

State Advisory Council Meeting

October 21, 2022 – Zoom

Members Present Through Zoom: Rochelle Beley, Megan Bailey, Valerie Winfield, Julie Fleck, Christy Hendricks, Carrie Krepps, April Barnings, Ben Davis, Julie Burk, Valerie Winfield

CFSD Representatives Present: Nikki Grossberg, Sahrita Jones, Eric Barnosky, Lynne Johnston, Theresa Becker, Courtney Callaghan, Laura McCullough, Brandi Loch

Absent: Effie Benoit, Deb Cole, Jennifer Hoerauf, Jennifer Blodgett, Det Sean Schoenfelder, Serena Wright, Dana Toole, Greg Daly, Judge Spaulding, Bonnie Bear Don't Walk

9:00-9:10am **Welcome, Introductions**

9:10-9:20am **Approve Minutes**

Motion to approve minutes made by Megan Bailey and seconded by Christy Hendricks. Minutes approved as written.

9:20-10:20am **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) by Nikki Grossberg
New Structure**

- Brandi Loch has been hired as the new Deputy Administrator. Brandi will be leading the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process and moving our Family's First Prevention Services Act requirements forward in addition to the Child Family Services Review (CFSR). A few positions will be added under Brandi to be a part of that unit.
- Courtney Callaghan, Regional Administrator for Region 5, has been hired as the Bureau Chief for the new Training, Recruitment and Retention Bureau. This new bureau will include our wellness program, training unit and the safety science program unit that works with the Ombudsman implementing the philosophy of safety science.
- The Regional Administrator position for Region 5 has been posted and the new person should be onboard by the next SAC meeting.
- There has been significant strides over the past four years with The Kids in Care numbers going down and doing good prevention work to prevent removals. We want the rights kids in care for the right amount of time. Transition into where the delays are and how we continue to tackle that.
- Nikki discussed about the Continued Quality Improvement program and she asked who has attended a Regional Advisory Council meeting. She would like to connect individuals to a council meeting wherever they are at. Nikki asked Laura to reach out to include Kerrie Krepps in her area.
- Each Regional Advisory Council has one in each region and will meet at least 2 times per year with some meeting up to 4 times. Some are meeting virtually and also in-person. Our 2023 calendar will be developed soon so the State Advisory Council does not coincide with the Regional Advisory Council meetings.
- Rochelle Beley asked Nikki to have Deb Cole reach out to her about the Billings Council.
- Nikki asked how many in this group have been part of the Case Reviews and what it means? The case review process is a requirement of the Children's Bureau. Over the past couple of years the Case

Review process has been used to improve the practice piece of what we're doing. We review 130 cases each year in 6 month increments with good data coming out of the meetings. Our reviewers are internal individuals who drive change in our organization. We are focusing on a roadmap to best practice and focusing on child safety, permanency and well-being. We try to understand practice strengths and deficits. We interview children aged 6 and up, parents, placement, safety resources and caseworkers or supervisors. Interviews are used to support documentation. Nikki discussed the cases we get graded on with different checks and balances to give us a sense of how we are doing.

- Julie Fleck will make herself available for Missoula and/or Flathead.
- Achieving Permanency would be reunification in 12 months, guardianship in 18 months and adoption in 24 months. Nikki asked for thoughts on what some of the delays for permanency would be.
- Brandi Loch discussed some cases that she has been going through and what is problematic. There is paperwork issues where the judge needs to write their orders.
- Valerie Winfield described some of her permanency issues and problematic areas in Great Falls. Some of her cases are 2-3 years old.
- Safety, permanency and well being need to be reviewed. Child, parent and foster parents need to be involved.
- Permanency pieces we look at are placement with siblings, visits with child and parents or siblings, preserving connections, relative placement, relationship of child with parents and ICWA. If anyone has thoughts on what the delays to permanency might be, please contact Nikki.
- How do we look at the well-being of the child in foster care? Many people are familiar with Dr. Bruce Perry and his thought process around relationships. We need to look at the needs and services of child, parents and foster parents; Child and parent involvement in case planning; caseworker visits with the child and parents.
- The Quality Improvement Center is a new four-year project working with staff and training including modules for gaining permanency for the kids and working with the court system. Research included for child welfare and analyzing the data to see if it makes a difference. Partnered with the University of Washington to gather and analyze the data and with 6-8 states that are participating in this project. This company works with us and helps us. We would like to get the courts involved. Research will be involved to get the data we need. How do we involve the parents with this group. If there is a parent anyone knows who would be interested in getting involved with this group, let Nikki know.
- Moving the Dial #5 training is next week. The last training focused on ICWA.
- Other components of well being are education, medical, mental/behavioral health and worker involvement in medical, dental and mental health.
- After case reviews are completed, we compile all the data, analyze it for good and bad trends, report results to the Management Team, plan and implement strategies for improvement, evaluate effectiveness of strategies and make changes as needed.
- The purpose of the Stakeholder Meeting is to establish a process in identifying how to best support children and families within our community. CFSD is required to report to Children's Bureau on programmatic changes being made to improve outcomes. These changes will only be successful if we work together in identifying what is and is not working and how we can move forward as a community to best provide for children and families. We have until June 2023 to look at cases that are overseen by the Children's Bureau. We have 18 items to pass; one item we did not pass was our permanency item. We need to see if we are making improvements through the years. We will provide members with additional information ahead of time. We are in the third round in the cycle and heading toward

the fourth round of the plan. We will be working on our CAPS/MFSIS system. The Children's Bureau will be coming to Montana Jan 10-12, 2023, for only 2 days which will be an in-person attendance. Nikki will send out more information as soon as she receives it.

- Megan asked from the perspective of a treatment center provide, what is it they need to do? What should they be doing differently. She mentioned that more AI/AN live in urban areas than on our reservations, the MT Consortium of Urban Indian Health would like to assist with getting some of our urban areas involved on these panels.
- Nikki said that one challenge is harm reduction on positive/negative drug testing and also educating the court system.
- Eric Barnosky said permanency outcome barriers with adolescent and their difficult behaviors is a concern along with finding a forever home. They need more services for adolescents with difficult behaviors and substantial mental health issues.
- Nikki gave her presentation on Children in Care
 - Nikki reported the number of CPS Reports have dropped from 10,272 in 2020 to 7,567 in 2022. Kids in Care have dropped from 3,505 in 2020 to 2,757 in 2022. Removal numbers have dropped from 2,000 in 2020 to 1,390 in 2022. In 2021, the number of children removed by age 0-5 was at 52%, 38% for ages 6-13 and 10% age 14-17 for a total of 1,813. In 2022, the number of children removed by age 0-5 is at 52%, 36% for ages 6-13 and 12% for ages 14-17 for a total of 1,390.
 - Permanency outcomes for reunification have dropped from 64.5% in 2020 to 59% in 2022; for adoption, in 2020 it was at 19% and raised slightly to 19.2% in 2022, and guardianship has increased from 9.5% in 2020 to 15.8% in 2022.
 - Exits have decreased from 2,392 in 2020 to 1,752 in 2022. Entries has decreased from 2,000 in 2020 to 1,390 in 2022.
 - Nikki will get this data out to everyone.

10:20-11:20am Regional Updates

Region 1 – presented by Eric Barnosky

- More success in last 6 months in recruiting and hiring staff;
- Sidney office has been recruiting for a vacant position for 6 months. All vacancies have been hired;
- Glendive has been able to hire new positions;
- One vacancy CPS position in Hardin;
- Two CPS vacancies in Wolf Point area;
- Region 1 has been chosen as one of three pilot site. Getting more knowledge and expertise and focus on engaging some of the older youth so they can have a forever life family;
- Family Support team meetings have been successful. If there is any danger, the team focuses on putting a team together to get families quickly connected with treatment, support and safety resources;
- CPS workers are meeting face-to-face.

Region 2 – presented by Sahrita Jones

- Two openings are available in Great Falls and one is opening in November;
- One opening in Havre at the end of November;
- New worker coming on board in Cutbank area;

- Staffing is in good standing. 22 workers under 1 year and will increase to 27 at the end of November;
- New programs coming to Great Falls are being introduced with good training. They are selected as a pilot like Region 1;
- There are three new supervisors in Great Falls;
- The pay rate increase has helped a great deal;
- They hired a Hill County supervisor who started 2 weeks ago;
- The SRS has been able to increase the case load;
- Family support teams are going strong. They added a couple new provider;
- Rocky Boy was able to hire their director, Shanene Hammond;
- Good training going on and will have stability soon;

Region 3 – presented by Nikki Grossberg

- Billings, Yellowstone County, and Lewistown had increases in staffing;
- Billings is almost fully staffed;
- Caseloads are at 25 per worker rather than the 40-50;
- Lewistown is down a supervisor;

Region 4 – presented by Jennifer Hoerauf

- Region 4 is a very large region with many kids in care;
- Will be hiring a second child welfare manager;
- Will be starting a Family Support Team;
- Will be piloting the Quick Program focusing on transitioning older youths;
- Kids in care for 12 months are staffed every month;
- Moved 13 kids into permanency from September to October;
- Three children were dismissed off trial home visits to their parents;
- Seven kids were moved to FRS for finalization within the last month;
- Finalized one guardianship;
- We helped facilitate one case when the tribe decided to take jurisdiction;
- One child aged out;
- Two supervisors hired and will start in next couple months;

Presented by Laura McCullough for the Helena area

- Family Support Teams begin in January;
- Promise 686 program with the care portal to be presented in next coming year;
- Centralized Intake is seeing quicker response time;
- Centralized Intake fifth Supervisor position will be opening for advertising;

Region 5 – presented by Courtney Callaghan

- Region 5 has had fewer vacancies in the last 6 months;
- Starting to see stabilization in counties;
- Pay Increase for field staff;
- Former employees returned due to pay increase;
- Seeing more applicants for open positions;

- Remain at a handful of staff in Missoula. Should be filled by end of year;
- There were three resignations in Hamilton and three in Lake County;
- Lake County has one staff onboarding right now;
- New cases coming in decreased;
- Lower number of kids in care;
- Increased criminal activity in violent crimes;
- Justice council working on program in order to get to clients sooner;
- Brought on two safety resource positions;
- They have 15 families for in-home safety plans;
- Will be replacing an RA position – more information available at next meeting;

Region 6 – presented by Nikki Grossberg - Jennifer Blodget out

- Kalispell, Libby and Thompson Falls are still struggling with staff numbers;
- Pre-hearing conferences and emergency protective hearings are streamlined with court process;
- Have been doing work with Logan Health in trying to understand what their needs are and what our needs are;
- Jennifer Blodget was able to promote a CPSS to the vacant CWM position she had been covering;
- Results of case review has greatly improved since Jennifer Blodget has taken over;

11:20-11:40am Program/Licensing Bureau Updates – by Bureau Chiefs

Licensing Bureau - presented by Theresa Becker

- There are a couple openings with pay changes;
- Identifying work plans and goals for the bureau such as diligent recruitments;
- Updating training for Resource Families to see if it can be done more efficiently, effectively and more engaging with a focus on everything starting from when children are removed to reunification to children heading into guardianship and adoption to make sure we are supporting the work;
- Kyla Rock and Theresa connect with the Parent Advisory Council in order to gain information about the work they do and shape our processes.
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Program Bureau - presented by Mick Leary

- Keep paper work moving forward to keep Feds happy so they will continue to fund us;
- Dale and Mick are trying to get out to all the tribes in order to get Information out to them;
- Administrative rules are being reviewed. Oct-Dec is a dead zone time where no new rules can be implemented;
- Working closely with fiscal bureau to implement audit findings during the last couple years;
- New contracts officer – JoAnne Rude; She has over 300 contracts to handle;
- Effie Benoit is getting her staff up to speed;
- Talking with tribal staff and our staff on what the barriers are to implementing some of the procedures that were put into effect on therapeutic group homes that were designed to comply with the Family First requirements for QRTP (Qualified Residential Treatment Programs);
- Changed rules for congregate care to make sure we are meeting federal requirements and that kids are getting the treatment they need;

- Kerrera Pretty Paint attended Race Equity meeting. Native kids in Montana are disproportionately represented within our foster care population. This is a long term process;
- Helena is a difficult city to recruit. The main issue is not getting applications. Are there things we can do internally to get things done to go more smoothly?

Provider Comments:

- Nikki discussed the Remote Work Option that has been opened up for state employees. CPS can work up to 2 days remotely including supervisors. If there are comments or concerns, let Nikki know.
- We continue to look at being more informed and help workers within their professional and personal life in the Wellness Program. A Wellness Program Manager was hired.
- Megan Bailey mentioned the outdated rules for Substance Use Disorders. Rules for providers had not been updated since 1998. The state updated them and found there were a lot of discrepancies with OIG and Medicaid policies. The providers are waiting to find out what the changes are.
- Brandi Loch introduced herself and lightly covered her role.
- Julie Fleck discussed recent licensing changes and SUD rules.
- Rochelle Beley provided that there are no huge updates on Individual therapy rules.
- Megan Bailey mentioned that all the codes are the same.
- Rochelle Beley – Are there any difficulties to provide counseling services? How is everyone doing in their region?
- Jennifer Hoerauf: They have providers who are accepting Medicaid, but it is time consuming and complicated for them.
- Rochelle Beley will help with any meetings and/or training which would be good for RA's to have.
- Brandi Loch will get with Rochelle, Megan and Julie after the meeting to see if there is a potential for the therapy role.
- Ben Davis, Friends of the Children, reported that they are at the end of their first year of operation and working with 16 children in Missoula and enrolling another 16 children. They will be expanding to Lake County. Nina Hernandez will be the new Executive Director in Billings and will be on board within a week. Ben talked about different family cases with Friends of the Children. They are excited about their increased work with CFS.

11:40-11:50am No Public Comment

11:50-12:00noon Wrap Up/Next Meeting: Chair Rochelle Beley

- Next meeting date will be January 12th or 20th. Nikki will get email out with a decision.
- Has a decision been made about what meetings will be in person and what ones are zoom? Two virtual and two in person is being considered but no decision has been made. Rochelle felt that virtual for January would be good because of the weather. People like to meet in person in January so they get together with legislature. Nikki will keep everyone updated.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:20am