

Child Welfare Advisory Committee

November 6, 2024, 1:30 PM

Members Present

Beverly Jones (Co-chair)	Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz
Christopher Cox (Co-chair)	Andrea Durbin
Rich Bobby	Jere Murry
Stephanie Franklin	Andrea Hall
Kim Cobb	Kimberly Jones
Dr. Tiffany Johnson	Jason Keeler
Kara Teeple	Emily Rawsky
Latasha Roberson-Guifarro	Melissa Smith
Mary Savage	Elena Xhalexington Duncan Velez

I. Welcome and Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Chris Cox.
- Kara Hamilton proceeded with the member roll call. An in-person/virtual quorum was established.



II. Review and Approval of Minutes

- **Approval of Minutes** – Chris requested a motion for approval of the minutes from August 2024. The minutes were approved as is by all members present.
- **Appreciation for Beverly Jones' CWAC Leadership**
 - Chris expressed his gratitude to Beverly for her work and leadership in her current role as CWAC co-chair.

CWAC Committee Cycle and Committee Terms

- Chris stated that four memberships are ending December 31, 2024.
- He also mentioned that the committee has seven positions open, one being a co-chair.
 - Five individuals are completing their first term, they are eligible for reconsideration.
 - One member has timed out in their role.
- Applications will be sent out to committee members, in hopes that they will network and refer individuals that are passionate about child welfare.
- Chris stated that he, Bev, and Director Mueller plan to meet and discuss the CWAC summit and next steps for the committee.
- Chris stated that new terms will be starting January 2025

III. Co-chair Report

- Beverly opened this part of the meeting by stating that she will be retiring at the end of January 2025.
- Beverly talked about her child welfare career.
- She spoke about a leader that had a significant impact on her dedication to the field.

- Beverly also discussed the importance of empathy and listening in our roles of child advocacy.
- She talked about four specific clients that have had a lasting impact on her career.
- Beverly encouraged attendees to improve their work by doing better and working together.

IV. Director's Remarks

- Director Mueller had to step out for a moment.
- She asked that we amend the agenda to ensure that she was present for the background process update.
- Director Mueller permitted the rest of her speaking time to Bev.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. CWAC Summit Recap

- Chris opened this part of the meeting by acknowledging that there were 39 individuals who attended the summit (private and public sectors).
- He stated that there was a clear presence of joint commitment for the children and families of whom we serve.
- Chris emphasized on the importance of relationships in the transformational work we do, to fulfill the needs of our client's.
- Chris opened the floor for members to share comments about the summit.
- Rich stated that he appreciated the collaboration of the sectors during the summit, he also stated the summit was a pleasurable experience.
- Chris talked about a developing an innovative structure for CWAC moving forward.

II. IllinoisConnect Update (Jim Daugherty)

- Intake module went live August 11, 2024.
 - Call numbers are improving.
 - Time to answer calls is going down.
 - Abandons, (people calling and hanging up) are improving as well.
- 56500 calls have been completed in the new module.
- Abandon rate of IllinoisConnect is at 2.31% compared to the national average of 7% (significantly lower).
- C-Well Module, complaint line for case workers was recently rolled out.
- Foster Parent recruitment module has rolled as well.
- A question was asked if the Foster Parent recruitment module was being utilized by department staff as well as POS?
 - The intake module is currently only available to state employees.
- Another release will be happening in December.
- Jim stated that we are currently unsure of the impact that the Safe Practice model is having on intake, but this process is currently being evaluated.
- Scope hardening is affecting every part of the project by transferring all the information that has been collected by our system integrator and then conforming it into a concise document.
- A provider module is being developed as well.

III. Update on University of Kentucky (TASC) Initiative

- Nearly all contracts have been completed but there are some that may still need to be revisited before they are finalized.

- There are currently two surveys, one for DCFS staff and the other is for other child welfare agencies.
- Committee members were asked to encourage their team(s) to participate in the survey.
- The survey is designed to identify the strengths and challenges within our current systems.

IV. Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Update

- Established in 2022 to address the rising mental health needs of youth.
- Focuses on closing gaps and providing behavioral health therapy to children in Illinois.
- Brings child service agencies together to improve access and coordination of care.
- Enhances seamless and efficient services for families.
- Key Transformation Priorities
 - Simplifies the experience of seeking services.
 - Improves speed, by improving efficiency and transparency.
 - Listens to consumers by empowering the voice of youth and their families.
 - Fosters collaboration between public system partners.
- Identifies the six child service agencies for behavioral health care.
 - Department of Children and Family Services.
 - Department of Human Services.
 - Department of Juvenile Justice.
 - Illinois State Board of Education.
 - Department of Public Health.
 - Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

- Identifies Twelve Recommendations to Address Identified Barriers
 - Develop portal care as a primary resource for families.
 - Improve coordination of service delivery.
 - Centralized oversight of residential beds.
 - Implement resource referral technology.
 - Conduct regular data analytic review.
 - Adjust rates for similar services.
 - Increase capacity by expanding eligibility.
 - Partner with providers in a standard protocol.
 - Offer universal screening and education in pediatric care.
 - Facilitate information within agencies.
 - Build workforce using paraprofessionals and other roles.
 - Fortify community networks by investing in local communities.
- Implementation highlights
 - Beacon Care Porter is now live.
 - Continuing staff cases collaborative across 5 agencies.
 - Collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education.
 - Fosters in collaboration with DCFS to engage judges on new integration processes.
 - Also collaborates with HFS and IDPH on strategies to strengthen community networks.
 - Collaboration with HFS on procurement of Resource Referral Tool.

- Provider capacity reporting tool launched to capture residential capacity and staff shortages.
- Leverage private foundation (ICHF) to develop Family-Run Organizations.
- Collaborating with DMH/DHS to develop pilot for in-home behavioral health aides for youth with autism and behavioral health needs.
- Details of the Beacon Launch Plan were shared.
 - Phase I- Go live release for integration team case management. (August 1)
 - Phase II-Provisional release for system partners, possibly including hospitals, legislators, attorneys, state agency staff and school personnel. (October 1)
 - Phase III- Public release (January)
- Information on how to access beacon was provided.
 - www.beacon.illinois.gov

V. Background Process Update

- A question was asked about the three-week turnaround time for processing background checks.
- Director Mueller stated that, although three weeks is the goal for successfully completing a background check, there will be times that this is not an obtainable goal, considering barriers.
- A fingerprinting vendor has been identified and approved through procurement. However, the current vendor does not fulfill all the program's needs.
- Director Mueller stated that there is a team working to identify and solidify a fingerprinting vendor that will fulfill all program needs.

- Will Blount-Stephens stated that we have two procurements that are active. We have successfully completed one procurement, and it has been awarded.
- Will further explained that we had to protest our second procurement decision because it was awarded to a different vendor, so the current vendor is protesting this decision.
- We are waiting on that protest resolution. Procurement has about thirty days to respond to the protest and we are halfway through this process.
- Follow up on the solutions requested and presented as options in previous meetings (8/24, 5/16 and 2/29) were committed for the next meeting.
- Questions were raised for the reconvening of the background check workgroup.
- Nancy stated that the bandwidth for people accessing CITRIX for community providers lags during the day. The issue affects staff across Illinois, the log on is timely and it is a very slow process. Staff are unable to complete their notes in SAWIS due to this at times.

VI. Public Comments

- Elena made an announcement thanking Beverly for her dedication for change in the system and allowing her to partner with LCFS to work as a family Specialist, leading to more positive results for families rather than separation.
- Kara stated that Latasha noted Citrix and all applications, not just and how to access ASTR support.
- Stephanie made a comment, regarding young parents who are developmentally delayed and have mental health needs but do not have post-21 CILA placement options. There is not a CILA for young families in the state of Illinois; they need a placement and services.
- It was asked that the committee be informed of any program/placement contract closures.
- A new ask of any new placement/program contracts opening soon.

- Chief Deputy Director Polan provided a forecast of upcoming placement/program contracts at Chief Deputy Director Snowden's meeting.

VII. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:35 PM