

BELKNAP COUNTY SERVICE INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

**DATA COMMITTEE
MEETING OF MARCH 19, 2009**

SUMMARY

Attending: Sandy Loomis, Pam Kuczkowski, Rich Moed, Katy Shea, David Reichel, Eric Borrin, Dan French, Stephanie Halter, Scott Meyer, Betty Anson, Melissa Correia, Ann Marie McCarron, John Tuell, Alan Robichaud.

Melissa and Eric gave an overview of the data research they have conducted on the target population of the initiative. They looked at data traced back three years from the Laconia District Office. They then looked for the crossover indicators and where abuse or neglect occurred prior to, during and after involvement in juvenile justice.

Their research found there to be 743 unduplicated youth involved in the juvenile justice system over the three year period of 2006 through 2008 (calendar years). Of those, 450 (61%) juveniles were determined to have had some form of DCYF assessment with 119 (16%) having been “founded” cases. Discussion followed around the fact that New Hampshire, by comparison to other states, has a lower substantiation rate of founded cases. It amounts to about 10% of all cases investigated. New Hampshire places a high burden of proof on substantiation in comparison and there is no federal standard with which to compare. New Hampshire’s system also allows for voluntary involvement of families in support services, helping with what may often be the need for parenting skills and assistance versus a finding of abuse or neglect. This prevents some cases from progressing to the point of substantiation.

Discussion included the need to drill down and look at risk factors of those on the juvenile caseload; to look at abuse/neglect cases that do not lead to juvenile justice involvement; and to evaluate family data. One in six youth have dually-engaged histories with DCYF and DJJS. National research suggests that where there is substantiated abuse/neglect there is evidence of long-term involvement in child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

John remarked that the 1 in 6 ratio was the highest among other states with which he has worked and suggested we may want to conduct further research into the 16% caseload with founded assessments. David raised the issue of abuse/neglect as a risk factor for juvenile justice involvement and was interested in what interventions are available to families. Sandy suggested that entry into one system from another may not be linear and that youth may find themselves engaging at different points. The notion of intervening at proper points in system involvement, however, is to prevent further trajectory into the child protection and/or juvenile justice system. Beyond establishing cause and effect relationships, we need to create evidence-based interventions that ultimately prevent multi-system involvement and treat the whole child, whole family.

Melissa stated that we need to dig down into systems to determine whether they are well-coordinated, collaborative in their approach to children and families and whether they are utilizing the best intervention approaches. We must be aware of the impact of mental health and substance abuse on children and families and assure that systems that address these issues are part of our planning and service integration.

Pam suggested looking at (1) where the crossover from one system to the other occurs and (2) what the case practice review data offers by way of other descriptive information on the child and family. Rich stated that while we are beginning to see the relationship of DJJS cases entering through the DCYF

process, we may want to look at the reverse to understand those cases that enter DCYF before, during and after DJJS involvement.

Discussion on further understanding who the kids are led to the following suggestions:

- Get more detail on the 16% caseload;
- Add data analysis of DCYF youth with a history of DJJS involvement and identify number of Laconia District Office child protection cases with no JJ history (to clarify JJ prevalence);
- Conduct a case study on this group by looking at:
 - Child protection/juvenile justice risk factors,
 - Family characteristics,
 - Where the child is placed,
 - Academic status,
 - Mental health/substance abuse involvement,
 - Juvenile justice involvement,
 - What services were provided,
 - What were the intervention outcomes

Rich asked if it would be possible to identify kids with earlier substantiated cases (e.g. 2001, 2002 and 2003) and turn those cases over to Eric to conduct a discreet research piece.

Next Steps: Pam, Sandy, Melissa and Eric will get together to discuss what next questions need to be determined and how they will be addressed.

Melissa Correia and Ann Marie McCarron gave a presentation on the Case Practice Review Process. Handouts included a flowchart of the process and a DCYF/DJJS Case Practice Review instrument. This instrument provides a comprehensive assessment of safety, permanency, and child and family well-being rating factors. The process occurs over a week-long visitation and provides an in-depth review of a sampling of district office cases. Sandy recently participated in a case practice review by shadowing the facilitator of the Salem D.O. review for a couple of days.

Next Meeting – To Be Determined

Resources and References

Melissa Correia of the Division of Children, Youth and Families has provided us with documents pertinent to our last meeting. Please look for these documents posted to our website with the meeting summary. They are as follow:

- Issue Brief – Children in Out-of Home Placement in New Hampshire: Health and Healthcare, February, 2009 (2 pages) *
- Report - Children in Out-of Home Placement in New Hampshire, Health Status, Utilization, Payments, and Preventive Visits, State fiscal Year 2007 (60 pages) *

* Please note that this research involves children in DCYF cases only.