

**Child Welfare Advisory Committee
June 22, 2009**

Call to Order

Jerry Foxhoven called the meeting to order at 10:03 am

Committee Members Present

Jerry Foxhoven
George Estle
George Belitsos
Miriam Landsman on phone
Jean McAleer
Nancy Magnall
Richard Moore
Kathleen Penkert
Ronald Stehl
David Van Ningen
Mary Nelson
Rep. Charles Isenhardt
Sen. Amanda Ragan

Committee Members Not Present

Matthew McDowell
Tiffany Wilson
Sen. James Seymour
Randall Peters
Charles Krogmeier
Rep. Renee Schulte

Guests

Kristie Oliver
Molly Kottmeyer
Tom Lazio
Jan Clausen

Approval of Minutes

Dick Moore moved to approve the minutes, Jean McAleer seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

DHS Update (Administrator's Report)

Mary Nelson provided an update from DHS. The written report is available on the Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC) webpage. One of the topics she talked about is the Parent Partners. Mary Nelson mentioned the 3rd annual family reunification picnic, it was held on Saturday June 20th. It is put on with the Parent Partners and the Middleton Clinic. It is families that have had children in foster care and have gotten there lives back together and have gotten there children back in the home come together for this picnic.

Mary also touched on the Education and Foster Care Collaboration and the Foster Aunt and Uncle project. The latter would serve 500 children. These will be children in residential care and possibly children in foster homes. This project takes children that are having problems with reading and arranges for them to have access to tutoring.

One item that is not on the report is that the official CFSR preparation has begun, and we are working on the items to prepare us for when they arrive in Iowa for our review in August of 2010.

Mental Health Institute (MHI) Report/Discussion

Mary said the Department would submit a report related to closing 1 of the MHI's in Iowa. The bill also requires that the Governor appoint a task force to do an in depth review of the MHI's. The task force will also be holding public meetings for input from the public.

Both reports are due to the Legislature by December 15th. Cherokee and Independence both have children's programs. Dick Moore asked if there was a report that would answer some of the following questions such as how many beds and what are the ages of the children, and who are they, where do they come from, etc. Mary will post the link from the budget book for the MHI's that has much of this information. Kathleen Penkert said she believed that there was a substance abuse program at Cherokee and she wanted to know what the length of stay was for the children and she asked if Mary could find out these answers for the group, on the questions asked above. Moore expressed his concern that the members of the task force may not be knowledgeable about foster care children. Mary stated that the CWAC as a whole might want to make a presentation to the task force stressing their concern for the foster children that might need the services in a MHI.

DHS Budget Presentation

Jan Clausen gave a presentation on the budget. She reviewed a hand out (it is on the web).

Jan said that things are looking up with the economy, however the latest unemployment figures have gone up for Iowa.

Jan said since the stimulus dollars will go away after the first quarter in 2011, DHS would need more state general funds than we have in 2010 in order to maintain current services, and all stimulus dollars will be gone in 2012. There was a lot of discussion of the budget. CWAC members discussed various aspects of the overall SFY2011 budget for DHS and the state.

CFS Budget Breakdown

Mary talked about the Child and Family Services budget for year 2009. She handed out a hand out (it is on the web). The hand out is for 2009, but the CF&S budget for 2010 will not look significantly different, because of the federal stimulus finds that were used to offset state reductions. There was a question on what was included in transition services. Mary will find out what the figures are for transition services and share with CWAC members.

Broad Discussion of the Child Welfare Budget

The group had a broad discussion of the Child Welfare Budget. There was discussion on the county boundaries/service areas of DHS, Mental Health, and Judicial, etc. Ron Stehl suggested consideration be given to restructuring the various department geographic boundaries to make it easier to coordinate services to children and families.

George B moved that the committee present to the Human Service Council on July 8th 2009. Some of the topics that were discussed that they want Jerry to bring to the meeting are as follows:

1. Restructuring regions and the reasons why.
2. Avoid across-the-board cuts in programs.
3. Programs that have good out comes should have priority in funding.
4. Transparency & accountability.
5. Permanency planning.

Motion seconded by David, voted on, unanimously approved.

Adoption Subsidy in Iowa

Adoption subsidy was discussed separately because adoption subsidy is a large portion of the DHS budget.

The department sees 1000 adoptions a year and 90% of them receive adoption subsidy. The subsidy budget grows every year because children are adopted at an earlier age so they are covered for a longer time. Without the subsidy some children would not be adopted.

George B moved for the group to suggest to DHS to take more steps to promote the option of a future needs agreement, vs. a monthly subsidy payment. There was no second to this motion, and the motion failed.

Emergency Services in Iowa

Jean McLeer talked about Emergency Services and recommended members read the child welfare emergency services report (on the web). One point that Jean wanted to

make was that emergency services is not about the number of beds, it is about services covered.

Committee members discussed the target population for child welfare emergency services (CWES), and whether the language in DHS appropriation bill stating that CWES were 'for children that might otherwise be served in shelter care' restricts CWES to system-involved youth. Senator Ragan indicated it was her understanding that the intent was to allow CWES providers to serve non-system involved youth as well as system-involved youth

Jean moved to recommend that DHS redefine that emergency services are for all children in need of services not just for those in the CW/JJ system that would otherwise have been placed in shelter care within the dollars currently in the CWES contracts. George B. seconded the motion, a vote was taken and it was unanimously approved.

Public Comment

There was not any public comment.

Future Meetings

The next meeting will be August 10th from 10:00 till 3:00.
Topics will be:

- Federal CFSR and Iowa's current performance
- Presentation to the task force on MHI's
- Aftercare: P.A.L.S.
- Permanency Sub-Committee Report

Meeting Adjourned at 3:13 PM

Lori Vande Wall
Recording Secretary

