

## State Advisory Council Minutes

Monday, November 3, 2014

**Members in attendance:** Elisabeth Cannata, Claudia Carbonari, M.D., Jacquelyn Farrell, Deb Kelleher, Patricia Lorenson, Regina Moller, Susan Sherrick,

**Also in Attendance:** Irma Camacho, Jeannette Archer-Simons, Susan Smith

**Members Absent:** Janice Andersen, Lorna Grivois (for Donna Grant), Erica Kesselman, M.D., Regina Roundtree,

### Welcome & Introductions

Patricia Lorenson

Deb Kelleher-was appointed to SAC from Region 5 RAC-is Executive Director for Annie C. Courtney Foundation. Also serve as the project manager for the Regional Community Collaborative for Foster Care and Adoption for region 5, formerly known as Foster/Adoptive Mission but no longer using that name.

The organization is piloting extreme recruitment (which is a form of recruitment of adoptive families for kids who have been stuck in foster care for a long time and also provide clinical services. Have worked in foster care and adoption since 1994 and adopted three children from foster care.

Jeanette Archer-Simons, is the Interim Executive Director for the Child and Family Guidance Center. Was brought in by Board of Directors to lead organization while they are transitioning to a new Executive Director. Will be here through March of next year. A former foster mother, has 25 years of experience in non-profit management.

### RAC & Community Update

Irma Camacho-Region 1. Did not attend the last RAC meeting as she was attending a Consortium Training in Norwalk. They discussed topics from the all-day retreat. Discussed ways to better identify what the RACs job is and help provide information to the SAC. Discussed subcommittee for membership, to better define what the positions are at are vacant in SAC to assist with recruitment. In addition in 2016 we will be undergoing a federal review. Susan Smith will be discussing this during her report.

In response to Ms. Archer's question, the definition of the role of the Advisory group was discussed. SAC's role is to advice the Commissioner. The RAC's role includes advising the Commissioner and facilitate the coordination of services. RAC's participation was added to SAC in 2012. SAC also has a role as a Citizens Review Panel which has a federal connection and enumerated responsibilities pursuant to federal legislation that also provides modest resources in funds to SAC/RAC.

Jacquelyn Farrell - Region 2 has been focusing on happenings in their region regarding stats and the status of two local offices (Milford & New Haven). They have also continued to work on consistent parent representation with some success. Parents have raised several issues. One, (which they asked to be brought before SAC) to assure the development of a satisfaction survey for clients to receive regarding their experience with DCF. All the providers are required to do these satisfaction surveys as a result of their intervention and contact. But these parents had done a lot of work on one in the past and it never went beyond the local level or ever used.

As part of cultural awareness, Region 2 continues with the on-going work of cultural awareness. Because one of the local offices was involved in the Racial Justice Workgroup, they brought back some of the materials to RAC.

Deb Kelleher- Region 5- have been writing sub-committee reports to bring before SAC and the Commissioner. The sub-committees are: DCF Knowledge and Case Load, Adolescent Foster Homes, Education, Mental Health. They had reviewed the last of the sub-committee reports (5) and are still in the process of refining them because there is a lot of overlap in the recommendations that were made by

the various sub-committees. Two of the recommendations that will be in the final report (1) a dormancy period for youth aging out of foster care so that their cases remain dormant for 6-months in the event that the youth change their minds. This practice would present less of a hassle to get the kids back into the system and the help they need. (2) To develop a buddy system for youth who do age-out utilizing other youth who have aged-out. It would be a low cost option, provide work for the youth who have aged-out, and provide a good bridge to meet with others who have been in the same situation. The report should be completed for next month.

Sue Smith clarified that the intention was to have the report brought to SAC since it is a RAC report following through on intentions voiced at the retreat.

Inquiry was made whether the CRP check has been issued to Region 5. The check would have been for \$1500 written by RYASAP. (The CRP documents describing the program in full will be forwarded to Ms. Kelleher.)

Due to the substantial participation from youth and an increase in participation from families, Region 5 will be using the funds in the form of gift cards. The meeting time of 3 – 4:30pm has facilitated family participation.

LISA Inc. does a Life Skills program on the premises where we conduct the meetings at Waterbury Youth Services and the youth from that program attend the RAC meetings.

### **DCF Updates**

### **Susan Smith**

CFSR- (Child and Family Service Reviews) that the federal government Administration for Children and Families administers to all states over a course of certain periods of time. This is the third round which is a substantial change from the previous round. They have introduced new measures and changed some of the processes. In the past, the CFSR process consisted of the feds coming on site and looking at a certain number of case records, so a distribution of adoption or children in placement records and then kids who were in home. That concept of review of records will still happen, but the feds are allowing states to potentially do their own internal self-monitoring process. We are opting to do an internal self-monitoring process for a variety of reasons. We have been working on and conferencing with our federal liaison once a month on how we can develop something that is an integrated part of the work the department does. We are taking into consideration the court monitor work, our own internal review with quality assurance processes, our Administrative Case Review. It doesn't make sense to have these discreet review opportunities without connecting the dots. If the CFSR is required of us every certain number of years, and the intent of it is to allow jurisdictions to get a sense of their functioning, then it is a good thing and something we should be doing on an on-going basis. We are looking at how to incorporate that. Years ago we incorporated the measures related to the CFSR into our Administrative Case Review process, so we know that every 6 months kids and their families go through the Administrative Case Review process. The instrument we created incorporates the measures that the feds have. In addition to incorporating whatever new measures there may be, we want to think about how to incorporate some of these processes.

Mentioned before was the focus group component with outside entities. That has been exclusive to the CFSR process. We are now figuring out how we can incorporate some of that with some kind of on-going frequency and the SACs and RACs as well.

We don't want the CFSR to be a discreet process that happens every 4, 5, or 6 years and that we are scrambling to comply with it. If it is intended to support jurisdictions in child welfare agencies really getting a good sense of their functioning, we should be doing this ongoing. We are looking to build upon our existing ACR process. Unlike other states, we have about 60 staff who are dedicated ACR reviewers (some part time). We are scheduled for this review in 2016 although originally set for 2017. We asked to go in 2015 because that process could inform the development of SACWIS (the new child welfare information system replacing our current LINK system). They were not able to grant our petition to go as early as 2015, but they could accommodate us for 2016. We are hoping this will allow us to benefit from that review process and where available, we might be able to actually inform that new system as best as we can.

The lead person on CFSR is Susan Smith in partnership with the staff in the Office of Research and Evaluation, Administrative Case Review office. Consideration is being given to have a dedicated person coordinate the process but we are waiting to hear back if the feds will allow us to do our own self-

directed process because that would change the functioning of that role and the type of expertise that we would require. If the feds do not accept our doing our own internal driven process and go back to the traditional on-site, then this would affect the person's function which would be more of coordinating that onsite review as opposed to helping us build the internal capacity which is a little different.

Clarification about "self-monitoring" was requested. It means not bringing in the crew of supervisors and social workers from other parts of the country looking at the department. But it still requires the federal vetting process so all the data and information needs to still go through the feds for approval. There is no state that has not actually gotten Performance Improvement Plan - (PIP) the mechanism by which the feds ask for remediation of issues that they identify.

It is a pretty heavy lift- but this seems to make sense for where we are as an agency and where we want to go to use this as an opportunity to embed that quality assurance function more deeply into the work and fabric of the department.

It is the intention that the PSDCRS system will be integrated into the new system. And similarly the conduit system that is used to capture case management information for kids at CJTS would also be integrated. We want a single seamless system that would allow us to look at information in an integrated way.

We just started some of the internal Infinity groups this week and will have staff beginning in March 2015 with this as their dedicated function to support. We have entered into a contract and selected Deloitte to be the vendor for this and KPMG is going through an assessment process to do some mapping in terms of the functionality. Deloitte has an extensive history with SACWIS development and the DC system they recently completed will be the model for us. We have gone down there and seen some the function in DC. Their system will be the base model for us and we look to determine whether or not we need to do any tweaks to that system. The hope is that there are aspects of it that we can adopt and make whatever small portion of tweaks that are specific to CT.

Question: Any work planned with Value Options so their MT TPR system may be integrated? Our intention is that we not have separate processes. So restraint seclusion and such are going through that single process. This topic could really be a whole other meeting but some of the examples we have seen from other jurisdictions do allow providers with select permission, to enter info into the SACWIS system, which is of great interest-and are looking at if we were to do an integrated case plan, what would it look like, what are other jurisdictions doing so that we are all working for the same case plan-rather than a family having five or six different plans. How do we maximize technology so families can provide feedback on their plan and record some of that. There are a lot of exciting things that are happening in other communities that we are looking to adopt. Deloitte also did the system for Delaware and Delaware folks are one of the few remaining consolidated child welfare agencies so we are looking to what they are doing to integrate those various pieces. We are getting advice from Delaware in terms of some of their case planning work. So the next 18 to 24 months is going to be a push on the agency to roll out this new system.

We have surveyed our staff (the median age being 15) since they have a lot of interest in this and are savvy, we want to know from them what technology we should adopt. There were certain things that absolutely resonated- voice to text (in the field they want to be able to speak into our iPhone and be able to say and have it go into the system. We have seen versions where folks can make a notation and it goes into the actual case plan or record. Again having a consolidated case planner care plan.

Each case has a dedicated email so folks can use that to scan documents and it goes directly into the case record. There are a lot of things that make it easier so we no longer have to deal with some of the paper base stuff that is happening. Our interest is to have it as technologically and electronically driven as possible because folks can carry it in their hand. Obviously we are very cognizant as all jurisdictions are with the protection of confidentiality. There are protections that exist, should a device be lost, you are locked out and with the "grenade" concepts go into effect. Entries immediately back into the system and you wouldn't actually have anything on the device itself. You access it through your log-in. If someone (an outsider) does not have the ability to log in they just have a device. This is another piece - the investment that it will take in order to have the right technology, whether it is iPhones, some kind of tablet device, laptop. So obviously that is also part of making sure we have appropriate resources so staff in the field can do the work there. Give them the ability to do that case plan with families in their homes. In some jurisdictions people actually sign on tablets, the family signs-off on

tablets. Fernando Muñiz and Sue Smith are the geek leads on some of this project and are excited about some of the things that they have seen. This is a big initiative that is being undertaken by the department.

From the beginning Ms. Smith's intent was that the ACR work that the department does, (one of components Susan Smith oversees) to have clear relevance and value. It is disconcerting that folks have not seen it to be as valuable and useable as it should be. Regardless of whether the feds say yes you can do your own internal process it is still Sue's aim, with the Commissioner and Court Monitor in support of using the ACR process as the corner stone of our CQI. You have no better window in the department than that process. It touches 7,000 kids and cases a year. We do 14,000 reviews a year – so we are doing the in-homes as well as kids who are in placement. The CFSR does 70 or so records, the court monitor does 54 per quarter, both pale in comparison to 7,000- which is much more statistically significant and give us a better sense of our functioning. We need to be thinking about what is the information we are able to glean here –how do we use this to extend our practice model -who do we look at this as part of our teaming continuum. Folks know that we have adopted considered removal team meetings, we have permanency team meetings, and team decision making and Ms. Smith never understood why ACR was not viewed as part of the teaming continuum which have families, providers, and workers there. There are certain things that the ACR staff are needing to look at to assure minimal compliance with federal components, but ultimately it is about facilitating a discussion, about how do we move this family forward and having somebody independently and objectively say we need to go here, we didn't follow through on this. This review process can go beyond QA and move on to something where we look at it in terms of the system level of the department. Looking at this as something that radiates. So our child and family is in the center (that is where you get some of that QA), as you radiate out from a worker to units to regions and departments, that is where you get your CQI. And if we are already this process, then we should look at how to we extend that, how do we change some of the work we are doing there that makes sure that folks are valued.

We started doing an Inter-Rater Reliability process with the ACR- it will be valued only if they think the information has integrity – so last year we did a contained focus Inter-Rater Reliability review with our Office of Research & Evaluation.

What is an Inter-Rater Reliability Process? As an ACR reviewer, I reviewed this case and identified the strengths, these are areas that need improvement. If someone else did the exact same review, would we come out basically the same result? If we don't, why? That is critical, our staff needs to know it doesn't matter who reviews it. We are all going to come out the same way. Is there some training issues that are thwarting that or some other things? We wanted to make sure that folks felt confident that any reviewer that they got would be looking at their information through the same lens. The result was that there are some areas that needed work. We originally thought to do this on an annual basis, but we re-conceived this notion and decided that this should be part of an on-going process. So what we will be doing now is during the course of each month, there will be an X number of ACR reviews and reviewers that we will doing an Inter-Rater reliability, so we are looking at a couple of hundred over the course of the year (20-30 reviews each month by people from the Office of Research and Evaluation, people from court monitor, and other divisions, to assess they too would come out with the same rating, which allows us to think about what training that we need to do, consider supervision issues with our staff. There are a myriad of things that we could potentially do with through this single process. It would also start to turn the curve and help the messaging that is critical that the ACR has value and ratings you are getting are meaningful and not subjective.

This is part of some the work. We have been meeting with court monitor routinely, and have ACR Advisory Group which consists of actual members, actual reviewers. We meet once a month –with the management team and discuss how we will make this change. What issues they are grappling with, and how is it working for them. We are really trying to think about this in a much more integrated way and that we are all working out of one standard.

The feds are coming Nov 20 and 21. On the 20<sup>th</sup> they will sit in on a couple of ACR's and on 21<sup>st</sup> chat and get feedback and we will also have them work with us on some concepts to assure we have consistency of definitions, i.e. concerted efforts. We want to make we all are applying that federal standard of concerted efforts. The Court monitor, ORE and QA & ACR managers as well as some of the

ACR reviewer will sit in on that. A lot is happening with respect to that work and we are letting regions know the changes that are happening and that we need to better partner.

Question: In this process are regions being tracked to identify any patterns in terms of case review.

Response: It is done presently. There are reports that are generated related to the ACR and in some of that we are reviewing it. Do we see differences in the number of regions that have a certain # of strengths or areas needing improvement with their case practice reviews. We also look to see if it has implications in terms of the work volume for our reviewers or is it indicative of folks looking at the work differently. We can look at it by statewide average and by regions. There are existing reports that allow us to look at that. Also in the past we had 6 ACR managers. A few years ago, that went to four. Susan was able to recruit the two managerial positions. But instead of dedicating them to the region, decided to keep 4 specifically to the region, but change the focus. So those 4 positions will be working with the ACR review staff on a day to day basis ensuring that daily functioning of that process, and applications are going well. But the two other positions – one exclusively on training (making sure we are incorporating policy into the ACR practice, supporting the training needs of our ACR staff as well as ACR managers and the other is data and CQI and that individual really getting underneath that information and data to develop reports that are specific to the regions and also working out some of the train issues going across the department. In the old model each ACR program managers were effectively expected to do all that and it did not seem effective and efficient – there is no way they could do all those components, with the same levels in competency. With the dedicated positions, it gives us more depth and moves us closer to that model that is intended through the whole CFSR concept and process.

Question: For recommendations coming out of this process in terms of integrating them into the department, is it still in the process of development.

Response: Yes, We have not gotten to the point of incorporating some of the work in the same degree. We get certain things that are generated through Ray Mancuso's (Court Monitor) reviews, try to make course corrections and changes, but thinking of this in a more concerted way is still part of the thinking. There are aspects of the ACR that inform decision making and practice of the department. For example, the department looked at some of the ACR findings and identified for certain staff that they were in need of case planning training. So last year, every region engaged in some case planning training for staff based upon what the reviews for the ACR revealed. But, turning it to the corner stone of CQI is much bigger, a lot needs to happen. Part is also are the feds going to allow us to do our own process because that will change or impact how we will think about some of this and what are some of the functions we will associate with.

We are also looking at EKHERD from Florida that do some of the predictive analytics on child fatalities. They have come up with a model and have nine core questions that are reviewed on an on-going basis. We met with them about one month ago and they are very interested in partnering with us and have had some on-going discussions with them. And this too would be something I would want to build directly into our ACR process. We are mapping those questions to our ACR ACRI as well as thinking about how to imbed it with our supervision model. The nine questions you should be asking for any case. If it is part of our supervision model, these are the questions at a minimum the supervisor should be asking when meeting with their staff and then when we go into the ACR process, we should be seeing better results and help them to guide some of the discussions.

Looking at adding the EKHERD and child fatality questions into our process specifically targeting in-home cases zero – two to help us determine those cases at greater risk for potential fatality.

### **Membership Updates - Leave of Absence Policy**

Donna Grant (Region 3) has asked for leave of absence because of school work she is doing and precludes her from participating. Taking into consideration the two groups that make up SAC (in terms of appointing authority), members appointed by the governor's office and those appointed by their RAC and validated by the Commissioner.

The conclusion was that if the person in the RAC category wants to alter their appointment that the RAC can grant the leave and appoint an interim person during the absence. This allows continued representation of region, and it gives some flexibility of membership for the RAC category.

Ms. Lorenson asked for a consensus to formalize this practice it as a policy for this group.

**MOTION:** Consensus was that it was reasonable and the motion was made that should the appointed member of the RAC determine they need a leave of absence, the RAC has the ability to appoint an interim representative. Regina Moller made the motion that the RACs self-fulfill their absentee slots. Seconded by Dr. Claudia Carbonari. Unanimously accepted.

The question was posed as how the same situation would be covered by the other category of membership. This would require a legislative change. The current statute states that three meeting absences means that the member has resigned. Discussion about Roberts' rules followed regarding quorum. If you have a decline in your membership and those folks do not exist then the balance of the folks that exist can make decisions.

Further discussion continued regarding consideration of the proportionality of the number of meetings and attendance requirements due to the extended number of meetings that have been added.

Ms. Lorenson directed the attention to the *Membership Committee Report (11/3/14)* attached.

She reviewed the report and identified some of the things that this group should be aware of.

-The secretary of state of requirement of groups like SAC to consider gender and race and report any issues with gender or race. The report is completed by the department every other year and the last one posted is November 2012.

-(c) Youth is under DCF and only includes one parent out of a myriad of other participants that are stipulated.

-The NE region has its own negotiating council for negotiating with state government—"NE Regional Negotiating Council." This is helpful for the RAC in that region to know.

-Trafficking in Persons Council (was not aware of this group)

-Noted DCF advisory groups from the website and added that SAC could find it helpful to know what those groups are talking about if they need assistance/ support in their recommendations.

Noted SAC needs to know context and parameters as we look to make changes on issues surrounding membership. We have a high number of parent designations that is the most difficult to fill and the reason we are considering making a change. When SAC is ready to make some changes, talking with Josh Howroyd and Susan Smith will be most helpful.

Announced that we have a new member appointed to SAC, Dr. Erica Kesselman, who is expected to attend the December 1 meeting.

In September we forwarded an application for SAC membership to a referral by Dr. Carbonari. Have not heard anything yet.

Facilitating application for SAC membership.

Discussions were carried regarding the process.

Place a description of the application process on the DCF website. The description should include the categories of SAC membership and vacancies.

Include the Statute which outlines the function of the State Advisory Council.

**Motion** that instructions to obtain an application for State Advisory Council Membership (titled **Background Information Questionnaire, State Boards and Commissions**) appear on the DCF website under the SAC Advisory Group section and a notation be added that it will be reviewed by the SAC Membership Committee to meet the diverse needs.

**Further move** to include the Statute and information to contact the DCF Commissioner's office to obtain the application.

Elisabeth Cannata made the motion. Jacquelyn Farrell seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Discussion ensued regarding the Background Information Questionnaire form and the extremely personal, detailed financial information requested. In an effort to respect the privacy of the applicants,

the members asked that a one-page cover sheet be included with application form noting the name of the applicant, their occupation, who recommended them to apply, what they can bring to SAC, and what category they are applying for. An email at the DCF Commissioner's Office will be identified where the information from the cover sheet can be sent.

Membership issues.

Discussion about diversity of gender in SAC was discussed.

Since the RACs are more diversified and demonstrate commitment to the work, maybe the recruitment emphasis for SAC could be focused on the RACs. They are already acting on an interest at the RAC level and it would serve as a natural pipeline to the SAC.

Another solution posed was that a legislative change be considered to modify the composition of the SAC for two appointments from each RACs. This would enable the RACs' to funnel a second person to SAC without that person having to through the Governor's vetting process. This would need a legislative action.

It was noted was that the required **Background Information Questionnaire** is great deterrent to our filling the parent/family member category.

Three things were identified to facilitate recruitment of membership to SAC:

Application going through the Commissioner; Reducing specificity in the membership language that allows flexibility; Screening process (to use the RACs as a mechanism to fulfill – screening process)

These considerations are timely since Josh Howroyd is working on the DCF legislative list for the new session.

### **Retreat Themes and Next Steps**

As a result of discussions carried at the retreat, the importance of formalizing and creating a process for receipt of RAC recommendations was strongly voiced.

The draft of *SAC/RAC Recommendations to DCF (11/3/14)* and the *DCF Reply Form for SAC/RACs Recommendations (11/3/14)* were reviewed.

The buy-in on recommendations can go both ways.

Ms. Lorenson asked that the RAC representatives take this back to their individual RACs asking for their input on what they would like included or removed.

She indicated that it is an opportunity to have a tracking tool to document a recommendation process and provides a format to assure recommendations reach a certain level.

Extensive discussions were carried regarding the drafted form and recommendation to package the general message were noted.

Before it is presented to the RACs, consider an explanation as folks may interpret the form to be too formalized, or that SAC appears as the filter. (The form appears to suggest that a RAC recommendation has to be vetted by the SAC. This perception could impact the importance of the RAC.)

Propose that we are working in the spirit of partnership because it lends itself to assure a statewide view. Explain that we are responding to the momentum at the retreat. Describe the themes that came out of it and that now we want to figure out how to be better partners.

Also consider that when a recommendation goes to the Commissioner that it be in the form of a long letter as opposed to a form.

Suggestion presented to insert a "purpose of the document" section at the top. What is the reasoning behind the recommendation? For RAC: to notify the SAC or seek input or support from the SAC.

For SAC: to seek input from the RACs, to seek feedback, to request action from the RAC

A stronger directive was made to the RAC representatives to inform their respective RACs the thinking process of these discussions on how we should / could be communicating. Also advising them that this is one of the theme clusters from the retreat about the communication to and from.

## **Chairpersonship**

Patricia Lorenson's term as SAC member was up in June and has been acting as interim co-chair.

Met with Janice Andersen who indicated her plans to resign as co-chair of SAC. They also discussed that RYASAP would continue as our fiduciary. This needs to be confirmed.

Ms. Lorenson volunteers to serve on the newly formed Membership Committee as we work through the issues, but needs to have an election for chair or co-chair by next month.

She asked for anyone who is interested to serve as co-chairs to email Ms. Lorenson of their interest – ideally it would be two persons to serve as co-chairs.

The SAC Bylaws state the SAC chair serves for two years.

It was recommended that a rotation be devised for future SAC chair position.

Some members voiced the need for a transition for the term issue.

The Membership Committee will meet discuss how to go forward and send a recruit request out to the membership. The matter is postponed to the next meeting.

## **2015 SAC meeting schedule**

The consideration to change the SAC meeting day was made in order to increase participation of youth and family. It was recommended that SAC reach out to the Youth Advisory Council requesting a presentation to build on what exists.

The results of the poll to change the SAC meeting day to Tuesday was reviewed. Most members were in favor of a Tuesday early evening meeting, preferring the second Tuesday of the month.

Another compromise may be to switch the time and day of one or two meetings per year, to open it up for others to attend. Consider October which is when we go into a new legislative session, and spring to review how the past year has been. Those time frames would make sense.

Consider changing the location of a meeting to obtain representation in other parts of the state.

The consensus was to keep the meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday morning of the month, keeping in mind that a change could benefit membership and attendance. If the barrier is the schedule, and you can attend on a second Tuesday of the month, note your availability for second Tuesday.

The possibility of an evening meeting be held twice a year for reasons that make sense at that point in time.

In terms of the chairmanship, Ms. Lorenson will work with the membership committee to develop the SAC chair transition.

Susan Smith asked that the meetings to be attended by the DCF Commissioner be identified as soon as possible

Meeting ended at 11:54p.