

Eastern New York Citizen Review Panel

Meeting Notes
March 17, 2005

Attendance

Stacy Alvord
Julia Bielawski
Dianne Meckler

Mary McCarthy
JoAnn Merriman
Anita Welborn

Mary Felasko
Steve Weber
Lance Jackson

OCFS Staff: Richard Nells, Associate Commissioner
Tom Hess, Panel Liaison

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA) Staff: Diane Mastin, Panel Coordinator
Karen Schimke

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

Handouts:

- Prevent Child Abuse New York information on funding recommendation for the Children and Family Trust Fund
- Minnesota Alternative Response Evaluation: A Review of Pilot Project Findings from 2001-2004 Summary
- SCAA Policy Brief, February, 2005
- Eastern panel's recommendations from 2004 Annual Report

Meeting opened at 10:05 am. Meeting began with a welcome and introductions for the two new members of the panel.

An overview of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, the new organization contracting with OCSF to support panel activities was given. SCAA is a 133 year-old organization that provides analysis and advocacy in areas such as public health, child welfare, and mental health in New York State. SCAA staff expressed their enthusiasm in having the opportunity to work with and learn from each of the panels and asked for the panel members understanding in this transition period. SCAA will help link the work of each of the panels, set up a password protected web page for their use, and provide the research needed for each meeting. Although SCAA has been awarded the contract from OCFS, it takes some time before a contract is signed. The contract will have a February 1st start date and be renewable yearly for up to five years.

An overview of the governor's proposed budget and the budget process was given. Concern was expressed over the proposed Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS) and that foster care numbers will increase. A letter was faxed on March 16th on behalf of the panel to appropriate elected officials stating the panel's interest in support of funds for Home Visiting programs and the Children and Family Trust Fund.

Panel members asked that SCAA staff keep them apprised of any future situations where phone calls, letters, faxes, or emails are needed on issues important to the panel. Specifically mentioned were Dual Track, Children and Family Trust Fund, Home Visiting, Child Advocacy Centers, Child Fatality Reviews, and Child Care. At the federal level, concern was expressed for the proposal to cap 4-E

which funds child welfare services. Information will be forwarded to panel members by one of the members.

OCSF staff reviewed pending appointments to the panel. If no action has been taken on two names that have been forwarded by the next meeting, the panel will send a letter to the appropriate offices asking for action to achieve full membership on the panel. Any letters or phone calls from elected officials to the appointment offices of the Governor, Assembly, or Senate can be helpful to any candidate seeking panel membership.

The panel's 2004 Recommendations were reviewed. OCSF is currently drafting a response to the CRP Annual Report.

An update on Dual Track legislation was given. Two bills have been introduced, A313 and S1574. The bills are in the process of being amended. The panel will be kept informed of progress.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a discussion leading to a work plan for the year. Ideas expressed include:

- 1) ACS's new direction: blended funding pot and a move to neighborhood services (with waiver)
- 2) Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR): review of NYS data and national data with OCSF staff. Panel has a particular interest in repeat cases and data that counties would find useful.
- 3) Need for monthly data kits for each panel meeting which would include aggregate information for 44 counties and also grouped by small, medium, and large sized counties by population. Information of interest includes numbers of CPS cases, those in foster care and length of time, indicated cases by reporter, and number of repeat cases.
- 4) Update on Connections
 - a. Presentation on federal data collection, the need counties have for data and outcomes.
 - b. Oswego pilot
 - c. Presentation on how data drives practice
- 5) Follow NYC panel's interest in home alone standards
- 6) Dual Track: the Westchester experience and interest in having counties use their rights letter. SCAA staff was asked to circulate that letter to panel members.
- 7) Boutique Courts and keeping kids safe: interest in funding, outcomes, monitoring needed, data links and restrictions, and child advocacy centers
- 8) Best practices in CPS services: Chemung County as an example of using a solution focused practice. Possibly bring in a national expert.
- 9) Link between Rape Crisis services, Domestic Violence services, and Child Advocacy Centers

For a joint meeting with all three panels, the following were suggested for agenda items:

Dual Track: report on Westchester County
Pockets of Excellence in CPS
Report outs from each panel

Meeting was closed at 1:45. Meeting dates for the year and agendas:

- Friday, June 3: CFSR and use of data
- Friday, September 16: Connections and the Oswego pilot
- Friday, November 4: CAC visit to Saratoga and preparation for annual report.

Possible dates for joint meeting: Oct. 14 or Oct. 21.