



Dana E. Blackwell
Executive Director

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

COMMISSIONERS:
CAROL O. BIONDI, VICE-CHAIR
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JOYCE FAHEY, Esq.
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LILY GRIEGO
PHALEN G. HUREWITZ, Esq.
HELEN A. KLEINBERG
DAISY MA
ROBERT G. MCCAMAN
DR. LA-DORIS MCCLANEY
SANDRA RUDNICK
ADELINA SORKIN, CHAIR
REVEREND G. LIND TAYLOR
DR. HARRIETTE WILLIAMS, VICE-CHAIR

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **September 22**, 2003 in room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Carol O. Biondi
Patricia Curry
Joyce Fahey
Brenda Galloway
Lily Griego
Phalen G. Hurewitz
Daisy Ma
Robert McCaman
Sandra Rudnick
Adelina Sorkin
Rev. G. Lind Taylor
Dr. Harriette Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused)

Helen Kleinberg
Dr. La-Doris McClaney

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the September 22, 2003 meeting was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the September 8, 2003 general meeting were unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. David Sanders, Director, indicated that the Department's contracts with group homes will expire in approximately eight months. The Department is interested in approaching the issue of contracting differently than in the past. The Department will be meeting with the group home representatives in the near future. Dr. Sanders requested the participation of a Commissioner in this process.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Chair Sorkin reminded Commissioners that the CWS Redesign Community Forums are taking place. Chair Sorkin attended the forum in SPA 3. Commissioners are asked to contact the office for the schedule of forums to be held at the various SPAs.
- Chair Sorkin indicated that she and Commissioner Griego have been participating in the Safe and Stable Families RFP development. The next meeting will take place on September 30th. The RFP will be issued in January 2004.
- SPAs 6 and 8 will be hosting a school readiness conference. Information for this event will be available in the Commission office.
- Chair Sorkin informed the Commission that at the invitation of Deputy Director Russ Carr, she has been participating in a workgroup on Hotline/front-end services. A report to Dr. Sanders and the Commission is forthcoming.
- Commissioner Hurewitz moved and Commissioner McCaman second the motion to approve the Annual Report for FY 2002-03. The report was approved with one abstention.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Commissioner McCaman called for the election of Commission officers as indicated at the previous Commission meeting. The slate is as follows:

Chair: Harriette Williams; Vice Chair: Carol Biondi, Daisy Ma and Sandra Rudnick.

The results of the election are as follows:

- Chair: Harriette Williams
- Vice Chair(s): Daisy Ma and Sandra Rudnick

Child Deputy Martha Molina Aviles, on behalf of Supervisor Gloria Molina, thanked Chair Sorkin for the time and dedication she has put forth on behalf of all children in Los Angeles County during her terms as Chair and throughout her tenure on the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Draft Family Conference Center Proposal

Angela Carter, Deputy Director for Administration, presented the Commission with a draft document outlining a pilot program for the Family Conference Center (FCC) in Paramount. She indicated that the plan of the FCC concept has been underway for approximately one year. The initial concept included County owned facilities that would play a number of roles in the reception of children into the system as well as providing an appropriate space for family conferencing and permanency planning. The current

concept is narrower in focus. Ms. Carter stated that there will be only one County owned facility and subsequent facilities will be implemented through contractual partnerships with community-based organizations. These organizations will provide a setting for the reception of children, family conferencing, permanency planning, and multi-disciplinary assessments.

Ms. Carter stated that the FCCs main purpose is to lessen the trauma a child experiences as he/she enters the system. The critical information that is gathered about the child is to inform the resulting placement decisions. The development and utilization of the FCCs is expected to assist the Department in reducing 1) the timeline to permanency 2) the incidence of abuse and neglect and 3) the reliance on out-of-home care and recidivism. Further, the FCCs will provide for a single point of entry, immediate screening, comprehensive assessments, and integrated case management services.

The Paramount FCC is a pilot program which will focus on SPAs 6, 7, and 8. The target population is youth age 7-17 and sibling groups. Ms. Carter indicated that there are many resources within the system currently being strengthened to address the needs of those youth who will most likely experience replacement.

In response to Commissioner Hurewitz, Ms. Carter explained that the Paramount facility can accommodate nine children at one time with stays not to exceed 23 hours, as the facility is not licensed. Intake for children outside of the pilot program's geographic span will continue in its current practice.

Vice Chair Biondi commented that the design of the Paramount FCC does not include service to the system's most at-risk population and questioned the Department's ability to gain insight into how to best serve this population. Ms. Carter explained that the Department is currently utilizing a number of resources to serve those youth outside of the pilot program's target population. She added that the Department has purchased resources to address the needs of these youth. Commissioner Curry indicated that she participated in the workgroup that assisted in the development of the FCC concept. This workgroup made the decision that although the original intent of the FCC was to address the needs of high-risk youth, ultimately the FCCs could not effectively meet their needs. Commissioner Curry requested a corollary report on the development of services of high-risk youth.

Commissioner Fahey commented that for those children who are experiencing replacement, they could benefit from an intake system like the one designed for the FCCs. She further commented that preverbal children are often not appropriately placed due to the lack of family conferencing at the time of placement, and they too would benefit from such an intake system. Ms. Carter indicated that the Department is intending to implement an identical intake system throughout the Department for youth age 0-17.

Dr. Sanders stated that a broader view toward the issue of initial placement and replacement needs to be adopted. He stated that the Department has previously taken a

“one size fits all” approach to placement. He acknowledge the many populations the Department serves and each population requires different strategies to appropriately meet their needs. In response to the concerns raised by Vice Chair Biondi and Commissioner Fahey, Dr. Sanders emphasized that the Department is in the process of examining the needs of special populations at the front end of the system. He suggested that the Department make a comprehensive report to the Commission about efforts in this area. Vice Chair Biondi requested more specificity as to the implementation of the FCCs to gain a better understanding of exactly how they will operate.

Commissioner Hurewitz asked if it was realistic for the Department to believe a family conference could take place within the 23 hours a child is at an FCC. Ms. Carter stated that the expectation is that the process begins within the 23 hours and agreed that it is unrealistic to expect a family conference to take place within that timeframe.

Commissioner Fahey asked if the Department is examining the possibility of creating an intake center for replaced children. Ms. Carter responded in the affirmative.

In response to Commissioner Ma, Ms. Carter indicated that the start date for the pilot program is November 1st and no end date has been determined.

Chair Sorkin asked if law enforcement would be able to bring children to the FCCs for intake. Ms. Carter indicated that policy in this area has not yet been developed. Additionally, Chair Sorkin asked about the language capability for the pilot FCC in Paramount. That too is still under examination.

WRAPAROUND

Dr. Jackie Acosta, Deputy Director, shared her span of responsibility and the programs under her leadership. Michael Rauso, Division Chief, gave a brief history of the WRAPAROUND program in the County. Mr. Rauso stated that WRAPAROUND is a multi-agency collaborative that receives clients from the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Probation Department. Currently there are 267 youth enrolled in the program. Mr. Rauso stated that in each SPA there is an Interagency Screening Committee (ISC) with representatives from each of the participating agencies who review the appropriateness of referrals to the WRAPAROUND program. Mr. Rauso presented a flow chart, which details the steps taken to ensure appropriate and timely service, and specified that services should be in place within two weeks following the referral. He has implemented policies and procedures to ensure that all of the WRAPAROUND agencies are operating consistently and in accordance with contractual obligations. This type of oversight was not in place previously, but is necessary to achieve desired outcomes. A Local Interagency Operations Network (LION) is in place to make certain that all managers are communicating to ensure that the children under the Departments supervision are receiving services.

Vice Chair Biondi inquired about the number of children residing in group homes who are enrolled in the program. Mr. Rauso stated that approximately 25% are residing in group homes and this is in line with the State’s expectations. He added that group home

placements are often part of the youth's care plan as a short-term intervention. He stipulated that the WRAPAROUND agency does not receive payment for those children; rather the State pays the group home an RCL 13 rate. This he believes serves as an incentive to the agency to move children back into their communities.

Commissioner Biondi asked what happens to those children who are randomized out of the program. Mr. Rauso explained that either the youth is placed in System of Care or the ISC team refer them to an appropriate program. Mr. Rauso added that the creation of a single referral form for all family centered programs is under development. Based on this referral form, the ISC team will determine the appropriate program to meet the youth's needs.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Rauso stated that approximately 20% percent of the program's participants are in the delinquency program, 70% are in the dependency system with the remainder of the participants coming from DMH. Commissioner Curry further inquired about the need for the program in the community. Dr. Acosta stated that the program's goal is to provide services to 1,500 youth, yet she stated that this would most likely not meet the need. She indicated that although the strategy employed by the WRAPAROUND program would be effective with all populations, the County's focus is on high-end youth. The goal of the Department is to increase the service capacity to 1,500. A timeline to reach this number needs to be developed. Additionally, a strategy is being developed with the State to continue funding of WRAPAROUND through waiver Title IVE. Currently, the Federal government has granted a ten-month extension that will terminate July 2004. John Oppenheim, Chief Deputy Director, stated that the State is requesting a five-year waiver extension, and the Federal government will continue to grant an extension until the State and the County reach an agreement about funding the program.

Commissioner Curry asked if agency evaluations are taking place. Mr. Rauso stated that his administration is currently reviewing all agencies and it is the intent of the Department to carry out an evaluation that will provide data with respect to program outcomes for all individual provider agencies.

Chair Sorkin asked why there has been little progress in increasing provider capacity. Mr. Rauso indicated that there is a high rate of staff turnover due to the intense nature of the program service. Secondly, not all phases of WRAPAROUND implementation has taken place. Chair Sorkin asked if a link existed between WRAPAROUND services and Metropolitan State Hospital. Mr. Rauso stated that WRAPAROUND does not currently have the type of exposure necessary to link and provide services. With respect to language capacity, Mr. Rauso stated that providers are encouraged to meet the language needs throughout the community.

Mr. Rauso explained that the public WRAPAROUND program is an extension from the 10-child pilot program and is staffed by county employees. Currently there are 18 children in the public program. Mr. Rauso will inform the Commission how many children are participating in the public WRAPAROUND program and who previously

resided at MacLaren Children's Center (MCC). No new referrals are being submitted to the public program, and it is currently being phased out and subsumed by private program providers. Mr. Oppenheim will provide the Commission with the report, which provides follow-up information for the children who were reinstated from MCC.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sacha Martin, ACHSA, testified to the slow expansion of WRAPAROUND from the agency point of view. She stated that some providers have vacancies because CSWs and DPOs are hesitant to refer to the program as they would encumber more work due to the inherently intense nature of the program.

Tammy Lanier asked if WRAPAROUND services are specifically for children above level 12 and whether they are available to relative providers. Mr. Rauso responded in the affirmative and that referrals should be made through the CSWs. Mr. Oppenheim added that there is the capacity to service children assessed at level 10.

Merritt Holloway commented that Dr. Sanders should be present during the entire Commission meeting. He requested that visits be given to parents throughout the appeal process. There should be an organization to help parents understand dependency proceedings. In addition, there should be an investigation of "fraud, conspiracy, and civil violations on the part of the Department with respect to termination of parental rights." Finally, he requested an understanding of the federal laws that drive the rapid placement for adoption.

Mrs. Dixon-Farrior testified that she has interviewed CSWs and that children under the Department's supervision are being hypnotized at the approval of Dr. Sanders.

Yvonne Michelle Autry requested a moratorium on all adoptions until investigations have been completed.

MEETING ADJOURNED