

**Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems Integration Initiative
Executive Committee Meeting
July 26, 2007**

Attendance: Chris Finch, Commissioner, DHS
Kimberley Gomez, Assistant Commissioner, DHS
Ada-Luz Rivera, District Manager, DHS, Office of Intervention Services,
Juvenile Unit
Evril Powell, Director of Treatment, DHS, YRC
Wanda Wright, Co-Director, Childworth
Clema Lewis, Co-Director, Women's Coalition of St. Croix
Dr. Denise Marshall, Director, Mental Health, DOH
Karen Hendricks, Child & Family Therapist, Mental Health, DOH
Irma Hodge, VIHA
Massarea Sprauve Webster, LSS
Shana Braithwaite, VIBS
Carla Benjamin, DHS, Intake
Carolyn Forno, Project Coordinator
John Tuell, CWLA Consultant

Welcome & Introductions

Chris, Kim, Carolyn and John all commented on the tremendous amount of work accomplished through the subcommittees. Because of everyone's hard work and dedication, this project is on track and we are positioned to be able to make recommendations for action by the end of the year.

Purpose of Today's Meeting

What is it we are trying to do?

- Change the outcomes for youth entering juvenile justice system with maltreatment histories.

What are we going to change?

- What do we do with youth before and after they are in the detention center (majority of youth at YRC are there for less than 3 months).
- Must address families – need parental involvement/ family intervention needed.
- Also must maintain ongoing relationship with youth (absent parental involvement).
- Research supports that family outcomes must be taken into consideration. Approach can embrace imposing court orders that support treatment plans to include parents and families.
- Although youth with juvenile justice and maltreatment histories are a small percentage of the youth population, they create a disproportionate impact on crime.
- In defining who has a history of maltreatment (unsubstantiated cases) - It depends on the story and who is collecting the information. Cultural norms around corporal punishment must be taken into consideration.
- VIPD should be at the table (someone who has decision-making authority. (Chief Hannah – formal request to the Commissioner of Police).
- Frustration on parents part – don't know what to do. Parents don't want to put in the energy and want others to take the legal responsibility of raising their children.
- "Fix the kid" – need to change this attitude, possibly through an educational campaign.

- Possible DHS initiatives – Social Work SWAT team (addressing multi-generational involvement within DHS); Family Initiative – legal/policy change and parenting classes / support groups in multi-locations year round.
- Is there anything in the V.I. Code currently about parental responsibility? Truancy and curfew? Contributing to delinquency of a minor/ cannot be enforced – the code is so vague. Child neglect statutes – up to judge to make determination of parental responsibility; almost never charges the parent.
- Want to be able to make case recommendations. Judge Steele should be at the table to ensure that the recommendations will be taken seriously.

Where do we want to start shaping the change?

- End product is the management of a case and a recommendation to the court on how to proceed with the youth in question.
- Start at delinquency petition at the court. Recognize here whether they have substantiated history of maltreatment. End is the difference in case management and treatment plan/ management of disposition of case.
- Are recommendations made pre-adjudication? Or at adjudication in prep for disposition? Should the Public Defenders office be at the table? Believed that the Defenders office would support recommendation at pre-adjudication (may depend on the charge).
- Currently one social worker follows a child through the system. For this project, do you have a special person in charge of dual-jurisdiction youth? Or are all social workers cross-trained to deal with this population? Can they call on someone with expertise for support?
- V.I. Statute can define who makes up the team (i.e. agencies) and the information to be gathered and presented. The team will explore all issues in order to create a comprehensive plan for treatment.
- Child abuse cases have interagency meetings. Rarely in the juvenile unit do they have interagency meetings. Currently social workers do not have general knowledge about the other divisions; they need to be part of a team to give more knowledge about the treatment and processes regarding the youth.
- Should be triggers at intake and when youth enter the juvenile justice system. These triggers would start the process of putting together a multi-disciplinary team to deal with the case.
- Can we improve therapeutic services now for those 25 kids who are dual-jurisdiction? What about the transfer youth?
- Budget – should have more resources according to DHS’ budget.

Committee Progress Reports

- Data and Information Subcommittee
 - See data work summary
 - Need Dept. of Education at the table
 - There is a format for court reports prepared by the juvenile unit. Can use this as a template for future recommendations.
 - Should we pair down data elements? Are they required for what purpose?
 - Must define “dual-jurisdiction youth.” Must make a decision about how/if to include self-reported/unsubstantiated abuse cases.

- Resources and Assessment Subcommittee
 - See resources work summary
 - Screening instruments – not standardized; Mental Health and VIBS have tools. Create grids for service levels – determination for services.
 - Tools needed for dual-jurisdiction youth.
 - Resources not identified for the families – parenting programs.
 - More resources for parents/ families. (hard to have resources for families if parents won't get involved).
 - Look at how we offer the services. Times and location. Has to be accessible.
 - We have resources – opportunities; parents don't access the services.
 - Do we know that they work? What are the outcomes? We need services that are evidence-based and cultural sound. Family-based programs.
 - Determine needs of the youth to identify gaps in resources.

- Legal and Policy Subcommittee
 - See legal work summary
 - Need confidentiality policies from each relevant agency
 - Confidentiality statute analysis gave some interpretation of the code; not verbatim.
 - Statutes on curfew, parental responsibility, child abuse/ foster care/ court proceedings. What info is required?
 - Identify title of proceedings.
 - Are there any standing or blanket court orders for compliance issues (education, mental health, substance abuse)?
 - John will provide a HIPAA analysis; how to access files.
 - According to the V.I. Code, it appears that “any person responsible for the child's welfare” can have access to case information. This will cover team analysis.
 - Closed court– attorney, child, social worker (in-camera).

Timeline

- In next six weeks finalize all data collection for the subcommittees
- Send out final documents/data to all members for review two weeks before the next executive meeting.
- Next meeting in late September to review all data and start making recommendations.
- Have a full-day retreat in November to create recommendations and action-plan.
- Final meeting in December to review final action-plan and to begin putting recommendations into action.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, September 26th, 2007, 8:30 – 11:30am. Dept. of Human Services, Office of Financial Programs Conference Room

**CWLA Data Subcommittee
Meeting and Work Summary – June 26, 2007**

I. Work Progress

- The Data Subcommittee met on 7/6/07 to complete the following:
 - i. Establish a time-frame for data collection – decided on point-in-time survey; open cases as of June 29, 2007
 - ii. Determine data elements that needed to be collected and complete core data elements spreadsheet
 - iii. Create spreadsheet with required data elements for data collection; distributed to DHS Juvenile Unit, Foster Care Unit, and Protective Services, VIBS, SOS, and YRC.

- The Data Subcommittee met again on 7/24/07 to review data collected from agencies, cross reference cases, review data questions that need to be answered and determine next steps.

II. Initial Findings

- 350 unduplicated youth were reported to have open cases as of 6/29/07.
- 246 youth had a history of maltreatment; 17 unknown
- 119 youth had a juvenile justice history; 9 unknown
- 25 youth had both a history of maltreatment and involved in the juvenile justice system (approximately 7% of cases)
- All St. Croix-based cases at VIBS and YRC should also have a case at DHS. However, cross-referencing these cases determined that 11 cases at VIBS and 12 cases at YRC were not reported by DHS.
- Additional research is needed to complete histories, including mental health and education histories, as well as histories of abuse and offenses. May need to work with Div. of Mental Health and DOE to collect necessary info.
- In duplicated cases (cases reported by two or more agencies/divisions), sometimes the info reported was different. Need to determine which info is accurate/ up-to-date.
- Future data collection – spreadsheet should have choices for each data element to insure consistency (i.e. Income variable could list out “low-income”, “middle-income” and “high-income”).

III. Next Steps

- Continue to cross-reference cases and verify data for all cases. Collect case information from DOJ if possible to cross-reference.
- Resolve/ clarify questions for data collection (see attached). Process data and complete questions with demographic information.
- Look at all cases in juvenile justice system. Document any self-reporting of abuse of these cases as “unsubstantiated” maltreatment.
- Fully document data collection process and make recommendations for future data collection efforts.

CWLA Resources and Assessment Subcommittee Meeting and Work Summary – July 26, 2007

I. Work Progress

- The Resources and Assessment Subcommittee met on 6/28, 7/19 and 7/24 to complete the following:
 - i. Create an inventory of existing services and resources for dual-jurisdiction youth.
 - ii. Create a flowchart to map the decision-making process in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
 - iii. Document partnerships/agreements that agencies have to provide services to dual-jurisdiction youth.

II. Initial Findings

- DHS/ YRC/VIBS services primarily provide case management, advocacy and counseling services to the target population.
- Individual and group counseling is also available through other agencies (i.e. WCSC, Mental Health).
- GED classes are available through a variety of agencies and programs.
- Many community programs have a small amount of spots available and infrequent enrollment (i.e. year-long cycles).
- Lacking wide-scale alternative programs for youth.
- Small prevention/ crisis intervention programs are available in a variety of communities. However, these programs are not well known or well documented, and often do not last more than a few years.
- Formal assessment tools are not widely used for placement and service determination.

III. Next Steps

- Document the type and number of staff serving the target population at the various agencies and programs. Identify gaps in staffing/ staffing needs.
- Create inventory of assessment instruments used to move a client along the system (i.e. forms to determine placement).
- Identify gaps in resources and services – what services should be created/ strengthened to better serve dual-jurisdiction youth and their families.
- Identify the need for instruments/tools to formalize the assessment and placement processes.

**CWLA Legal & Policy Subcommittee
Meeting and Work Summary – July 26, 2007**

I. Work Progress

- The Legal and Policy Subcommittee met on 7/9 to complete the following:
 - i. Create a chart of existing statutes regarding confidentiality and information sharing for juvenile and child welfare cases. Atty. Jasmine Griffin completed this with the assistance of a summer intern.
 - ii. Gather consent and confidentiality forms from relevant agencies. Document internal confidentiality policies. Forms were collected from DHS, DOE and DOH.

II. Initial Findings

- Each agency provided similar consent forms.
- Agencies do not seem to have formal/ detailed policies regarding confidentiality.

III. Next Steps

- Document how policies and statutes are actually implemented (i.e. are they being followed).
- Identify gaps in specific policies and statutes.
- Draft confidentiality policies and consent forms that can be used across departments and agencies.