

*The mission of MCWAP is to assure that the state system is meeting the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families through assessment, research, case reviews, advocacy, and greater citizen involvement. Our goal is to promote child safety and quality services for children, youth, and families.*

## **Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel Minutes**

May 1, 2020 / 9am-11am

Zoom Meeting

**Co-Chair:** Bobbi Johnson

**Co-Chair:** Deb Dunlap

**Panel Coordinator:** Heidi Landry- Interim

**Present:** Chris Bicknell, Adrienne Carmack, Lanelle Freeman, Jim Jacobs, Deb McSweeney, Cindy Seekings, Tara Kosma, Travis Bryant, Erin Witham, Kelly Dell Aquila, Brittany Raven, Jamie Brooks, Bobbi Johnson, Annette Macaluso, Esther Anne, Betsy Boardman, Alana Jones, Todd Landry, Lynn Carter, Susan Cormier

**Meeting minutes:** Lynn Carter needs to be added to April minutes. Unanimous vote to approve April meeting minutes with this addition.

**Member updates:** Betsy provided updates on PC and TPR cases related to pandemic management order changes. <https://www.courts.maine.gov/covid19/pmo-tc-1-3-30-20.pdf>. YLAT groups are active and information can be found on website and Facebook page. <https://www.ylat.org/>. HCI is working on virtual visitation and building capacity for accommodating technology in Districts 1-5. Maine Families Home Visiting has transitioned to virtual visits and is accepting referrals. CAN Councils are providing programming for parent on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/MaineChildrensTrust>

**Breakout Groups:** Panel members continued discussing priority areas, Family Quality Engagement and Developmental/Behavioral Health, in breakout sessions.

**Annual Report updates:** Annual report is in the process of final edits and waiting for OCFS responses to recommendations. Executive Committee will send to the panel for final review, and share with Legislative HHS Committee upon approval.

### **OCFS Updates:**

- CJA application is being developed; MCWAP annual report will be embedded.
- 90% child welfare workforce, including intake, currently working remotely.
- 32% decrease in report volume, equal summer decrease in school reports, collaborating with DOE to recognize families with significant stress and support them before they need child protective intervention.
- Guidance has been developed for telehealth providers  
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/COVID-19-response.shtml>
- Taking a two-tier response: Level 1 in most districts- operations as normal as possible; Level 2 in districts with confirmed community transmission (D1,2,3,6) – 24 hour high severity in person, other activities using telehealth, into field for emergencies, everything possible remotely.
- Beginning to develop recovery plans for return to normal operations

- Family visitation in person suspended through month of May. Resource parents are unsung heroes in the pandemic.

**Court and Children’s Justice Taskforce Updates:**

- Chief Justice Saufley has left to serve as Dean of Maine Law School. Justice Mead is serving as interim until Governor appoints new Chief Justice.
- Courts have started to hear uncontested TPR/adoptions. 40-50 adoptions ready statewide; all but 5-10 are scheduled to be heard. 25 adoptions recently finalized with modified celebrations.
- E-Discovery process has been accelerated: ability to share discovery in safe, secure site with all partners who should have access.
- Courts improving ability to have families participate through video.

**Website Updates:** Need more volunteers if anyone is willing; three different groups (MCWAP, CDSIRP, Children’s Justice Taskforce) need to come together. Content for MCWAP still needs to be finalized. Bobbi will bring website needs to CDSIRP chairs.

**Next Steps:**

Action	Lead
Finalize draft of Annual Report and share with Panel for approval	Bobbi, Deb
Identify CDSIRP point person for website content. Convene meeting among three workgroups (CJTF, CDSIRP, MCWAP) to coordinate content for new website	Bobbi, Betsy
Share approved final draft of Annual Report with Legislative HHS Committee	Executive Committee
(Carried over from April minutes) Invite Christine Theriault to future Panel meeting to review FFPSA and progress	Executive Committee

**Next meeting:** June 5, 2020