



State of Tennessee
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
615-741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

General Services Conference Room
Andrew Johnson Tower, First Floor
Thursday, May 19, 2011
2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Tim Goldsmith, Chair
Denise Hobbs-Coker
Trudy Hughes
Cindy Durham
Marti Herndon
Diane Neighbors
Mary Ann Poe
Nancy Williams

Natasha Blackshear
Lindsay Callahan
Erica Gilmore
James Roland Reid
Colonel Robbins
Tawny Spinelli

Staff Present

Marietta Backus
Cyndy Banks
Beverly Bell
Peggy Carter
Susan Cope

Sandra Decker
Dominick Grimaldi
Jennifer Hargis
Craig Hargrow
Peggy Haynes
Dustin Keller
Pam Kirkpatrick
Frances Lewis
Linda O'Neal
Gerald Papica
Cheryl Sahlin
Melissa Staley

Committee Members Absent

Phil Acord

I. Welcome and Introductions – Tim Goldsmith, Chair

Chair, Tim Goldsmith called the meeting to order at 2:55 p.m. with welcome and introductions.

II. Approval of February 2011 Minutes (ACTION)

MOTION: IT WAS MOVED BY (HOBBS-COKER) AND SECONDED (HERNDON) TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 2011 CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES. UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

III. Ombudsman Update– Gerald Papica and Dominick Grimaldi

Grimaldi pointed out in the demographic study from the last two quarters that there was a fifty percent case increase. Smoky Mountain had a case increase from two to twelve. Those seeking information about legal or custody issues had a five percent decrease. Herndon asked if they were trying to reach minority cases, and at what level of language was it written. Grimaldi explained the information has been written in a concise, easy to understand language. Goldsmith inquired if there were any regions we may need to travel to for education purposes and he offered to hand out pamphlets or add the ombudsman toll free number to their agency handouts. West Tennessee, Shelby County, and other regions need information about the Ombudsman Program to reach out to the minority population as suggested by Herndon. Papica and Grimaldi will provide an update about this topic in the next Commission Meeting. Before closing a case, Papica informs referents of its closure, but can be re-opened if needed. Referents felt assured about this follow-up phone call. Hughes commented that referents in Blount County feel that someone is truly listening to them when they call the TCCY Ombudsmen, even though some of their issues do not get resolved. The Ombudsmen had projected they would have 132 cases in 2010. That target was met by having a total of 133 cases. Papica was asked to run again for the United States Ombudsman Association's (USOA) Board of Directors. His nomination was submitted and he is expected to be elected. The 2011 Annual Conference, titled "The Ombudsman: The Bridge to Conflict Resolution, Accountability, and Transparency," will be held Wednesday, October 26, 2011 through Friday, October 28, 2011 at the Crowne Plaza Jacksonville Riverfront Hotel in Jacksonville, Florida. Two two-day pre-conference workshops will be offered on Monday, October 24 and Tuesday, October 25.

IV. Council on Children's Mental Health - Dustin Keller

The council has met two times since the last commission meeting. Keller stated Doug Varney, formerly from Frontier Health, is the new Mental Health Commissioner. The original proposed state budget had an eight and one-half percent cut for mental health provider reimbursements through the TennCare program. With this cut, at Volunteer Behavioral Health alone, approximately 3,000 children would lose services. However, the governor has filed an amendment to replace the proposed cut. Department of Human Services had few state funding cuts but are preparing for larger federal cuts. A federally funded System of Care Grant proposal application will be discussed at the June 16, 2011 meeting of the CCMH. Next report to the Legislature is due to be submitted July 2012. A workgroup co-chair retreat is planned for mid-June to provide direction for the Council and writing the next report. Keller has presented twice in the month of May, one to a class at Union University with Mary Ann Poe and the other for Lindsey Cody in Knoxville on "Creating Solutions-Stage II" discussing different systems and how they collaborate.

V. Second Look Commission – Craig Hargrow

Hargrow explained the statute defines second or subsequent incident of abuse as an indicated incident of severe child abuse to a victim who had a prior indicated incident of child abuse or severe child abuse, as determined by DCS. There are 256 identified cases statewide that meet the criteria to be reviewed. A stratified random sample of 25 will be reviewed. Hargrow researches cases and presents them at the Second Look Commission meetings. There have been three meetings since February, 2011. At the February meeting five key areas were discussed. Five cases were slated to be presented at the May investigatory meeting but they only had time for two of the cases. Hargrow had prepared a 40-page document on the cases and it was decided that a summary of information, in addition to the full report, would be more manageable for the commission to read for future cases.

A discussion arose about possible contributing factors impacting prosecution of cases. Hargrow stated that while it is still very early in their investigations, lack of communication or sharing of information between players such as DCS, law enforcement, prosecutors, providers, and so on appears to be a concern. Another problem is that when looking at cases over time, witnesses and even perpetrators are often difficult to track. Williams asked about the two case reviews and what form of closure document is available. Hargrow responded that the Second Look Commission has not yet investigated enough cases to prepare a closure document and the commission is required to submit its findings and recommendations on an annual basis to the general assembly.

In the process of researching sources of information and data, Hargrow took a tour of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) Fusion Center. He found it to be very interesting, and noted it will likely be a valuable asset in combating human trafficking.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2011 at the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) in Nashville.

VI. CPORT – Frances Lewis Reporting for Pat Wade

Lewis pointed out since the last meeting in February 2011, reviews were conducted in Mid-Cumberland, Upper Cumberland, Shelby, Tennessee Valley and Hamilton. The regional reports have been completed for three regions: Smoky Mountain, Mid-Cumberland and South Central.

Smoky Mountain Region

Hargis reported there were 25 cases reviewed in Smoky Mountain. She referred to the bar graphs in the packet of information and pointed out improvements in System and Child and Family indicators. Hargis reviewed a number of the indicators. All children reviewed were safe. Foster parents were satisfied and system performance indicators really improved. Assessment affects planning and long-term view, which were issues needing improvement.

There was some discussion related to rating criteria and definition of the safety indicator, as well as a 30 day window timeframe. Safety takes into account the safety of the child at the time of the review measured against any unmanaged risk factors that would have a negative impact on the child's safety. Any concerns are discussed with the case manager during feedback. The safety indicator is not used as an investigation like child protective services. It is measuring whether or not the child and family are free from known risks of harm to self or others, risks to community, and if there is adequate management of any known risk factors that would cause harm to the child or others across daily environments.

There was some discussion related to the Appropriateness of Placement indicator, which focuses on the least restrictive and most appropriate living arrangement consistent with the child's needs, age, ability, culture, etc. A child's home and community, or a family type setting, is considered the least restrictive, most appropriate placement to receive services. Determining the most appropriate placement is based on an adequate assessment of the needs of the child. Stability examines continuity and consistency in caring relationships. Inconsistency in relationships and unplanned disruptions can cause trauma and reduce the child's ability to bond with or trust others.

South Central Region

Lewis discussed the South Central Review, conducted the week of February 7, 2011. Twenty cases were reviewed, three non-custodial, four juvenile justice, and 13 social services. Due to weather conditions, some interviews and feedback session were conducted via conference calls. Of the 11 Child and Family Status Indicators, eight were equal to or improved over the past two years. Caregiver functioning decreased six percent, family functioning decreased nine percent, and family connections decreased four percent. All 11 System Performance indicators were equal to or improved over the past two years, with dramatic increases from last year in most areas. The region was pleased with their improvement and credited their training and preparation on best practice principles as well as their implementation of Quality Practice Circles. This next year they plan to focus more on training Child Protective Family Service Workers who work non-custodial cases. Compared to other regions, South Central showed the most improvement this year.

Lewis noted more detailed information could be found on the DCS website.

Mid-Cumberland Region

Banks briefly went over the summary provided in the commission packet and talked about her non-custodial case that was a great example of a quick response from CPS and services provided. The case was about to be closed at the time of the review and rated acceptable in all areas.

Quality Service Reviews

TCCY, DCS and Tennessee Center for Child Welfare (TCCW) have developed an Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) form to test consistency in rating among reviewers. This information will be used to track the progress of developing reviewers for rating competency, training needs, rater drift and indicator problems or interpretation. The IRR tool was implemented in the Tennessee Valley Region and results indicated 90 percent inter-rater reliability.

A QSR Feedback Survey was developed and implemented post regional review. The survey was emailed via Survey Monkey to all case managers involved in the QSR review process. Survey questions were designed to gather feedback about the QSR process, effectiveness, or opportunities to improve. The survey responses will also be used for training reviewers for improved service delivery, if needed.

Quality service reviews of the Youth Development Centers begin in June. Lewis provided the schedule with dates for the reviews and invited committee member to shadow. Herndon expressed interest in participating in the Wilder Youth Development Center QSR.

Backus provided a brief overview of the research and work being executed to update the CPORT Division information for the TCCY website.

DCS Commissioner Kate O'Day shadowed Pat Wade on a QSR case in Shelby.

VII. Other Business

- Beverly Bell is leaving Children's Program Outcome Review Team and transferring to Shelby County DCS to be a training coordinator, which she had been before she came to TCCY.
- Juvenile Justice group homes will be officially closing June 30, 2011. It is unclear how the closure of the group homes will impact placement resources needed for youth to step-down from Youth Development Centers as they gradually reintegrate into their home and community.
- Goldsmith noted an order of agreement will/could end the Brian A. lawsuit.
- Foster Care Review Boards (FCRB) are now beginning "Specialty Boards." The FCRBs for older children and Juvenile Justice will focus on independent living.

There being no further business Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 4:19 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Minutes approved by:

Frances Lewis, Children's Program Coordinator
Children's Program Outcome Review Team

Tim Goldsmith, Chair