



MINUTES

HHS Advisory Board Meeting

8/3/20 3:34 p.m. | *Meeting called to order by* Gabriella Celeste on Zoom Virtual Meetings, Cleveland, Ohio

In Attendance

Gabriella Celeste, Beverly Charles, Dr. David Crampton, Dr. Andrew Garner, Debra Rex, Angela Newman-White, Victor Ruiz, Lakecia Wild, Natasha Davis, David Merriman, Anastasia Dimitropoulos, Cynthia Weiskittel, Jackie McCray, Donna Rojek (recorder)

Welcome

Presented by: Gabriella Celeste

Welcome to everyone in attendance and introductions. This is the last meeting for Victor Ruiz.

Call to Order

Presented by: Gabriella Celeste

Meeting was called to order at 3:34 p.m. on 8/3/20.

June 15 Minutes

Presented by: Gabriella Celeste

The minutes for the June 15th meeting have been approved with no changes. Angela gave a motion to approve the minutes, Natasha was second to send out a motion of approval. Full approval was given.

Public

Presented by: Gabriella Celeste

Cindy to find out with Jennifer if the public was made aware of these virtual meetings. *Update: All meetings are listed on the County and HHS websites with zoom links and full details.*

Back-Logs of Termination of Custodies

Presented by: Cindy Weiskittel

Some court rooms have caught up with the back logs of custody terminations. Our numbers went under 3000 custodies this week, which suggests that the back log of custody terminations have been starting to move. 11 more hearings needed due to objections (out of 5 courtrooms).

Topic of kids in the Jane Edna Hunter building awaiting placement was discussed. Placement providers offered suggestions and the Executive has given them until Wednesday to submit proposals. Our per diems are significantly lower than Franklin County. There are not enough beds. We are trying to hire a recruiter to focus on Cuyahoga County children. We place over 200 kids a month. Some of these are new kids, some are moving from a higher level of care or vice versa. Anytime a child needs to be in the building overnight is unacceptable and consists of

a very small percentage of children.

Natasha reached out to Erika Gaiter to volunteer in the childcare room but is still waiting for a phone call back. Cindy will follow up.

Funding issues are also a problem-not unique to Cuyahoga County, but state & nationwide. Can we advocate for a legislative fix? Cindy will check with the law department.

We are seeing an uptick of kids staying longer in the building because of Covid-19. Kids can come into the building at any time.

On April 1st, we began doing blind screening at the hotline and the Performance Evaluation and Innovation department is evaluating this process. The hotline supervisors were asked not to look at race or the address of a family when they read the narrative. Screening guidelines are defined by the State. Counties can screen in more but not less. When this evaluation is available, we will bring the results to the Board.

Our call volume at the hotline did go down at the onset of the pandemic but is now only 100 calls down from last July-so pretty much back to where it was pre Covid. It always goes down in the summer. We are getting some serious calls through FB.

Deputy Director Tammy Chapman-Wagner sent out a report comparing 2004, 2012 and 2019 decision points within our system where we saw racial disparity. In 2004, referent type family and friends' constituted 36% of all calls. In 2019 this dropped to 16%.

Calls from hospitals or law enforcement will vary depending upon the geographic area and circumstance. Hospitals drug test mothers when they give birth differently. There is some bias in what actions are taken depending on the status of the family.

Director Merriman

Presented by: David Merriman

David Merriman shared a racial equity and inclusion presentation that he shared with County Council on May 20th, 2020. He would like to establish an agency-wide response to racial disparity at HHS. At this time, he said that we must prioritize Covid-19. A lot of planning has been going on and we need to move into action with urgency in response to the clear disparities.

Prevention Committee

Presented by: Gabriella Celeste

A data dashboard was discussed to provide info to the public. David said that we need more community dialogue. We need to survey the community to determine what they think of our work.

Marielee Santiago

Presented by: Gabriella Celeste

Marielee has been nominated by Victor Ruiz to fill his position on the Advisory Board because he is leaving. She has a background with HIV and chemical dependency patients at MetroHealth. The board had voted for Marielee to be a recommendation to Council. Gabriella set the first motion, Beverly seconded that motion and all remaining members approved. They will submit their recommendation with a unanimous vote.

Advisory Board Proposed Process for Advocacy *Presented by:* Gabriella Celeste

See attached proposal. Gabriella to resend this document to everyone.

2B can be sent through email.

2F we should have some type of process-Jennifer can check with the law department.

Please send Gabriella any suggestions or feedback. We will discuss at next meeting.

Information gathering is underway.

2 main areas- Literature Review & Creation of a Child Protection Teams (CPT) Advisory Group; First need is to identify CPT and MDT models from other cities and states (review common types of MDT's, CPT's and CAC's, and other strategies used. Identify process for establishing an MDT or CPT. Develop case studies of models from similar cities and states. They are trying to identify models for use here. Preliminary interviews with administrators of other CPT models) The first meeting for the creation of CPT Advisory Group will be 8/17/20 at 11:00 a.m. More details to follow at the October meeting. They are reviewing policies for a better understanding.

Draft Data Dashboard

Recommendation-Elevate emphasis on qualitative review of casework-report out efforts of performance, evaluation, & improvement (PEI) to address this concern including feedback to staff.

Recommendation-Strengthen DCFS staff-hiring-total number of staff allocated, total filled, updates on departures and new hires.

Recommendation-Strengthen DCFS staff training-Advisory Board members invited to attend Shadowbox but we should also receive updates and evaluation data on training efforts including licensure and training cohorts.

Recommendation-Community Involvement-Geographic assignment data showing progress, strengthening collaborative work.

Recommendation-Community Education-Number and attendance for mandatory reporter training, DCFS in your neighborhood, newsletters.

Recommendation-DCFS & Law Enforcement-Updates related to these partnerships.

Recommendation-Father Engagement-% open cases with father identified, % father attendance at initial TDM, % father participation in case plans, updates on efforts to identify and engage fathers.

Recommendation-Safety & Parental Rights-Updates on policy advocacy, training and work with law enforcement.

Recommendation-Disproportionality data (not a part of recommendations, but important because of disproportionate representation of Africa-American families in DCFS)-% of Hotline calls by race, safety assessments by race, initial custodies by race, reunification by race, perhaps also length of stay, multiple placements, and aging out by race.

*Board Members also interested in efforts to reduce the number of caseworkers who work with each case.

Cindy will work with David for an agreed upon format. Once detail is agreed upon, then a quarterly report is recommended.

The Board was in unanimous agreement to move forward.

Assist with developmental plan for Prevention Committee Statement

Next Meeting is October 9th with a time change from noon to 2:00 p.m. via zoom.

Update on Public Awareness Strategies will be brought up at next meeting.
Cindy will advise on progress towards replacing vacant Board what the vote/approval was for the new board member.

Adjourned

Presented by: Gabriella Celeste

Meeting adjourned 5:43 p.m.