

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

April 2nd, 2021 / 9 a.m.- 11 a.m.

Virtual: Meeting held over Zoom

Co-Chair: Bobbi Johnson

Co-Chair: Deb Dunlap

Panel Coordinator: Kathryn Brice

Agenda

9:00 a.m.- Welcome and Introductions

Virtual attendance: Christine Alberi, Esther Anne, Bob Baptista*, Chris Bicknell, Betsy Boardman, Kathryn Brice, Jamie Brooks, Ahmen Cabral, Adrienne Carmack, Lyn Carter, Bob Cavanaugh*, Kelly Dell'Aquila, Theresa Dube*, Deb Dunlap, Lanelle Freeman, Jim Jacobs, AnnMarie Lemire*, Annette Macaluso, Andrea Mancuso, Ashley McAllister, Libby McCullum, Deb McSweeney, Tammy Roy, Dennis Souza*, Kelly West, Erin Whitham, Jean Youde

*guests of the Panel

Approval of March Minutes: The Panel was notified of an edit to the March minutes, specifying that Robert's Rules of Order were followed during the Mission Statement vote. Members voted unanimously to approve the March minutes with this edit.

9:15 a.m.- New Business

Children's Bureau Stakeholder Meeting: The Panel was joined by representatives from the Department's federal partners at the Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. AnnMarie Lemire, Child Welfare Program Specialist, explained that the child welfare system in Maine underwent the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in 2017. As a result of the CFSR, the State and Children's Bureau developed a Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The plan was approved and implemented in February 2020. Now that the Department has completed their first year of the PIP, the Children's Bureau is interested in hearing feedback on stakeholders' experiences with OCFS and the services that support the mission of the Department.

The Panel discussed various aspects of the PIP: the interaction between the Panel and the Department, access and quality of services in Maine and the Panel's knowledge of Department data (for example, the number of children in care, etc.). Panel members provided feedback to AnnMarie based on their experiences both as Panel members and providers in the community.

Mission Statement: Members were notified that the results of the vote held via email supported removing the term 'case review' from the mission statement. Kathryn described the process of how case reviews are conducted through the Child Death and Serious Injury Panel, and members were reminded

that the Panel can always reinstate the term at a later date should MCWAP begin conducting case reviews.

Parent Survey: Every three years, MCWAP conducts an in-depth review of the child welfare system in Maine, asking for feedback from parents and providers through surveys. Members were notified that the in-depth report was due in March 2022. As such, MCWAP will need to administer, collect, analyze the results of the surveys in time for the annual report due in January 2022. Additionally, the findings from the last round of surveys (2019) have not yet been made public. The Family-Centered Policy and Practice subcommittee has agreed to create a document summarizing the results.

Stipend. The Panel discussed its ability to provide stipends to members who sit on the Panel but do not represent a specific agency. Tammy explained that OCFS can use federal funding to do so, but the process is still being finalized. Ahmen explained that YLAT can provide stipends for youth to join and encouraged subcommittees to connect with her if they wanted to invite a young person to meetings. The Panel discussed the importance of also including voices of a more representative population- BIPOC, LGBTQ+, tribal, for example- on the Panel. Members agreed to set aside some time on the next agenda to have a larger conversation about doing so.

Adding Agenda Items. Members were reminded that they are always welcome to add an item to future agendas and can reach out to any member of the Executive Committee to do so.

Workgroup Meetings: The subcommittees broke out into separate Zoom rooms to work on their topics. Once the breakout groups rejoined the main group, they were asked to provide updates to the Panel:

1. Family-centered policy and practice

Kelly, Betsy, Lyn, Lanelle, Brittany, Esther, Annette, Andrea, Christine

The subcommittee thanked the Panel for approving their next steps (held through a vote via email) and reported that they had considered the questions and comments they had received in the process. The group explained that they are hoping to hold 6 no-cost training sessions in the fall, focused on the following areas: domestic violence, crafting a Family Matter (FM) order as a resolution to a Protective Custody (PC) case, Protection from Abuse (PFA) orders prior to a PC case, and post-child welfare involvement (resources that are available to families, what to do if a FM order is not being followed or a PFA is being violated, etc.).

The group also revised a summary of the parent/provider survey findings. They will send the document to the Executive Committee, with the hopes that the larger group will approve the summary for posting on the website.

2. Effective communication/coordination for the care of children entering the system

Alana, Cindy, Jim, Ahmen, Deb McSweeney, Marie

Members reported that they are continuing to look at an electronic system for information sharing between CPS, families, and resource parents.

The group agrees that information consolidation and consistency start with a really good medical home. They are considering recommending that a pilot study be done to compare the care of children who have a medical home in comparison to those who do not. The group talked about

how to manage the information on the portal to ensure it is maintained and accurate. The subcommittee plans on inviting Dr. Carmack to their next subcommittee meeting.

3. Father Engagement

Erin, Travis, Jean, Chris, Libby, Jamie, Kelly W., Ashley, Tammy

The subcommittee is working on creating father engagement listening sessions, which was a recommendation from MCWAP's work last year that OCFS supported and agreed to partner on. Tammy was able to share some background information about how the Department is working on parent engagement, especially through the goals and steps identified in the PIP. Members reported that they began thinking about what kinds of questions would be helpful to ask fathers and recognized the need for a professional facilitator of the sessions.

11:00 a.m.- Adjourn and Next Steps

Next Panel Meeting: Virtual Meeting, May 7th, 2021, 9 a.m.- 11 a.m.