

**DHS Report to the Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC)  
September 21, 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**

- Over the last year, several communities have begun implementing family team meetings in the community for “non-system” involved families.
- Community Partnership sites have submitted their annual proposed plans for next year and will submit year-end reports 10.15.09. These reports will be compiled in a summary and disseminated in November.

**Child Protection**

- In November 2009, the Child Protection Council will be conducting a study of child protection intake, focusing on alleged incidents of abuse reported by medical professionals. Teams for the review will consist of child protection council members who were interested in participating and DHS workers who have expertise in child protection. The review will be of an informative nature to identify where improvements in training, changes to DHS policy and practice and changes to Iowa Code may be recommended.
- DHS is developing a contract to ensure that staff have access to necessary medical expertise in child abuse cases, especially in situations involving conflicting medical opinions. Staff are consulting with recognized child protection medical specialists and members of the Polk County MDT.

**Parent Partners**

- The Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center (MCWIC) continues to work with DHS to establish expansion of the Parent Partner approach as a child welfare implementation project. On 9.8.09, MCWIC and DHS staff met to review the four year plan’s logic model, work plan, evaluation plan, MCWIC’s responsibilities, and budget plan. Once these are approved by the federal Children’s Bureau and the MOA is signed, MCWIC can begin to provide financial support to DHS for the expanding the Parent Partner approach.
- The next Parent Partners statewide steering committee meetings is scheduled for 9.29.09 and will include: 1) reporting expectations and evaluations of outcomes; 2) feedback on the structure of the steering committee; 3) training needs and requests; 4) written personal accounts of how the Parent Partner Approach has positively affected families and children; 5) Parent Partner Approach presentation for new workers; 6) Mastery of core skills presentation.
- The following counties are continuing to take steps towards implementation and have meetings scheduled during October: Webster; Floyd, Mitchell, Chickasaw, Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Winnebago and Worth counties; and Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Franklin and Grundy counties.
- The Center for Social Service Research at the School of Social Welfare, University of California at Berkeley recently published research on the Parent Partners program in Contra Costa County, California. The study compared the outcomes for an experimental group with a matched comparison group. Results from the outcome study indicate that reunification may be more likely for children

whose parents were served by Parent Partners. Specifically, approximately 60% of children with a Parent Partner reunified with their parents within 12 months of removal, compared to 26% of children whose parents were not served.

**Parent-Child/Family Interaction Guidelines**

- Training has been completed in all Service Areas.
- Service Areas are rolling out integrating Family Interaction into overall practice. Some Areas started rollout on new cases and have now moved into integrating the practice into existing cases.
- Service Areas are continuing to work with foster parent support groups, court personnel, and community stakeholders to continue to educate and create buy-in on the benefits to children and families.
- While there is no state-wide tracking on the number of cases where a formal family interaction plan has been developed and implemented, discussions with all Service Areas indicate the practice is expanding; and staff, providers, judges and foster parents are beginning to see the benefits of the practice.

**Non-Custodial Parents (NCP)**

- One of the Children’s Bureau’s findings in both CFSR Round 1 and 2 was that there are significant differences in how states serve mothers and fathers. For example, they found that workers had monthly visits with mothers in 69% of the cases reviewed, but with only 42% of the fathers. Similarly, they found that workers had assessed the mother’s needs in 79% of the cases reviewed, but had assessed the father’s needs in only 46%.
- Last year, DHS quality assurance coordinators examined our case reading data to identify to what extent issues with the NCP were impacting Iowa’s performance on CFSR outcomes. They found that in 54% of the cases rated as “area needing improvement (ANI)” for two indicators<sup>1</sup>, not adequately addressing the NCP was the primarily reasons for the ANI rating. They looked further at the barriers to adequately addressing the NCP, and found that the biggest issue was lack of engagement (73%), followed by inadequate efforts to locate (20%), with 9% related to inadequate efforts to identify.
- As a result, DHS has developed an initial set of recommendations to improve engagement with non-custodial parents over the life of the case, as well as suggests for identification and location that we are working to implement.

**Transition for Youth in Foster Care**

- **Transition for Youth in Foster Care – Preparation for Adult Living.** Following are PAL caseload numbers for the last several months. DHS will again be supplementing the state funding for PAL with federal Chafee dollars in order to avoid/delay imposition of a waiting list.

<b>Month-End</b>	<b>Caseload</b>	<b>Average YTD Caseload</b>
August 2009	330 (est.)	328 (est.)
July 2009	327	327
June 2009	334	293
May 2009	288	290

<sup>1</sup> “Needs and services of child, parent and foster parents”; and “child and family involved in case planning”.

- **Medicaid for Independent Young Adults (MIYA).** In response to concerns that youth may be losing MIYA eligibility at the annual eligibility recertification, DHS staff recently began matching the list of cases due for recertification with the list of participating youth in Aftercare/PAL/ETV. For youth with an upcoming review, the Aftercare Self Sufficiency Advocate ensures that the youth has completed the annual recertification form. The Aftercare program reports that this step is working well in keeping them apprised of youth due for recertification, and overall MIYA participant numbers climbed from 334 in July to 362 in August. DHS staff are also reviewing data on the “drop-off” rate. Next steps may include gathering information on reasons for the drop-off, and exploring additional ways to facilitate timely completion of the recertification documents.
- **Transitioning Youth Initiative.** As noted in previous updates, Iowa’s Transitioning Youth Initiative (TYI), funded in collaboration with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, will begin its third year 10.1.09. Currently, there are six CPPC sites participating in this initiative<sup>2</sup>. Applications for this year are due 9.18.09; so far two additional sites (Scott County and Council Bluffs) have applied. DHS staff will also be working on activities to build capacity for the TYI during SFY 2010, including developing trainers and coaches for dream teams, completing a training curriculum, developing a facilitator/coaching handbook, developing a webpage for TYI materials, and developing a proposed plan for how dream teams could be expanded statewide.
- **National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD).** The DHS NYTD work group is continuing its work to ensure Iowa is prepared to begin transition data collection on October 1, 2010 and begin data submission to the Administration for Children and Families by May 15, 2011. Staff have developed draft Administrative Rules (to be formally submitted by 12/31/09) that define independent living services to align with the NYTD reporting framework. The Elevate youth council has committed to helping inform youth about NYTD, and to assisting DHS in program development efforts.

### Disproportionality

- **CPPC work.** The CPPC disproportionality task team has decided to suspend their work on identifying cultural competence training resources available to communities across the state, pending other work going on through the Disproportionality Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC).
- **BSC work**
  - The initial faculty meeting for the BSC was held 8.6.09 and 8.7.09. Members of the faculty include Allison Lasley (Meskwaki), Ralph Bayard (Center for the Study of Social Policy), Lorisha Martin (Elevate), Judge Stephen Clarke, Denise Moore (Parent Partners), Belinda Creighton-Smith (DMC Coordinator and pastor, Faith Temple Baptist Church), Lucille Echohawk (Indian Child Welfare Programs, Casey Family Programs), Khatib Waheed (Center for the Study of Social Policy), Brad Richardson (University of Iowa School of Social Work/National Resource Center), Liz Squib (Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative), and Susan Ault (Casey Family Programs).

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<sup>2</sup> The six (6) sites include NW Iowa counties of Cherokee, Lyon, Plymouth, Ida and Sioux; Boone/Dallas counties; Cedar Rapids; Clinton/Jackson counties; Black Hawk county; and North Central Iowa Decat including Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Winnebago, and Worth counties. Iowa’s Shared Youth Vision sites in Dubuque and Storm Lake are also participating.

- The 8 BSC sites have begun putting together their core and extended teams. The first all-collaborative call was 9.15.09; subsequent calls will be monthly.
- Casey Family Programs is also sponsoring Peer Technical Assistance scheduled for 10.22.09 and 10.23.09. This event will focus on the child abuse intake and assessment process, which has been identified as a critical decision point in child protection that can impact disproportionality. The peer TA team working with Iowa will be from various counties across the state of Minnesota. The event itself will involve facilitated conversations around some of the work that they have done, and is designed to generate ideas that BSC teams in Iowa might test in their communities.
- DHS is also working with Casey Family Programs to develop a cadre of facilitators for “Race: The Power of An Allusion”, so that this training can be brought to a larger audience of key stakeholders.

### **Education and Foster Care Collaboration**

- The Education Collaborative has begun vetting draft forms that could be used to inform local school professionals when a child enters foster care, and is refining based on feedback received. The goal is to have the forms in practice by calendar year end. The next Education Collaborative meeting will be 10.01.09 and will explore the basics of education stability for children who enter foster care: Are children able to remain in their home school? If a move is necessary, are educational records transferred timely and is enrollment occurring immediately? And is collaboration between DHS and local schools sufficient to ensure educational stability?
- At the suggestion of the Children’s Justice State Council, DHS and Children’s Justice of State Court Administration are developing additional materials related to education and children in foster care, including an updated Practice Bulletin for DHS staff and a Children’s Justice Newsletter.

### **Child Welfare, Substance Abuse and Court Collaboration**

- Ottumwa and Davenport are piloting the draft protocol for working with families with substance abuse issues that are involved in child protection system during the months of July-September 2009. In October 2009, surveys will be sent and focus groups will be held with treatment providers and DHS staff that participated in the pilot. Survey results and feedback will be shared with the HF2310 workgroup in the beginning of November. The group will discuss what worked well and what needs to be enhanced in the protocol. Discussion will also include planning for the next pilot in two non-drug court sites.
- Chris Corken, an attorney from Dubuque, has taken the lead on reviewing laws regarding disincentives for pregnant women to participate in treatment as it may lead to drug testing the newborn and a founded “presence of illegal drugs” finding. She will be presenting the research to the group in November. The group will make recommendations in their final report.

### **County Attorney Meetings**

- DHS staff met with Iowa County Attorney’s Association (Juvenile Section) members on 8.7.09. Discussion focused on drug testing policies and protocols, as well as domestic violence situations which result in accepting an intake for denial of critical care. The next meeting is scheduled for 10.30.09. Agenda

items will include the federal and state Indian Child Welfare Acts (ICWA), as well as voluntary services vs. CINA and CINA/TPR discussion.

### **Child Welfare Provider Training**

- As the Child Welfare Provider Training Academy enters into its second year, the Coalition will introduce a wider variety of live training topics, new web classes, and in the next few months E-Learning opportunities and live Webinar trainings.
- The FY 10 Training Plan incorporates 28 live trainings, 26 of which are new courses. There are currently links to 15 training courses that are accessible through the Training Academy website. The first year of trainings were mainly structured to the basic skill level with the next year of trainings focusing on multiple skill levels from intermediate to advanced and supervisory level courses. These courses will be offered statewide and will include such topics as attachment issues, working with children with emotional and behavioral problems, testifying in Juvenile Court, Motivational Interviewing, bringing fathers into the circle of family centered practice, supervising difficult times and difficult staff, and working effectively with substance affected families.
- The Training Academy has a new website with easier access and registration: <http://iatrainingsource.org/>
- Marketing and public relations for the Child Welfare Provider Training Academy is a priority for FY 2010, in order to increase participation for frontline child welfare providers and supervisors.

### **Safety Plan and Family Safety, Risk and Permanency Services**

- DHS has amended the contract with Myers and Stauffer regarding the analysis of FSRP payment rates to include the review of the market analysis of factors impacting provider rates within the full report (draft due 11-1-09). Originally, this portion of the work was due 8-1-09, but Myers and Stauffer found that it would not have been meaningful without the provider information on actual staff salaries, etc. The final analysis of findings is due by 12-31-09.
- Doug Johnson and Evan Klenk continue their workgroup's efforts to develop alternatives for addressing safe case closure. Their goal is to have recommendations prepared for the Child Welfare Partners Committee by 11.1.09. The committee began with an extensive analysis of the data from a random sample of cases from around the state. The data revealed four presenting scenarios that account for a significant majority of cases that remain open after 15 months: substance abuse, substance abuse with adult mental health issues, substance abuse with adult mental health issues and domestic violence, and child mental health issues. The work group plans to write two sets of recommendations in their final report: recommendations regarding contract amendments to replace the existing 10 and 15 month case rate reductions, and recommendations regarding a life of the case continuum that encompasses evidence based systemic practices and processes, benchmarking, and accountability for safety and timely case closure that align with good stewardship of finite resources (both personnel and financial).
- The next FSRP all contractor meeting date is scheduled for 11.5.09. Agenda items will include updates on various projects (e.g., safe case closure, Myers & Stauffer work, etc.), as well as small group discussions on topics identified by contractors and DHS (e.g., family interaction, H1N1, etc.).

## **Foster and Adoptive Parenting**

- **Proposed Rule Changes.** The Council on Human Services adopted the proposed rule changes in July; changes are effective 10.1.09. With respect to families that are currently licensed, DHS will begin applying the rules for those whose license renewal is December 1, 2009 or later. Staff have been working with IFAPA and KidsNet on implementing the rules, including:
  - Scheduling a webinar with DHS staff, KidsNet staff and IFAPA liaisons the week of 9.21.09 to go over the rules and respond to questions; and
  - Creating a Q & A process to respond to implementation questions, and ensure consistent information across the 3 organizations.
- **AdoptUSKids.** The Resource Family Partnership Team will complete a draft of proposed strategies to address the findings of the focus groups by 10.30.09.

## **Child Welfare Emergency Services (CWES)**

- The following information is from the November 2008 – June 2009 CWES report.
  - Eleven shelters reduced 21 guaranteed payment shelter beds, and reinvested the funding in CWES. This resulted in a total reinvestment of \$355,032; annualized this would have totaled \$707,939.
  - A total of 709 children were referred for CWES in SFY 2009. Following is a breakdown of the CWES provided: Screening and CWES assessment (38.65%), on-site intervention & mediation services (72.78%), information and referral connections (62.62%), in-home services (22.57%), parental agreements signed (14.25%), daily monitoring (5.78%), family team meetings (6.21%), daily problem solving (7.19%), health screenings (5.50%), referrals to Iowa KidsNet/FFC (4.23%), other health care (11.99%), screening for relative placement (4.37%), and crisis plan developed (20.87%).
  - Children were “discharged” to the following after completion of CWES: home (65%), relative (13%), family foster care (13%), group care (4%), family friend, supervised apartment living, detention, hospital, runaway (1% each), and other (2%).
  - A copy of the full report will be posted on DHS website upon completion.
- In SFY 2010, the Department will continue contracts with shelters for maintaining an estimated \$910,208 in CWES reinvestments using funding from 27 reduced beds. Contracted guaranteed beds in SFY 2010 continue at 246. Discussions began in summer 2009 for at least one additional CWES project.
- Led by co-chairs Gary Lippe of DHS and Cheryl Goodwin of Family Resources, Inc. the Child Welfare Emergency Services (CWES) public/private partners’ workgroup continued working toward drafting a framework for a continuum of CWES. Work completed at its August 20, 2009 meeting will be shared at the next full shelter providers’ meeting, tentatively scheduled for October 2009.
- DHS continues to consult with Legislative Service Agency (LSA) staff and the co-chairs of the Health and Human Services appropriation subcommittee to clarify Legislative intent related to the target population for CWES.

## **Group Care**

- **Community Conversations.** DHS, the Coalition, and Children’s Justice are moving forward with scheduling the community conversations regarding group care. Discussions will focus on the role of group care in the continuum of child welfare and juvenile justice services; outcomes, performance measures and expectations for group care; and potential contracting approaches. Invitees will include: child welfare and juvenile justice service providers, DHS and JCS staff,

Judges, Elevate members and other youth involved with the foster care system, Parent Partners and other parents/significant adults/family members involved with the foster care system, AEA representatives and other education staff, attorneys, foster care review board members and CASA's.

- **Technical Assistance.** Casey Family Programs has arranged to provide Iowa with no-cost training and technical assistance (TA) through the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). The work will focus on evidence based models of practice, strategies to enhance community based programming, and outcomes measurement. A small group of DHS staff, JCS staff and providers will meet with CWLA staff in early November to finalize the scope of work.
- **Permanency Roundtables.** DHS has also moved forward to initiate permanency roundtable reviews of children/youth in group care, with the assistance of Casey Family Programs. This is currently being jointly planned by the SAM and Chief Juvenile Court Officer in the Davenport area for mid-November 2009. Permanency roundtables are structured professional case consultations designed to expedite permanency for youth in care through innovative thinking, application of best practices, and the "busting" of systemic barriers. The focus will be on 25 – 30 CINA and delinquent youth that have APPLA (Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement) as their permanency goal. In addition to expediting permanency for the individual youth whose case is reviewed, the goal of the process is to gather data to address systemic and cross-system barriers to permanency. After this initial roundtable, DHS and CFP will review how this process could be expanded to other jurisdictions in the state.

#### **Public Provider Partnership Committee**

- The next meeting of the DHS Provider Partnership Steering Committee is scheduled 9.25.09. Agenda items will include finalizing the communication plan, committee structure and membership (e.g., length of member "terms"), workgroup updates, and a report from Mary Nelson (DHS) and Kristie Oliver (Coalition for Family and Children's Services) regarding the Fourth Annual Summit on Public/Private Partnership on 8.11.09 and 8.12.09.
- Casey Family Programs has arranged to provide the Partners workgroup on performance based contracting and quality assurance with no-cost training and technical assistance (TA) through the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). The TA will focus on aligning the contracting process with desired outcomes and a quality improvement framework. The work group will meet with CWLA staff in early November to finalize the scope of work.
- The Child Welfare Partners Committee web page has been created and can be found at the following link:  
[http://dhs.ia.gov/Consumers/Child\\_Welfare/BR4K/CWPC/CWPC.html](http://dhs.ia.gov/Consumers/Child_Welfare/BR4K/CWPC/CWPC.html)

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

- **Option to Extend Foster Care Beyond Age 18.** DHS and Children's Justice 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. On 8.27.09, the Children's Justice Taskforce guiding this work developed program recommendations, which The Finance Project will use for their fiscal mapping. The overall goal remains to complete the fiscal analysis by December 2009.

- **Subsidized Guardianship Option.** The proposed rules for the subsidized guardianship option have been noticed and can be found on the DHS website at <http://www.dhs.iowa.gov/policyanalysis/RulesPages/whatsnew.htm> under ARC 8183B. Public comments are due 10.13.09. The proposed effective date for the rules would be 2.10.10. These rules will replace the current subsidized guardianship waiver. DHS has also submitted the draft IV-E state plan amendment for the program to the Regional Office in Kansas City. Comments from the Regional Office are expected sometime in October 2009.
- 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](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Consumers/Child_Welfare/BR4K/Fostering_Connections/Fostering_Connections.html).

#### **Title IV-B Child Welfare 5-Year Plan and Child and Family Services Review**

- **Title IV-B Plan.** DHS is collecting additional information requested by the Children's Bureau Regional Office. Once the IV-B Plan is approved, it will be posted on DHS website.
- **CFSR Preparation**
  - Allison Lasley (Meskwaki Family Services) has joined the CFSR Operations Team. Other members include DHS staff, Gail Barber (Children's Justice) and Kathy McDonnell (JCS).
  - DHS staff are working on the summary of policy related to the CFSR outcome items, which is due 4.23.10.
  - The CFSR Operations Team will begin planning for the CFSR statewide assessment (SWA) in the near future. The SWA is due 6.23.10.

#### **Title IV-E**

- **Administrative Cost Review (ACR) pilot.** As noted in last month's update, Iowa participated in a pilot review of Title IV-E foster care administrative claiming. During the onsite review, the review team identified a few areas of potential under and over claiming by the state. Two areas where Iowa may have an opportunity to improve claiming include the administrative expenses for the 30 days immediately before a child moves into a IV-E eligible placement and for the licensing of relatives as foster parents. In addition, some training expenses were identified as being claimed at the 50% match rate when they could potentially be claimed at the 75% rate for training. The review also identified issues concerning the documentation of foster care candidate status, as well as a potential area of over-claiming for work done by child protective workers on cases where a child is considered at risk of removal from home. It's important to note that DHS is currently claiming under an approved cost allocation plan; and that these are preliminary findings subject to further review with the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) program staff and federal staff from the Division of Cost Allocation. If all initial findings become final, the financial impact is unknown, but is not estimated to be significant overall. The final report from the review is expected in about 2 months.
- **IV-E Administrative Claiming on Behalf of Juvenile Court Services (JCS).** At the request of the Chief Juvenile Court Officers, DHS staff have begun meeting with them to explore the feasibility of claiming IV-E administrative funds on behalf of JCS for their case management activities for children in foster care.

- **Tribal IV-E.** At the request of the Meskwaki Tribe, DHS staff have also begun meeting with them to assist them in developing their own IV-E application for approval by the Children's Bureau Regional Office.