

**ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
MEETING OF JANUARY 12, 2009**

SUMMARY

Attending: Rich Moed, Betty Anson, Katie Brandt, Claudia Ferber, Egon Jensen, Alida Millham, Santana Thibedeau, Deb Coe, Alan Robichaud.

1. Initiative Overview

Rich Moed stressed the importance of this initiative and its potential impact on services for children and families. Belknap County, through the Citizens Council, has mobilized the key stakeholders in services to children and families for the purpose of understanding and improving the way services are provided.

Alan Robichaud gave a brief update on how this initiative was started and why the Citizens Council brought the stakeholders together. Children who are subject to maltreatment are more likely to find their way into the juvenile justice system if we fail to provide the necessary supports and services in the community. The Council produced a report on child maltreatment in Belknap County which led to a symposium in June 2008. The Council has coordinated this initiative since October, 2008

The Data Committee and the Leadership Executive Committee have agreed to a hypothesis which will drive the work of the initiative. This hypothesis was handed out in the meeting packet and discussed. AOC members in attendance reached consensus on the statement as well.

2. Status Report

Concern was voiced over the attendance at this and the prior AOC meeting. The lack of guidance from AOC members may result in the initiative not being in sync with other state sponsored initiatives and priorities. Rich Moed will follow-up with the Commissioner's Office to arrange a discussion.

Leadership Executive Committee (LEC) – Betty Anson updated the committee on the work of the LEC and subcommittees. She reviewed the status of the Co-Chairs and membership representing a broad group of providers and other interested parties. The *Data Committee* (Co-Chairs Sandy Loomis of Familystrength and Pam Kuczkowski, Citizens Council) has refined its scope and is pursuing specifically targeted information on Belknap County youth with histories of involvement with DCYF and DJJS over the past 3 to 5 years. The *Resource Inventory and Assessment Committee* (Co-Chairs Lisa Morris, Executive Director of Lakes Region Partnership for Public Health and Jack Terrill, Executive Director, Lakes Region United Way) has been actively interviewing service providers and producing process maps of how people access and receive services and what assessments are used along the flow of services. The *Legal and Policy Committee* is being activated to examine the statutes, policies and practices that govern the provision of services. The committee is led by Maggie Pritchard, Executive Director of Genesis Behavioral Health. A Co-Chair will be announced soon. It was discussed that Egon and Santana would identify personnel within DHHS and DOE respectively who have legal and policy expertise to join this committee. As a first step, the committee will consider developing a policy dictionary of applicable laws governing the work of child and family services in New Hampshire. The Child Welfare League of America has developed a legal and policy analysis guide that will help to guide the work of this group.

The LEC is compiling a work plan composed of the various activities and tasks of each committee. The work is demanding and complex but with everyone doing their part, with support from their respective organizations' leadership, we will achieve the outcomes we desire. Additionally, the *Prevention Work Group* of the Citizens Council is conducting consumer interviews of individuals who have been involved in any of the various programs and services for reasons of delinquency, mental health, abuse/neglect, domestic violence, special education and the like. Through this feedback and others, we will assure that we have consumer voices in this service integration process.

The first phase of work of this initiative is targeted for completion by early June, 2009. While this is an aggressive schedule, we need to stay the course and move the initiative forward.

3. System of Care Grant – SAMHSA

Egon Jensen discussed the NH Systems Transformation and Realignment project (NH STAR) with the group. This 6 year system of care grant targets Belknap County as the pilot site for developing services and community capacity to bring home 44 youth to their communities. The grant targets youth who have severe emotional disorders and are involved in the juvenile justice system. Also, there is emphasis placed on assisting refugee and immigrant families. Hoping to build on successes, this pilot grant in Belknap County will build on the work being done by the service integration initiative and later expand to Merrimack County.

This highly competitive application process puts New Hampshire in a candidate pool that may well exceed 500 applicants. We should hear of the status of this grant sometime in May or June, 2009 with an implementation date of October if accepted.

4. Challenges and Needs

The committee discussed the threats and opportunities that concern the service integration initiative. Egon indicated that the department is very committed to the integration of children's services. He listed a number of other activities that are being explored to this end. The system of care grant is one; others include a policy academy, a planning grant through the Endowment for Health, with the Community Health Institute, and development of a turnkey Administrative Service Organization (ASO) that would transform children's mental health services through family involvement. We also discussed that the Department is reviewing the Wrap-around Milwaukee as a potential model for developing a community-based, wrap-around process based on braided funding and a capitated rate structure.

County Incentive Funds were discussed and Katie indicated that currently there are no plans to redistribute or administer these funds differently. These are general funds that are apportioned to each county based on a percentage (6%) of the cost of children in placement. County allocations are based on a base amount plus a formula of the number of children placed. Currently, county incentive funds amount to about \$3.5M statewide. These funds are principally applied to prevent placement and typically have been doled out to home visiting, after-school, parenting and diversion programs as well as to child advocacy centers.

Family Resource Centers were discussed. Katie indicated that contracts for these centers have not increased in the past 8 years. About \$120K per year are given out in contracts per year. It was stated that there is an increased need for the development of comprehensive family resource center supports in Belknap County. While there are many agencies providing parenting information, training and support, services remain very disjointed and families still find it difficult and frustrating to locate needed services. The Citizens Council is concerned about this issue and has begun conversations among providers in the region.

Claudia indicated that NAMI NH is providing an 8-week training series called Parents Meeting the Challenge, an advocacy leadership program for families accessing mental health services. NAMI will also be providing a legislative luncheon in February. One may view a public policy agenda by going to NAMI's website. The group discussed the need for stronger mental health support and advocacy in Belknap County. The Citizens Council would welcome NAMI's interaction with its work. It was noted that three of NAMI's Board members reside in Belknap County and one member serves on the Leadership Executive Committee of the service integration initiative.

Deb Coe mentioned that the Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Abuse has an Endowment for Health grant to perform research on children with mental health needs exposed to domestic violence. We may wish to request information on the type of assessment that is being used in this study. She stated that Grace Mattern would be the primary contact person.

Santina Thibedeau reported that SB18 becomes effective on July 1, 2009. This bill raises the age of required attendance of children in school to 18. Under this bill, school districts are permitted to offer off-site educational programs as well as schools within schools in order to assist students in completing their education. Other programs and services include GED options, credit recovery programs and Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO). Additionally, the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections have established an interagency agreement to meet the demands of HB766 which stipulates changes to the laws governing special education. Further, while county correctional facilities shall be exempt from state board of education rules, the standards for the education of students with disabilities and all educational programs shall be set by interagency agreements between the department of education and each county correctional facility.

The meeting concluded with further discussion and concern over the attendance at this meeting by leadership of the Department and Divisions. If this initiative is to succeed, members of all committees must see and hear from the leaders at the top. If this level of support is seen as lacking, people will question their level of investment. There is a good deal of progress being made and an enormous amount of voluntary energy and resources being expended on this effort by many people committed to making systems change and improving services to children and families. We feel that the Department can and should leverage this energy to assist in the threats to services in these difficult economic times. We need to continue to push for participation in this process.

Next Meeting

The Administrative Oversight Committee is scheduled to meet again on April 20, 2009 from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM at the Brown Building in Concord.