

**DHS Report to the Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC)
May 14, 2009**

The following are update items that may be of greatest interest to the Committee. For each of these items, the Committee may want to discuss how they want to be updated or engaged.

Community Partnerships for Protecting Children

- DHS is holding a statewide CPPC meeting on May 14th, and three regional meetings in June. The statewide CPPC meeting will focus on disproportionality (see Disproportionality item below).

Community Care Contract

- DHS published the RFP for Community Care on February 5, 2009. Two bid proposals were received by the April 9, 2009 deadline. DHS announced the apparent successful bidder, Mid Iowa Family Therapy, Inc., on May 4, 2009. Referrals to Community Care under the new contract begin July 1, 2009.

Parent Partners

- Currently, we have six Parent Partner pilot sites: 1) Sioux Cluster (Cherokee, Ida, Lyon, Plymouth, and Sioux Counties); 2) Lakes Area (Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, O'Brien, and Osceola Counties); 3) Polk County; 4) Linn County; 5) Madison, Marion, and Warren Counties; 6) Wapello County.
- 110 participants are registered for the Iowa Parent Partner Summit on May 12 – 13, 2009. Participants represent all six established Iowa sites, DHS staff and supervisors, other providers, IFAPA, PCA Iowa, and participants from Los Angeles, Oakland CA, Maine, Kentucky, and others. Presenters include Chief Justice Marsha Ternus, Dr Nicolas Taylor, and Parent Partner mentors from Oakland CA and Louisville KY.
- On May 11, DHS submitted a proposal for statewide expansion of the Parent Partner approach to the Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center that contracts with the federal government to implement system reform.

Parent-Child/Family Interaction Guidelines

- On March 30 and 31, DHS sponsored two 3-hour ICN's for DHS and provider supervisors. On March 31 and April 1, DHS sponsored three 3-hour ICN's for DHS and provider supervisors, as well as foster parents and other stakeholders on a space-available basis.
- Local training is being done by pairs of "champion" trainers and will be completed in the months of April, May and June.

Transition for Youth in Foster Care

- **Preparation for Adult Living.** Following are PAL caseload numbers for the last several months.

Month-End	Caseload	Average YTD Caseload
February 2009	282	295
January 2009	291	297
December 2008	274	298
October 2008	299	307

August 2008	317	310
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Disproportionality

- On April 8th, the Community Partnership disproportionality task team met with Pat Parker to provide an educational foundation for the task team to begin their work. Approximately 30 participated from across the state. Pat will be returning May 14th to provide an educational foundation for the larger Community Partnership network at the statewide meeting. And on May 15th, Pat will continue her work with the task team and Community Partnership Executive Committee.
- Brad Richardson from the Disproportionate Minority Contact resource center at the University of Iowa School of Social Work recently completed disproportionality “scorecards” for both Woodbury and Polk Counties. Following are excerpts from his work.
 - “In Woodbury County the rate at which Native children are living in out-of-home placements compared to White children has decreased substantially since the Minority Youth and Families Initiative began in 2005. In 2005 Native children were living in out of home placements at a rate 6.8 times that of White children. In 2008, while still too high, the rate has decreased to 4.9 times that of White children; this is a 28 percent drop in the rate.
 - In Polk County a similar Minority Youth and Families Initiative began serving African American families who came to the attention of the Polk County Dept of Human Services. In 2002 the disproportionality of African American to White children in out-of-home (foster) care was estimated at 5.5:1. In other words, an African American family was 5 1/2 times as likely to experience an out-of-home placement of children as a White family; today, that rate stands at about 2 1/2 which is less than half what it was.”
- On May 7, Casey Family Programs (CFP) hosted a compression planning session to develop key elements for an Iowa framework to address disproportionality. Participants included DHS staff from 5 of the Service Areas and the Division of Child and Family Services, as well as Children’s Justice and community members representing families, youth, the court, Native American tribes, and organizations serving the minority community. The group identified five key elements for our framework – community and family participation, leadership, data and key decision points, resources, and racial bias. The group also identified possible strategies for each element. DHS is working with Casey Family Programs to develop a Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) on disproportionality that would engage 8 communities across the state (one per DHS Service Area), based on the framework developed on May 7th.

Education and Foster Care Collaboration

- Representatives from the Department of Education, the Juvenile Court, DHS and community partners met with Kathleen McNaught (American Bar Association Legal Center on Education and Foster Care) on 4-1-09 as a follow-up to the initial 12-5-08 Education and Foster Care Summit. The group focused on two issues – systems coordination and data exchange, and implementation of the education provisions of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Based on the group’s work, DHS and DOE staff have developed a draft action plan, which will be available for review at the May 14 CWAC meeting.
- DHS has also been working with staff from the Foster Aunt and Uncle project to explore an expanded pilot for assessing reading skills of youth in foster care and providing tutoring to assist those youth whose reading skills are not at grade

level. Currently, we are working on scheduling a meeting between DHS, DOE and Foster Aunt and Uncle staff to discuss the pilot.

Child Welfare Provider Training

- DHS has received approval from our federal Regional Office to amend our IV-B plan to include the additional provider training that is being provided by the Child Welfare Training Academy. This will enable us to draw federal IV-E match for allowable training costs that meet IV-E requirements. (Note that the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 increases the IV-E match rate for provider training over the next several years from 50% to 75%, adjusted for the state's IV-E penetration rate.)
- DHS SFY 2010 appropriation bill includes language allowing DHS to carryforward funds from the SFY 2009 contract that were not expended in SFY 2009.
- Several hundred persons have gone through training so far. Sessions have been over capacity for many of the sessions. The reviews and feedback from these sessions will be reviewed and reported on.
- Upcoming training in May includes:
 - Strength-Based Supervision Of Child Welfare Practice Training (Clinical Supervision Part I)
 - Promoting Safety And Resilience In The Child Welfare Workforce Training
 - Safety Training
 - De-Escalation Training
- All details of upcoming trainings to be held for child welfare provider frontline staff and supervisors are now available at www.cw-academy.org.

Briar Cliff grant for Native American scholarships

- In April, the Briar Cliff University Department of Social Work was awarded a \$550,000 five-year grant from the U.S. Children's Bureau to provide educational stipends for Native American social work students that are pursuing careers in child welfare, beginning in the 2009 – 2010 academic year. The grant has been designated to develop and promote child welfare competencies with a focus on Indian child welfare. The grant was developed by the advisory committee of the Siouxland Indian Child Welfare Traineeship Project: Developing Native Bachelor of Social Work Child Welfare Workers for Native Families.

Safety Plan and Family Safety, Risk and Permanency Services

- On 4-8-09, Myers and Stauffer met with DHS staff and representatives of Safety Plan and Family Safety Risk and Permanency (FSRP) services to discuss the cost report format and a time study report, as well as potential sources and categories for the market rate analysis. An initial report on the market rate analysis is due this fall, with a final report on actual costs by the end of the calendar year.
- On 5-5-09, DHS and SP/FSRP contractors met for our semi-annual "all contractor" meeting. One of the main agenda items was identification and small group discussions of contract challenges for both DHS and contractors. Four areas were prioritized for small group solution-focused work: rate reductions (at 10 and 15 months)/legal delays/case closure, contract requirements in relation to

best practice/redundant paperwork/contract monitoring/PIP, understanding safe case closure and implication from case beginning, and proximity.

Proposed Foster and Adoptive Parent Rule Changes

- DHS received comments from 35 persons related to the draft rule changes that were filed in March 2009. Staff are currently reviewing to determine what changes to make in the filed rules.

Shelter Care Emergency Services

- As of May 1, 2009, DHS has signed contract amendments with 11 shelters to reduce the number of guaranteed shelter beds that are part of Iowa's unused emergency juvenile shelter bed capacity and reinvest the allocated funding to develop or enhance child welfare emergency services (CWES).
 - Funds from a total of 21 guaranteed shelter beds are being reinvested into community based CWES for children referred by DHS, juvenile court services, or law enforcement who might otherwise be served in shelter care. The total annualized state funding associated with these beds is \$707,939.
 - Following are examples of the types of child welfare emergency services being developed: appropriate shelter diversions or short stays (up to 23 hours) by offering crisis interventions, problem mediation, and in-home shelter; problem assessment and linkage with community resources; in-home and telephone follow-up to families of children referred; emergency assessment and triage activities to assess children's needs and arrange for appropriate services; and, multi-community on-call crisis intervention and telephone help lines. Some of the projects are specifically focusing on law enforcement referrals to shelter.
 - DHS is also currently reviewing a proposal from Cedar Rapids that would convert an additional 6 guaranteed shelter care beds to emergency child welfare service alternatives.
- The Child Welfare Emergency Services (CWES) workgroup, co-chaired by Margaret Wright (DHS) and Cheryl Goodwin (Family Resources, Davenport, Iowa), has prepared a report and recommendations for CWES in SFY 2010. The report provides information on the efforts this year to move toward CWES and an appropriate balance between bed capacity and other services, and establishes the groundwork for continued efforts next year to identify core elements for a continuum of statewide child welfare emergency services, with flexibility for service area specific needs. The report will be shared with the Child Welfare Partners Steering Committee at their next meeting. This Child Welfare Partners CWES workgroup will meet on May 15 to further discuss the framework for this continuum.

Group Care

- On May 8, 2009, DHS staff and Kristie Oliver (Executive Director of the Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa) met with Susan Ault to continue planning for the June 29th convening on strengthening the role of group care in achieving permanency for children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
- The June 29 meeting will be sponsored by the Department of Human Services, the Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa, Children's Justice of the

State Court Administrator's Office, and Casey Family Programs. Invitees will include the eight DHS Service Area Managers, the eight Chief Juvenile Court Officers, the CEO's of each of the 46 licensed group care agencies in Iowa, eight representatives of Elevate and a significant adult for each, and Judges. The agenda for the meeting will be final soon and it will include a mix of speakers from Iowa and across the nation, as well as time for small group discussion. This is expected to be the start of a planning process that will include both state level and local community level conversations over the next several months.

Children's Centers

- As noted in the March DHS Update, Iowa Code Chapter 237B provides for DHS to establish certification or licensing standards for children's centers; however administrative rule-making authority is not clearly granted to the Department. This Code section also does not provide authority for the Department or any other state agency to enforce "children's centers" standards.
- In response to these Iowa Code provisions, the Department implemented two courses of action, in light of the lack of clarity as to whether the Department has rule-making authority.
 - In April 2009, the Department published two documents on the DHS website on the Child Welfare Better Results for Kids webpage -- a draft set of rules describing broad facility standards that focus on keeping children safe, and a more extensive set of recommended standards that are modeled on existing licensing standards for group foster care, emergency juvenile shelters, and child care.
 - DHS filed the proposed administrative rules on 5-20-09, with a projected effective date of 11-1-09. Public comments are due 6-10-09; a public hearing is scheduled for the same date.
- During the 2009 Legislative session, the Legislature amended Chapter 237B to provide DHS with rule-making authority, and to require record checks for Children's Center staff.

DHS Provider Partnership Steering Committee

- The next meeting of the DHS Provider Partnership Steering Committee is scheduled for 5-21-09.
- The steering committee members have been busy working on the workgroups connected to: Family Interaction, Quality Improvement, Child Welfare Emergency Services, and Understanding Roles Across Contracts. See outcomes from two of these groups in other sections of this report.

Fostering Connections for Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (FCSIAA)

- As noted previously, DHS requested state legislation in 4 areas for Iowa to come into compliance with the federal legislation – identifying and notifying relatives, improving educational support for youth in foster care, and case plan changes related to transition planning and education. The Legislature passed SF 152; the bill is now awaiting signature by the Governor.
- DHS staff had an initial conference call with Finance Project staff on March 20 regarding technical assistance to Iowa to identify and analyze current spending on transitioning youth and to help Iowa determine the impact of extending foster care to age 21 on youth, Courts, DHS and the state budget. The Children's

Justice State Council appointed a workgroup to guide this work at their last meeting; workgroup members will include representatives of DHS, Judges, County Attorneys, youth, foster parents, the Child Advocacy Board, and other key stakeholders.

- Based on input from the Child Welfare Stakeholder Panel and other groups, DHS developed the following draft definition of relative for purpose of the Subsidized Guardianship program option in FCSIAA that would replace our current IV-E Subsidized Guardianship waiver. This definition was endorsed by the CWAC permanency subcommittee in a meeting held April 22nd.

“Relative” is defined as a person related to a child by blood, marriage or adoption, or an individual with whom the child has resided or had significant contact, or with whom the child has close emotional ties. For an Indian child, relative includes members of the extended family as defined by the law or custom of the Indian child’s tribe.

We also reviewed the definition with the Child Welfare Stakeholder Panel on 5-11-09. They provided positive feedback on the draft definition, and recommended that DHS provide additional guidance on factors to consider when determining whether an individual had “significant contact” with the child and whether the child had “close emotional ties” to the individual. We would also welcome CWAC comments/advice on the draft definition.

- For more information on the federal law and DHS activities to implement, see http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Consumers/Child_Welfare/BR4K/Fostering_Connections/Fostering_Connections.html

Iowa’s Title IV-B Child Welfare 5-Year Plan

- DHS has prepared a draft Executive Summary of the IV-B Child Welfare Five-Year Plan, which is due to the federal Regional Office 7-1-09. The draft reflects findings from the mini-CFSR’s that DHS conducted between April and November of 2008. On 5-11-09, DHS reviewed the draft executive summary with the Child Welfare Stakeholder Panel and got their input and feedback. We would welcome CWAC input and feedback on the draft executive summary as well.