

Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families Quarterly Report

1st Quarter FY – 2002

Introduction

The Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families (Council) became official at a swearing in ceremony on January 15, 2002. Twenty-one citizens representing each of the eleven communities of Belknap County now comprise the Council and have become fully active in developing the organizational structure by which it will operate. An Executive Committee consists of an interim Chair, Vice-Chair and four other members. A By-laws Committee, consisting of eight Council members, has completed and forwarded three policy drafts to the County Commission for their approval.

The By-laws remain a work in progress but substantial work has been done and awaits acceptance of a Vision and Mission Statement by the full Council before submission to the County Commission. Other Council members are engaged in setting up community meetings with local towns people as a precursor to future planning forums. Many unsolicited need areas have been brought to the attention of staff through one-on-one interviews and various coalition meetings. Numerous community presentations and appearances on Cable Access TV have been conducted to inform the public of the work of the Council. A Robert Wood Johnson grant has been awarded to the New Hampshire District Court System of which the Council is a partner and the Council's own grant-writing capacity has been called into use. Overall, the Council has gotten off to a good start.

Council Organizing Activities

At its first meeting on February 8, 2002, the Council elected Gil Schohan (Belmont) as Council Chair and Robert Rovella (New Hampton) as Vice-Chair. These individuals will serve in an interim capacity until such time as the Council establishes its by-laws and defines its election process. The Executive and By-laws Committees are also somewhat interim in order to conduct Council business and organizing activities during its inaugural year. Many other Council members serve on these two committees while still others are providing leadership in other projects or performing lead liaison roles in their communities.

Policies which have been reviewed by the By-laws and the Executive Committees, and submitted to the County Commissioners for approval, consist of *Conflict of Interest*, *Council Support of Grant Applications* and *Support for Training and Education*. As the by-laws reach finalization by the Council, they too will be submitted for final approval to the County Commission.

The Council is fully staffed as a result of hiring of Ms. Judith Buswell as Planning and Research Coordinator. A full job description had previously been submitted to the Commissioners for approval and posting of the position. Effective March 20, 2002, the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families became an approved department of Belknap County.

Community Outreach

Several activities comprised community outreach during these initial months of Council organization. Strategies have included one-on-one interviews with key leaders in state Juvenile Justice initiatives, local organization leaders and preliminary community discussions to establish a framework for eventual community planning forums.

One-on-one interviews have included the following individuals:

State

Commissioner of Department of Health and Human Services

Executive Director of New Futures

Director and administrative staff of Division of Juvenile Justice Services

Administrator of Family Services (DHHS)
Director of Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery
Executive Director of New Health Children's Trust Fund
Director Granite State Youth Mentors
Clinical Director of DJJS
Director of Juvenile Parole and Probation Officers/Laconia DO
Director of Victim Services, NH Department of Corrections

County

Laconia School District officials
Director, Belknap County Human Services
Laconia District Court Clerk
Director, Restorative Justice Program
Administrator of Genesis
Judge Willard Martin
Director of D. O. Division of Health and Human
Belknap County Extension
United Way Director
Director of Horizons Counseling Services

Community presentations have been made to the following audiences:

Ester Peters, Cable Access TV Channel 25
Zonta Club
LRGH
Leadership Lakes Region
"Asked and Answered", Cable TV Channel 25
Gilford Drug and Alcohol Prevention Task Force
Community Technical College/Laconia
Laconia Kiwanis Club
Belknap County Police Chiefs Association
Congregational Church Men's Group/Laconia
"The Chamber at Work", Cable TV Channel 25
Alton Selectmen's Meeting

Early initiatives that have sprung up as a result of Council inquiries and advocacy include a joint endeavor between the Community Technical College/Laconia campus Fine Arts program, area high schools, and the Citizens Council to create an arts contest leading to an art exhibit and potential public relations material centered on student depictions of current issues confronting youth.

Another Community Technical College and Citizens Council initiative which will ultimately involve many county programs for youth and families involved with the juvenile justice system is the *Community Justice Institute*, a curriculum-based course and seminar series detailing local programs and efforts in the emerging community justice arena. The institute will be open to credit-seeking students as well as the general public who may wish to audit the course.

The Council sought out and hosted an organizational meeting of former mediators throughout the county in the interest of determining whether there is a base of support to resurrect *mediation services* for family and youth in Belknap County. The meeting yielded enthusiastic interest for those who attended and the Council will conduct follow-up activities to identify interest by a host organization.

Numerous other meetings with individuals and organizations have set the stage for further interagency collaboration and development of supports needed by County children, youth, and families.

Need Areas

Many areas of need have been brought to the Council's attention in a short period of time. Even before conducting local planning forums, the needs confronting Belknap County children, youth and families

transcend all levels of services and programs. A complete array of services, including prevention, intervention, education and treatment services is best described as non-existent. The presence and performance of quality services by competent professionals notwithstanding, there are many services and supports that Belknap County simply does not have enough of or does not have at all.

We must keep in mind that while the Council has yet to perform community planning activities, the following list of concern areas have all been brought to the Council's attention through the various meetings, interviews and conversations held over the past three months. Until much more in-depth analysis can be performed and community input added, this list will serve as an indicator of the breadth of concerns facing Belknap County. These concern areas should be perceived on the basis of providing an array of services which, if available, could allow many children, youths and families, to be served in their own communities thus enhancing their treatment and reallocating resources to their own county. Early concerns are raised in the following areas:

Parenting training, support and accountability	Alternatives to violence
Mentoring	Mediation
Foster Care	Wrap-around services
Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Substance Abuse Treatment	Mental Health services
Shelter Care for teens	Short-term detention facilities
Coordination of planning and services	Sustainable funding sources

By way of comparison, refer to Appendix A for a look at the types of alcohol and drug prevention and treatment services located in New Hampshire compared to which of those services are available within Belknap County. Regardless of where these services are located, there are very often long waiting lists even for crisis services. Crisis beds do not exist in Belknap County and should a child be sent to such a facility, it is often in one of a few distant towns (e.g. Orion House in Claremont; Somersworth Group Home; Dover Children's Home; or perhaps Phoenix House in Dublin). As for other shelter care services, one must travel to Jefferson, Antrim, Manchester or Unity, New Hampshire. Other residential placement programs also cause a youth to be sent far from home (e.g. Pike and Colebrook, New Hampshire; Arlington and Methuen, Massachusetts; or Brattleboro, Vermont).

As we look further out into the communities, we find other needs such as lack of social activities, access to basic medical care and treatment, transportation, livable wages, affordable housing and many other needs expressed by those with whom we have visited.

One outstanding area of need that must be addressed before the Council can present evidence of need is that of data. This single area may prove the most challenging in how the Council conducts its planning and development activities. Early inquiry suggests that at best data is not integrated in local or regional planning activities; and at worse, it does not exist at all. In order to convince funding sources of the needs to prioritize funding for needed supports and services, the Council will need to encourage cooperative and coordinated data identification, collection and analysis across disciplines, across programs and across communities. Whereas common data sets are not present within agencies and organizations performing similar services, this is going to present some unique challenges in addition to the need for many smaller agencies to develop data generation capacities.

The Council has begun some very elementary attempts to engage agencies in the search for baseline data. We have requested data from local and state sources to begin to develop a sense of how disparate the data processes are among agencies and organizations. Sources already approached for this information are some not-for-profit organizations, county offices, State Department of Education, Youth Detention Center, county police departments and others. This is an area in which the Council will be seeking outside assistance from technical and research experts.

Collaborative Funding Sources

The Council has participated in the writing of a grant to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Juvenile Justice Services, for funding support under the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG). This grant, initially targeted to assist and enhance a local agency's effort in family counseling groups, identified various obstacles in the grant procurement process which the Council will work to remove in future attempts to acquire outside funding.

Through the efforts of the state District Court system, New Hampshire was selected as one of eleven recipients of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *Reclaiming Futures* grants targeting substance abusing teens. The Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families will serve, along with the Nashua Youth Center, as a pilot site under this one-year planning grant. Dependent on future funding, this project could lead to increased funding for substance abuse services. This project is now under way with the hiring of a state coordinator for the grant. A soon-to-be added site coordinator will be assigned to assist the Belknap County effort and our own Judge Martin of the Laconia District Court will participate in a Judicial Fellowship program as part of the overall nation-wide grant.

The Council has given further input and, if selected, will participate in a New Hampshire Department of Corrections grant targeting youth returning from correctional facilities. Titled *Going Home*, this grant would need to rely on communities' ability to re-welcome, through intense support and a well-defined array of services, young citizens who return to their home communities.

Additional grant sources have been researched and the Council will attempt to seek external sources wherever possible for start-up initiatives and program enhancements for local providers and community projects. Further, through its collaborative activities, the Council will intentionally seek cost sharing opportunities for training, technical assistance and consultation to strengthen the array of current and future support services for children, youth, and families in Belknap County.

Training and Technical Assistance

In seeking out opportunities for Council members and staff, we will take advantage of as many offerings provided in our communities and state as possible. To list just some of our participation to date, staff and Council members have attended the following events and forums:

- Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative / National Leadership Summit – Portland, Oregon
- CARE NH Juvenile Competency planning session
- Grant Preparedness workshop – Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery
- Structured Decision-making Process – Division of Children, Youth and Families
- Asset-Based Community Development – Lakes Region Community Services Council
- Community Leadership Institute – New Futures
- Governor's Commission on Alcohol, Drug and Other Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment forum.

Action Outline for Remainder of 2002

Many activities await the Council in the remaining nine months of the fiscal year. While it is impossible to anticipate all that will come its way, or the various diversions it will take to accomplish its goals, Appendix B outlines only a beginning scope of effort through the rest of the fiscal year. Priorities will be influenced by many internal and external events and activities in which the Council will be engaged.

In conclusion, the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families has risen from an idea and a vision of committed members of the Belknap Juvenile Justice Initiative. It has been influenced and nurtured by the richness of its partnership with Deschutes County, Oregon. It has developed its organizational base on which to mature as a voice and a force for children and families. It has been and will continue to be promoted throughout the county and state. It has been named in a major national systems change grant through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. And, it will soon begin a planning process that assures all eleven communities of Belknap County are effectively represented. Through the continued efforts of its members and staff, the Council, the Commission and the County Convention will realize and support the needs of all our children, youth and families wherever they live in Belknap County.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan J. Robichaud
Executive Director

APPENDIX A

Comparison of Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Treatment Services in New Hampshire and Belknap County

Source: Resource Guide for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Services
NH Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery
www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DADAPR

Clinically Managed Residential Detoxification Services

Services are for individuals who are experiencing intoxication from alcohol and/or drugs and are not in a medical emergency. Admission is voluntary and staffed by EMTs as well as staff and volunteers who are specifically trained in the management of the inebriated or impaired person. Sobriety maintenance is a short-term residential program for alcohols and substance abusers. Services include individual group counseling, education sessions and exposure to self-help groups. The purpose is to provide a safe and supportive environment until appropriate treatment becomes available. Offered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Belknap County Program: None

Outpatient Treatment

These programs serve those whose alcohol and drug use affects their daily living; family issues; irregular employment, arrest, etc. The outpatient counselor can be the first step towards comprehensive treatment.

Belknap County Program: Horizons Counseling Center, Gilford

Clinically Managed Low Intensity Residential Treatment Services

Residential facilities designed to give short-term supportive services to the recovering alcoholic and addict. The goal is to prepare each resident for self-sufficiency in the community. Completion of a residential program and/or minimum period of sobriety is a prerequisite.

Belknap County Program: None

Clinically Managed Medium Intensity Residential Treatment Services

Residential post-detoxification facility for individuals who have been substance free for a minimum of 72 hours. Admission is on a voluntary basis. The length of stay averages 28-30 days. Costs are on a sliding fee basis.

Belknap County Program: None

Clinically Managed High Intensity Residential Treatment Services

Programs are for individuals with more severe substance abuse problems. People referred are experiencing serious problems functioning in the general community. Admission is voluntary. The length of stay varies from three months to a year, depending on the needs of the client.

Belknap County Program: None

Other Residential Resources

Provides sober housing funded through private donations and other sources.

Belknap County Program: None

Private Treatment Facilities

Provide a variety of primary, intermediate, and aftercare for adults and in some instances, adolescents. Some of the facilities recognize most major insurance carriers. Treatment modalities are very similar; however, fees charged may vary greatly.

Belknap County Program: Nathan Brody Chemical Dependency Program/ Intensive Outpatient Program, Lakes Region General Hospital

Impaired Driver Intervention Programs

For individuals with substance abuse driving convictions.

Belknap County Program: State-operated program located in Laconia – Multiple Offender Program (MOP); NH Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery.

Prevention Services

Prevention Programs are pro-active programs available at the local level and often at no cost to the consumer. The programs are for the general population and/or for those identified at higher risk to use and abuse drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

Belknap County Program: None

Community Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions

Community-based goals are to raise awareness that youth substance abuse prevention is a priority health concern, and to work collaboratively with communities to establish comprehensive substance prevention programs.

Belknap County Program: None

HIV/AIDS Resources

HIV peer counselors are available at all clinics. Confidential diagnosis, treatment, counseling and testing.

Belknap County Program: None

New Hampshire Correctional Academies

Provide year long program in each county which involves strict probation and case management instead of incarceration.

Belknap County Program: Department of Corrections, Laconia, New Hampshire
Horizons Counseling Center, Gilford, New Hampshire

12 Step Recovery Programs

Alcoholics Anonymous Information

Belknap County Program: Laconia Area AA

Other Related Resources (1-800-804-0909)

Refer to Resource Guide for Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Treatment Services Guide, NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery

APPENDIX B

Action Outline for 2002

April – June

File 1st Quarter Report

Set up accounts and budget processes with the County

Complete By-laws

Establish Election Process – Council Officers

Establish Work Groups for the year (each Council member serves on at least one Work Group)

Establish staggered terms and publish term limits

Define and implement interactive processes with the following grant programs ~

Restorative Justice

Drug Court

Reclaiming Futures (RWJ)

J.A.I.B.G. (Dept. of Juvenile Justice)

Continue Outreach throughout communities and with provider agencies

Compile and present data on out-of-county services for Belknap youth.

Develop Council brochure, business cards, banner, etc.

July- September

File 2nd Quarter Report

Define process for conducting community plan

Train Council members in facilitating community forums

Coordinate with Community Technical College to begin Community Justice Institute

Continue one-on-one Interviews throughout the County

Submit Council budget to Commissioners (September)

October – December

File 3rd Quarter Report

Target communities and begin the planning process.

Continue to Coordinate the Community Justice Institute

Continue one-to-one interviews throughout county

Establish Council committees and workgroups

Meet w/Commissioners to justify budget (October)

Present Budget to County Convention (December)

Plan Annual Meeting (January)