

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, 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

May 5, 2023; 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Co-Chairs: Ahmen Cabral, Deb Dunlap

Panel Coordinator: Jenna Joeckel

Minutes

9:00 a.m. - Welcome and Introductions:

Attendance: Deb Dunlap, Andrea Mancuso, Ed Wiseman, Tammy Roy, Penthea Burns, Kris Pitts, Maura Keaveney, Kelly Dell'Aquila, Susan Denoncour, Chelsea Peters, Bobbi Johnson, Heidi Aajker, Esther Anne, Brent Beaulieu, Adrienne Carmack, Deb McSweeney, Jenna Joeckel, Todd Landry, Betsy Boardman

Guests of the Panel: Julie Smyth, Michelle Westbrook, Mark Moran, Justin Andrus

9:10 a.m. – MCWAP Housekeeping Items

Opening Statement: Members shared the opening statement

We are a federally mandated group of professionals and private citizens who are responsible for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively discharging child protective and child welfare responsibilities. The mission of the panel is to assure that the state system is meeting the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families through assessment, research, advocacy, and greater citizen involvement. Each of us brings to this table a different set of experiences and opinions. Every voice is valued, and all perspectives are needed. Our shared goal is to promote child safety and quality services for children, youth, and families. This is the task to which we continually commit ourselves, and we hold our relationships in trust.

Membership Update: Effective 05/04/2023, the following four members were voted onto the panel: Abbie Rohde, LCSW, CCS; Taylor Kilgore Esq.; Chelsea Peters Esq.; and Det. Lieutenant Brent Beaulieu.

April Minutes: Twelve members voted to approve the April minutes.

Retreat Planning: The annual MCWAP retreat will occur on September 15, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the Capital Judicial Center in Augusta. Any members that are interested in participating on the planning committee are encouraged to notify the panel coordinator. New members are encouraged to join a subcommittee and reach out to the panel coordinator for additional information.

9:15 - New Business

Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel (CDSIRP) Presentation: Mark Moran, CDSIRP Panel Chair was introduced. He shared a presentation related to data and trends shared in the CDSIRP 2022 annual report.

Link to 2022 annual report: <https://www.mecitizenreviewpanels.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CDSIRP-2022-Annual-Report-FINAL.pdf>

DHHS response: <https://www.mecitizenreviewpanels.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DHHS-Responses-to-the-2022-Annual-CDSIRP-Report-FINAL.pdf>

A panel member shared an article from the Journal of Pediatrics that highlights reimagining unattended well child check appointments as a symptom and not a diagnosis. The article offers suggestions on how to provide trauma informed support to families.

The link to the article can be found here:

https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/doi/10.1542/peds.2022-057590/191236/Reimagining-No-Shows-as-a-Symptom-and-Not-a?utm_source=instagram?autologincheck=redirected

Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services (MCILS) Presentation: Justin Andrus, Executive Director was introduced. He shared information related to legal and social work-based initiatives that support safe conditions for children including collaboration, support through training, benefits offered to attorneys, and an overall culture shift within MCILS. MCILS is committed finding ways to eliminate risk by investing in services including inclusion of individuals with lived experience. The Panel discussed future plans for attorney's pay rates. Director Andrus outlined additional benefits that attorneys receive in addition to their recent pay raise including payment for trainings, paralegal time, and support with higher education. Director Andrus acknowledged challenges of engaging MCILS in legislative action and expressed an interest in returning to the Panel at a later date to discuss the initiatives that MCILS is undertaking to support families.

The link to MCILS can be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/mcils/>

10:15 Legislative Updates:

On Tuesday May 2, 2023, the panel co-chair presented information to the Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee. The information presented included panel activities over the last three months and recommendations from the panel.

A theme that was noted during the presentation was the expansion of the Public Health Nursing (PHN) Program to support connecting families with services earlier and the possibility of including universal PHN services for all individuals when they have a baby.

Additional themes noted during the presentations were initiatives related to safe sleep and the Katahdin system within OCFS.

LD 1229- An Act to Support Peer Mentors for Parents Involved in the Child Protective Services System was heard on Thursday May 4th, 2023, with an amendment that focuses on CPS 101 and the OCFS contingency fund. The bill received an ought to pass as amended.

LD 1325 -An Act to Make Permanent the Submission of Certain Reports to the Legislature Concerning Child Welfare was heard on Thursday May 4th, 2023. The bill was tabled to discuss frequency of reporting as quarterly reporting would require a report when the panels are not meeting and the requirements for OCFS reporting.

ICWA LD – The bill is still at the Revisor's Office and has not yet been printed or scheduled for public comment.

Subcommittee Updates:

The **Family Team Meeting (FTM) Subcommittee** met and reviewed FTM surveys that OCFS has utilized in the past. The outcomes of these surveys were not readily available. Subcommittee members discussed methods to update the surveys and create a new process to gain measurable data regarding how well the model is being implemented in the field. The next meeting is on May 22, 2023, at 9 a.m.

The **Citizen Engagement Subcommittee** continues to focus on updates to the parent survey. Subcommittee members are seeking feedback from Dr. Somers who has been consulting during the process. Members will then seek feedback from individuals with lived experience before obtaining a final review by the Panel. June 2023 has been identified as the goal for presentation to panel members. Subcommittee members will also begin discussing methods to deploy the survey by December 2023. When the parent survey is complete, the subcommittee members will start work on the provider survey.

The **Family Centered Practice Subcommittee** is exploring alternative dates and times to meet. Subcommittee members continue to focus on aftercare supports for parents, the Ombudsman reports, and the MCWAP Annual report.

The **Lived Experience Subcommittee** is developing system partner training and finalizing questions for focus groups they hope to convene in May. Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month.

Member updates:

Panel member, Erika Simonson will be returning to her role on 5/15 and will be present at the next panel meeting.

OCFS Updates:

Todd Landry, Director and Bobbi Johnson, Associate Director of the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) provided updates related to child welfare.

Dr. Landry thanked the panel co-chair for providing updates to the HHS Committee and reminded panel members that the related documents are now available on the website at the following link:

<https://legislature.maine.gov/opla/hhs-committee-130th-legislature/9697>

Associate Director Johnson provided panel members with an update regarding initiatives OCFS is engaged in to support families impacted by substance use disorder. Those initiatives include:

- Partnering with the Clinical Opioid Clinicians group to review screening tools and improve screening related to SUD when engaging with a family
- Piloting a program that includes recovery coaches being available to families that have been impacted by SUD and are engaged with child welfare. The pilot will be connected to the three Family Recovery Courts in Bangor, Augusta, and Lewiston, and will also accept community referrals in these areas.
- Co-location of an SUD Clinician in each district.
- Participation in a Child Welfare Leaders group that has been exploring the impact of fentanyl on children, families, and first responders, including assessing concerns related to this substance and ensuring access to resources, such as Narcan.

- Developing and implementing additional training for staff related to engaging with families impacted by SUD, including drug recognition training by the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency (MDEA) and training related to ingestions by the Northern New England Poison Center (NNEPC).
- Participation in peer-to-peer calls with Casey Family Services, The Capacity Building Center for States and other New England states.
- Reframing the lens through which staff assess and respond to SUD to focus on treating and supporting addiction, instead of reacting to the newest substance available.

Associate Director Johnson shared information about the Children's Emergency Services (CES) Program which provides emergency response during non-traditional work hours (after hours, weekends, holidays, and other state closures). OCFS leadership continues to evaluate this structure to ensure minimal coverage is required by district staff

Associate Director Johnson also provided information about the OCFS Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), Katahdin. Maine engaged in a request for proposal (RFP) process and Deloitte and Salesforce were selected to build Katahdin through that process. During the development of the system, several child welfare staff were assigned full time to the project and others on a part-time basis as subject matter experts. Katahdin was implemented in January 2022 and many enhancements have been implemented since the initial roll out. In October 2022, a significant enhancement was implemented that addressed 80-90% of the larger challenges that staff had shared. Similarly, to MACWIS, which was implemented over 20 years ago, there will be ongoing enhancements to improve the system over time, which is a normal part of the process with any technology. OCFS has an Information Services Team and training staff that have created resources for staff and other stakeholders that use the system. The federal government oversees the development process and has validated the system.

Next Panel Meeting: June 2, 2023, 9a.m. -11a.m.