance. The public act comes with none, the grant is just under \$400,000.00 however there is potential for a lot more money for infrastructure. Tim reviewed the infrastructure that the grant will fund. A Steering Team will be created with at least 40 members which is family driven, there must be at least a 50% participation of family and youth, there has already been interest by 40-50 people. The remaining 20 positions will be strategically chosen to consist of middle managers have and include people with backgrounds in behavioral health, child welfare, early childhood, substance abuse, juvenile justice and education. Each Commissioner of each of these departments mentioned submitted letters of support for this grant.

Donna "former RAC" on page two of Tim's chart. Tim said no decisions have been made and will not be made centrally; all decisions will be made on a local level. Tim reviewed change of vocabulary, ideas for system integration, regional transitions and local transitions.

There is additional money for each region to use as incentive for parents to attend RAC meetings. These dollars can also be used for childcare.

Donna advocated for this group to be at the table from the beginning.

### **Chair Report**

Co-Chairs

Donna spoke about the Collective Impact article.

### **RAC Membership - Discuss current membership. Identify vacancies and appropriate candidates to fill them. Discuss "Friends of the RAC" and their role at regular meetings.**

Donna discussed holes in representation and would like some recommendations from the group by the next meetings. Please forward those recommendations via e-mail to Donna.

Allon suggested appealing to co-chairs of other groups for nominations.

Terri suggested really looking at the right people or groups to go after to assist in obtaining certain goals that the RAC would like to achieve and endorse them.

Allon gave suggestions on how providers may want to pursue grant funding opportunities.

Donna thinks this could be the forum to discuss the service delivery system. Maybe bring providers together to see how they could work together to provide services.

### **Gas Card Update**

There are currently 14 available. Jon asked if there is opportunity to expand the use of the gas cards. It was decided that this conversation would be on the next agenda to discuss.

## **Other Updates (as needed)**

### **Area Advisory Councils**

Nancy Gentes commented that the Human Trafficking presentation by Bill Rivera was very Informative.

### **SOC Collaboratives**

Middletown is discussing disproportionality and will be hosting the Color of Justice Screening. They are also looking at elementary truancy as a red flag for future struggles. Justin Carbonella said that they are working on building better bridges in the community between parents and community organizations and providers to create a table that is engaging and empowering.

The Middletown Area Advisory council will have DSS at their next meeting. They have had a training on human trafficking.

### **NEAC**

They will continue to access provider groups as well as consumer groups to gain insight on what isn't working. They are reaching out to youth advisory boards and have a presence there to get some of their thinking. They are involved with legislation that affects the region and are also looking to enhance their membership.

## **RAC Workgroups**

### **Family Systems workgroup**

Are reviewing the foster care template with the group in detail. At some point they want the chairs of the other committees to attend a Family Advisory Board Meeting.

### **Education Workgroup**

The group has identified a local project in the Putnam area for out-posting a social worker who will be integrated in the school community and not just doing DCF work but also school trouble shooting for intervention so a DCF referral can be diverted. They will

also work on some community building with meetings with DCF leadership and the board of education. Norwich and Colchester also has out posted workers.

Justin asked about the ability to Skype for some meetings where getting everyone at the same location is difficult. Kyle announced that he will shortly have that ability, Norwich and Willimantic already have it. Allon encouraged the group to make a formal statement to central office to enhance our regions IT capabilities. A motion was made and accepted to request funding to Region 3 to facilitate RAC member participation in various DCF meetings throughout the region via remote access. A vote was taken, and passed, all were in favor. A formal letter will be drafted by Donna and presented to the group. The next workgroup meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2013 at the Willimantic office. The meeting will begin at 1:00.

### **Adolescent Work group**

Chris reported that Ann Grabowski took their vacant co-chair position. The group is continuing to work on the RBA process and how to measure successful transitions into the community from DCF care. They will also develop a survey. They would then look at the case again in six months and give another survey after transition to see where the kid is at. They are also looking at how to help kids that have left care and are struggling, and how to not just help kids that have a case open with the department. It was also suggested that Chris connect with Tammy Sneed as well. Jon suggested that Chris Gardner talk to Sara Gibson who might be capturing some of this data.

### **Early Childhood**

The group has completed their directory and would like feedback from the group. The will begin meeting with staff and put the directory on the website. The group will meet again on December 3, 2013.

### **RAC FAB-Regional Advisory Council Family Advisory Board**

They began reviewing the RBA templates from the 4 sub-committees at their September meeting. Alana was able to review the Foster Care template with the group in detail, due to being a part of the committee. At some point, the FAB would like the chairs of the other committees to consider attending a FAB meeting in the near future to explain their templates.

In November, Dawn Johnson from the CT SIM Team will be facilitating a conversation regarding the progress on the SIM initiative and gather feedback on the recently released State Health Innovation Plan(SHIP).

### **SAC Update-State Advisory Council**

The SAC will be continuing to function as the 3rd Citizen Review Panel. The meeting schedule has been finalized, the next SAC meeting will be the first Monday in January, at 9am. A statewide retreat will be held in the late spring.

There will be another round of funding available to the RAC's. The FAB co-chairs would like to consider purchasing additional gas cards and to utilize some of the funding for the childcare provider and supplies

such as paper goods, etc. When the applications for the funding are available, they will be completed and forwarded to the RAC for approval.

At the October meeting, there was a presentation about the new Girl's Unit at Solnit. There was also a legislative update.

### **Co-chair Report**

There are 14 gas cards available. An annual report is in the process of being completed and will be submitted to the RAC members at the next meeting.

### **Providers**

The Noank group home is restructuring and will have a new name as well as a change in services.

### **TEEG**

Donna announced that the Northern Quiet Corner JRB is growing rapidly. They have referrals from Putnam Police and troop D. An RFI went out over the summer. No funding offer has come from this effort. It is difficult to maintain this resource with no source of funding to cover case management costs. Allon asked for data funding sources for the JRB's. Justin said that he can help to get that info.

### **CHR**

CHR has been awarded an adolescent substance abuse treatment grant for region 3. They will have a supervisor and 3 therapists, locations will be Middletown, Willimantic and Norwich. This will be an office based 13 week program which will hopefully go live in early December. Each therapist will have 12 cases for the whole region.

### **JRI**

Mia introduced Sean as their new employee.

### **AHM**

Donna announced that there are 6 tickets left for the AHM fundraiser