

DHS Report to the Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC) June 22, 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

- On 5-15-09, each Community Partnership task team set short-term (within one month) and long-term (within one year) action steps to address disproportionality (see “Disproportionality” listing below).
- Regional Community Partnership meetings are scheduled for June 11th; 18th, and 23rd and include introductory training on Compassion Fatigue.

Child Protection

- **National Resource Center on Child Protective Services Report.** As noted in earlier updates, DHS requested technical assistance from the National Resource Center (NRC) for Child Protective Services in April 2008 related to safety and risk assessment. We shared the Executive Summary of the reports, the full reports, and our plans for addressing the NRC’s recommendations at the February CWAC meeting. DHS has moved forward on implementing the plans that were contained in the document we shared in February. Policy clarification and enhancements will be effective 7-1-09. DHS provided enhanced Safety and Risk training for providers and DHS staff on 6-8-09; and has scheduled an additional training on 6-17-09.
- **Child Protection Council Intake Study.** The Child Protection Council Citizen’s Review Panel has identified a review of DHS intake process as one of the priorities for the current and upcoming year under the Children’s Justice Act. The purpose of the review is to identify recommendations for possible improvements in training, policy (including statute) or practice. The Council is currently reviewing aggregate data related to intake and will participate in a qualitative review of intakes in the future.

Community Care Contract

- DHS is completing final negotiations with Mid Iowa Family Therapy, Inc. for the SFY 2010 Community Care contract. This contract will include some changes in service delivery to reflect the \$1 M reduction in the contract amount. Referrals to Community Care under the new contract begin July 1, 2009.

Parent Partners

- Pocahontas, Calhoun, and Webster Counties have inquired about steps for Parent Partner site implementation. (Currently, 16 counties are implementing Parent Partners.)
- Over 100 participants attended the Iowa Parent Partner Summit on May 12-13 in West Des Moines. Participants included: Parent Partners, program coordinators and administrators, DHS workers and other providers, and representatives from IFAPA, public health, PCA Iowa, and other partners. Workshops offered hands-on skill building and practical tools for program development, and included: engaging fathers; family orientation and support groups; how to balance life and work in the helping profession; advocating for families as opposed to enabling

families; the community's role in substance abuse treatment; how to start Parent Partner in Iowa; facilitating conversations between foster parents and birth parents; and the history of Parent Partners. Featured presentations included Chief Justice Marsha Ternus, Dr Nicolas Taylor (Montrose CO), and DHS worker Jeff Liston. Angela Schroeder (Parent Partner from Louisville KY), Lindsey Thompson (Parent Partner from Cedar Rapids IA), and Mom's Off Meth founder Judy Murphy provided inspirational and real life experiences.

- On 5-21-09, DHS approved Building a Better Future (foundational training for Parent Partner program) for foster and adoptive parent training hours.

Parent-Child/Family Interaction Guidelines

- Joint local trainings have occurred across the state and overall feedback has been very positive. Training is being done by pairs of "champion" trainers and will be completed in the months of April, May and June.
- There is one central site compiling all of the evaluations from the trainings and there will be a report once this process is completed.
- Norma Ginther will be attending the Judge's Conference and the Public Defender's Conference in June to continue the message around Family Interactions.

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
April 2009	261	286
March 2009	277	290
February 2009	282	295
January 2009	291	297
December 2008	274	298
October 2008	299	307
August 2008	317	310

- **Medicaid for Independent Young Adults (MIYA).** MIYA provides Medicaid for youth between the ages of 18 and 21 who left foster care on or after 5-1-06, if Iowa was responsible for the foster care maintenance payment when the youth turned 18 and the youth meets other applicable eligibility requirements. In December 2008, there were 399 young adults served through MIYA, with an average monthly caseload of 303 for all of calendar 2008.
- **National Youth in Transition Database.** DHS has begun the design process to comply with the Federal Chafee National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), with implementation scheduled for 10-1-10. Iowa, like all states, is required to engage in two data collection and reporting activities: (1) the first collects data on the independent living services the state provides each youth eligible for Iowa's independent living program; and (2) the second focuses on the outcomes of youth who are aging out or have aged out of foster care starting with a group of youth in foster care at 17 years of age, with follow-up surveys of a sample of the same youth at age 19 and again at age 21. The information gained via NYTD will be valuable in Iowa and on a nationwide basis in guiding transition services for youth aging out of care.

- **Rural Homeless Youth grant.** As noted in previous updates, Iowa is one of 3 states that received a 5-year demonstration grant from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) – Support Systems for Rural Homeless Youth. SSRHY focuses on young people ages 16-21 in rural areas who are approaching independence and young adulthood, but who have few or no connections to supportive, family structures or to their surrounding communities. In addition to the first year planning phase, FYSB will provide annual grants of \$200,000 for four more years for the demonstration phase, for a total of \$1 million. The overarching goal of this demonstration project is to increase “connections” for youth in three critical areas of development - connections to survival support services (e.g., housing, healthcare, substance abuse, and/or mental health as needed); community connections (e.g., community service, youth and adult partnerships, mentoring, peer support groups), and connections to education/employment: (e.g., high school/GED completion, post secondary education, employment, training, and/or jobs). The State Core Team reviewed proposals and selected Boone community for demonstration phase of the grant and Youth and Shelter Services Inc. as the lead provider agency. A wide range of community members, including youth representing homeless youth in Boone met on May 26th at Boone DMACC to brainstorm ideas to help youth in their community. Suggestions included public service ideas to reduce stigma facing homeless youth, enhanced educational and employment opportunities, and safe drop-in centers with recreation and skill building opportunities. The Boone community will submit a proposal for their demonstration project to the State Core Team by 6-30-09.

Disproportionality

- On 5-14-09, Pat Parker gave a presentation on cultural awareness at the Community Partnership statewide meeting. The following day, 5-15-09, Pat presented skill-building techniques to the Community Partnership Executive Committee. Following this presentation, each Community Partnership Exec task team set short-term (within one month) and long-term (within one year) action steps to address disproportionality. Action steps include: conducting interview about cultures within particular communities; using critical thinking questions in FTM prep; adding culturally inclusive questions in reporting forms; sharing information with co-workers, on seminar calls and in newsletters.
- Casey Family Programs (CFP) has provided a written report, “Developing a Statewide Framework to Address Disproportionality” summarizing the work done in the 5-7-09 compression planning session. DHS has distributed the report to the participants in the 5-7-09 meeting and within DHS, and provided copies at the 5-9-09 “7th Annual Woodbury County DMC Conference”. DHS will also be posting a copy on the DHS website. (See Executive Summary.)
- DHS and Children’s Justice are continuing to work with Casey Family Programs (CFP) to implement 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 5-7-09 by DHS, Justice and community members representing families, youth, the court, Native American tribes, and organizations serving the minority community. The goal is to identify teams this fall and have the first “learning session” in December 2009.
- On 6-3-09, representatives of several state Departments met with the Community Initiative for Native Children and Families (CINCF) in Sioux City to discuss the

- local community's needs and ways that state Departments could better address the needs of the Native community. DHS coordinates these meetings, which are scheduled three times per year.
- On June 8 and 9, Sioux City/Woodbury County held their 7th Annual DMC Conference, with almost 100 participants. The keynote speaker was Hasan Davis.

Education and Foster Care Collaboration

- The next Education Collaborative meeting will be a phone conference mid-July to share updates on implementation of Fostering Connections and the data exchange portion of the group's action plan. Also, the conference call will be used to review and update the action plan.
- 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. DHS Director Charlie Krogmeier and Mary Nelson met with Judy Jeffrey and staff from the Department of Education on June 9 to explore possible funding opportunities within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Child Welfare, Substance Abuse and Court Collaboration

- **Drug Testing Protocol.** The Departments of Public Health and Human Services, and Children's Justice of the State Court Administrator's Office have developed a draft drug testing protocol under the auspices of Iowa's In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA) project with the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW). This protocol is being reviewed by Judges and County Attorneys, and other key stakeholders.
- **Protocol for Working with Families involved in both child welfare and substance abuse system**
 - HF2310 (passed in 2008 Legislative session) requires the Departments of Public Health and Human Services to conduct a study and develop a protocol to address the relationship between substance abuse by a child's caretaker and child abuse and neglect. The purpose is to identify effective means of reducing the incidence and impact of child abuse that is wholly or partially caused by substance abuse by the child's caretaker. The study will also identify potential changes in Iowa law that could encourage a child's caretaker to secure voluntary treatment for substance abuse. DHS and DPH are completing this project under the auspices of Iowa's IDTA project with the NCSACW.
 - Both DHS and DPH have begun data collection for inclusion in the final report.
 - DHS, DPH and Children's Justice of the State Court Administrator's Office developed a workgroup in January 09 to develop the protocol required by the legislation. Workgroup members included members with an expertise in multiple areas inclusive to but not limited to, judicial, medical, substance abuse and child welfare. The protocol will be piloted in two drug court sites (Wapello and Scott counties) beginning on July 1, 2009.
 - An initial report to the governor and legislative committees is due on or before December 15, 2009, with the final report due December 15, 2010.

Child Welfare Provider Training

- DHS SFY 2010 appropriation bill includes language allowing DHS to carry forward funds from the SFY 2009 contract that were not expended in SFY 2009, as well as \$100,000 in new funds for the SFY 2010 contract.
- Upcoming face to face training in June 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
- There are opportunities for online training options as well. All details of upcoming trainings to be held for child welfare provider frontline staff and supervisors are available at www.cw-academy.org.

Safety Plan and Family Safety, Risk and Permanency Services

- On 6-1-09, Myers and Stauffer distributed a draft copy of the FSRP Data Collection tool was provided to the SP/FSRP Contractors. The Contractors were asked to review the tool and send comments or suggestions directly to Myers and Stauffer.
- On 5-20-09, DHS sent an email to all SP/FSRP Contractors notifying them of an amendment to the current contract on Graduated Monthly Payment Rate; this amendment suspends these payment reductions effective 7-1-09 through 12-31-09. As of 1-1-10, if no other changes have been made to this particular section of the contract, the reduced payments will resume per the original contract language. Doug Johnson and Evan Klenk are co-chairing a joint DHS-FSRP contractor work group that has been charged to develop alternatives. DHS included this language in the SFY 2010 contract amendments in response to concerns raised by SP/FSRP contractors, and in order to allow the joint DHS-Contractor group to develop alternative proposals that support timely safe closure of FSRP cases.
- FSRP Amendments were sent out to all Contractors on 5-21-09 and will become effective 7-1-09.

Foster and Adoptive Parenting

- **Proposed Rule Changes.** DHS received comments from 35 persons related to the draft rule changes that were filed in March 2009. DHS is still reviewing the comments. Based on current timelines, the revised rules will likely go before the Council in August and be effective on November 1, 2009.
- **Iowa KidsNet (IKN) and IFAPA Contracts.** Over the past six months, DHS staff have been meeting with Iowa KidsNet (IKN), Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA), and Meskwaki Family Services (MFS) foster home coordinator to better coordinate activities and develop a work plan for future collaboration.
- **AdoptUSKids.** AdoptUSKids, a technical assistance arm of the Children's Bureau, conducted several focus groups in March and April 2009 on foster and adoptive resource homes issues. The report on their findings will be available by July 2009. There will also be a companion piece from the FCH providers group that will identify items currently being addressed or planned for in SFY 2010.

Shelter Care Emergency Services

- SFY 2009 will close out with 11 of Iowa's 22 contracted shelters having begun reinvestment of guaranteed bed funds into CWES. The equivalent state funding for 21 beds was reinvested for an annualized total of \$708,000.
- Beginning in SFY 2010, DHS will have contracts with 22 emergency juvenile shelters for 246 guaranteed beds and to continue the child welfare emergency services begun in SFY 2009. The SFY 2009 daily average shelter care utilization through April 2009 was 187. The Legislature also authorized DHS and shelters to expand CWES in SFY 2010. Effective 7-1-09, one additional agency will shift 6 beds to CWES, increasing the annualized reinvestment of funding to \$910,208 (the equivalent of 27 beds).
- The Child Welfare Emergency Services (CWES) public/private partners workgroup, co-chaired by Margaret Wright (DHS) and Cheryl Goodwin (Family Resources, Davenport, Iowa), is continuing its work related to the recommendations published in the document titled Child Welfare Emergency Services Report and Recommendations for SFY 2010. (This document may be found on the DHS web site at the following link: http://www.dhs.iowa.gov/docs/5.14CWES_Rpt_SFY2010.pdf) The workgroup is focused next on establishing a framework that will provide structure to CWES planning and delivery. SFY 2009 pilots will be asked to describe the methodologies they use related to the following elements of this framework:
 - Assuring access to services;
 - Screening and assessment;
 - Monitoring service quality;
 - Operating with a shared service philosophy;
 - Encouraging community connections and coordination; and,
 - Exit planning from care.

The framework will be discussed at the next shelter provider meeting planned for June 18, 2009.

Group Care

- DHS, the Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa, Children's Justice of the State Court Administrator's Office, and Casey Family Programs are continuing 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.
- Invitations were sent on June 4th to the eight DHS Service Area Managers, the eight Chief Juvenile Court Officers, the CEO's of Iowa licensed foster group care and PMIC agencies in Iowa, the Meskwakie tribe, eight representatives of Elevate and a significant adult for each, and Judges. Prior to the convening, participants will be sent a "readiness assessment" tool to facilitate self-assessment of their organizations policies and practices related to permanency.
- The agenda includes a mix of speakers from Iowa and across the nation. There will also be time for small group discussion and planning that can be used when participants return to their communities. This convening will initiate a planning process that will include both state level and local community level conversations over the next several months.

Children's Centers

- During the recent Legislative session, the Legislature amended Iowa Code Chapter 237B to require children's centers to conduct child abuse and criminal history record checks and evaluations, and provided DHS the authority to promulgate rules for children's centers.
- DHS has published proposed rules for public notice, and held a public hearing on 6-10-09. One person attended the public hearing, and provided positive comments on the rules and suggested one minor correction to align with the language in Chapter 237B.

DHS Provider Partnership Steering Committee

- The next meeting of the DHS Provider Partnership Steering Committee will be scheduled in mid July.
- The steering committee met on 5-21-09 with the primary focus of developing communication methods and to identify audiences to receive this information. DHS will create a web page on the DHS website will allow this committee to communicate with public/private agencies and other audiences.

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 Governor signed SF 152 on 5-22-09. Policy manual updates are scheduled to take effect 7-1-09 and field staff are being notified of potential practice implications.
- DHS staff are continuing to work with The Finance Project 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 include representatives of DHS, Judges, County Attorneys, youth, foster parents, the Child Advocacy Board, and other key stakeholders. The group staff met with the Finance Project staff on 6-4-09 and developed a draft action plan for completing the analysis of the impacts of extending foster care to age 21. The goal is to complete the analysis by December 2009.
- DHS posted draft rules for the subsidized guardianship option on the DHS website to gather feedback to prepare for a formal submission to the rule making process. These rules would replace the current subsidized guardianship waiver; however the program would still need to be fiscally neutral. A link to this posting can be found on the Fostering Connections page linked below.
- 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 and Child and Family Services Review

- Children's Justice of the State Court Administrator's Office and DHS are exploring implementing a joint review process that would combine DHS' "mini-CFSR" reviews and the Children's Justice assessments of court processes. An Integrated Review Design meeting was held June 10 and 11. The Child

Advocacy Board is participating in the June meeting as well to see if there are ways to integrate their reviews, especially in light of new flexibility they were granted by the Legislature. Benefits of conducting such a review would include the pooling of resources and expansion of reviewer expertise, decreased intrusion, shared sense of responsibility and increased consistency by unifying the process and providing for broader child welfare partners participation.

- Staff from DHS and Gail Barber participated in the first of a series of calls with the Children's Bureau and other FFY 2010 states regarding preparation for the state's upcoming CFSR, scheduled in August 2010. Iowa is currently in the "period under review (PUR)" – i.e., the period from which cases will be drawn and reviewed in the CFSR on-site review.