

## Eastern New York Citizen Review Panel

Meeting Notes  
November 4, 2005

### Attendance

Lance Jackson

JoAnn Merriman

Dianne Meckler

Mary McCarthy

Julia Bielawski

*OCFS Staff:* Tom Hess

*SCAA Staff:* Karen Schimke, Diane Mastin

Location: Wolferts Roost Country Club, 10:00 – 2:00

*Handouts:* Commissioner Johnson's letter and response to panel's Annual Report

New York State Citizen Review Panels' Annual Report

Commissioner Johnson's response to Panels' Annual Report

October 14 Joint Panel Meeting Minutes

OCFS 2004 CAPTA Accomplishments

Data: Recurrence Reports 2003, 2004

CPS by Child's Race 2002, 2003, 2004

Reports by Reporter Type 2003, 2004

Educational Neglect Determinations 2003, 2004

Inadequate Guardianship Determinations 2003, 2004

OCI by District 2002, 2004, 2005

Minutes from the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting

Lance Jackson agreed to facilitate the meeting in the absence of the panel's chair. Meeting began with the approval of minutes from the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and the Joint Panel Meeting on October 14. Discussion followed about the value of holding a meeting with Commissioners in light of the fact that soliciting attendance at such a meeting has proven difficult. Panel members asked that OCFS staff and SCAA staff look into three options. 1) Opportunities to meeting with Commissioners at White Eagle 2) Surveying Commissioners 3) Opportunities to meet with Directors of Services at OCFS regional meetings. Information will be sent to panel members for decision-making by email.

An overview of the annual report was given to panel members by SCAA staff and approved. Recommendations made by NYC panel at their November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting were highlighted. The panel agreed to some recommendations for their annual report that SCAA staff will draft for their approval.

1. They asked that the report frame a recommendation regarding family engagement strategies and rewriting letters such as the CPS Rights Letter with a philosophy that CPS become a measure of last resort after prevention services have been offered to families. Currently, CPS is the doorway to such services. Their recommendation is one of putting into place Community Child Protection throughout the state. The recommendation should emphasize family strengthening strategies.
2. They asked for a recommendation that would support the work of child fatality teams by addressing make-up of such teams, scope of work, and the fatality reports themselves.
3. Recommendations should be drafted that indicate their interest in continuing support to primary prevention programs.

4. Other recommendations included support for increased numbers of home/community based waiver slots, caseload standards (SCAA staff will look into recommendations for such standards).

SCAA staff was asked to draft a letter in support of increased funding for home visiting programs by recommending that the bonus New York State received due to a decline in teen pregnancy rates be used to support home visiting programs. SCAA staff will also notify panel members of the upcoming public hearing in Westchester County by the Assembly. JoAnn Merriman indicated her interest in attending the hearing.

OFS staff will look into obtaining a print-out of state-wide MAPS data for panel members and provide a hard copy of the latest MAPS data to the panel staff when it becomes available. In addition, OCFS staff will look into any available data which does a correlation between child fatalities and participation in home visiting programs. OCFS staff will bring information about standards and protocols for fatality reviews conducted by regional offices to the next panel meeting.

Panel members reviewed suggestions made and options laid out for potential work on the part of the panels. Suggestions were made for their 2006 meetings and a few additions/changes requested to the list of options. They agreed with NYC panel to look into child fatality reports, family engagement strategies, workforce issues, and giving input into the CFSR review to be conducted in 2006 by OCFS. Additional thinking included asking Zeinab Chahine from ACS to give a presentation to the panel on the reorganization of Child Protective Services in New York City. They agreed to use the data provided by OCFS and the analysis that SCAA will have ready in 2006 to drive further decisions about focus and meeting agendas. One suggestion was to hold a forum for county commissioners of social services that showcase best practices in the state.

They asked for a panel policy that sets guidelines and expectations for attendance for new panel members. They recommended that there be no term limits set for panel members. They agreed to hold elections for a panel chair every two years. They are interested in having one joint panel meeting per year and recommended that it be held in June with a joint teleconference in October to aid in preparation of the annual report. They are interested in holding a forum in the fall to review and receive input into their draft report. They expressed interest in Assembly and Senate legislator visits, especially visits to the new chairs of the committees dealing with children's issues in March or April, either in Albany or their home districts.

SCAA staff will draft a meeting schedule for 2006. Panel members agreed to schedule their next meeting for February 3<sup>rd</sup>.