

NYC Citizen Review Panel Meeting
Minutes of the Meeting
November 7, 2006

Attendance:

Eric Brettschneider
Gerard Papa
Marion White

David Lansner
Sania Metzger
Mathea Rubin

Yvonne H. Plummer
Jocelyn Brown

OCFS Staff: Richard Nells

SCAA Staff: Diane Mastin

Handouts:

Agenda

Case Review forms

ACS letter from Jane Jaffe dated October 5, 2006

Letter to Assembly Member Scarborough

CPS 2006 Annual Report Proposed Content

Draft Eastern/Western Citizen Review Panel Recommendations

Eastern/Western Joint Panel meeting minutes, October 13, 2006

S8344/A11852a

Article: *The Definition of Insanity* but Richard Wexler, NCCRP Child Welfare Blog

After welcoming panel members, the panel agreed to send Margaret Magnus an expression of their concern, letting her know she is in their thoughts and prayers.

The minutes from the meeting on September 28th were reviewed and revised by a vote of 6-2. Panel members then agreed to end debate on the minutes with a vote of 7-0. The revised minutes were adopted by a vote of 6-2. By a vote of 7-1, the panel agreed to proceed with the agenda. SCAA staff agreed to have draft by-laws available at the panel's next meeting.

Discussion related to the case reviews followed. Teams of reviewers presented two of the cases with questions posed by panel members following. Due to concerns regarding confidentiality, much of the discussion will not be reported in these minutes. Panel clarified that if a panel member has not recused him or herself, that panel member can view a case record.

In general, concerns were expressed regarding the condition of the records the panel received from ACS. The records that were turned over stopped before the investigations were completed, were disorganized and therefore hard to follow. Important information was lacking including hospital and medical records. The records did not include key pieces to the investigation. Either they were not part of the records turned over to the panel or were not done. From the notes reviewed, panel members could not tell whether or not services were offered, received, or refused; who was interviewed; and the dates various actions took place. Missing was a coherent picture of the families over time. Panel members have questions related to what happens in cases in which there are concerns related to domestic violence and why certain cases are accepted by the State Central Register.

Panel members were most concerned about the need for services and supports on the part of the families as evidenced in the case records. Services such as home visiting, visiting nurses, etc. can help and support families who are overwhelmed and without resources. And yet roughly 30% of families in need receive them. There seems to be a lack of accountability to see that the right services are in place and coordinated. With no one person in charge, the ball can be dropped. The underlying issue for all the cases seemed to be poverty related.

Discussion included the need for a differential response to these cases. Not every case should include a criminal investigation. Most families have a need for services and an increased effort is needed to provide those needed services without becoming involved with ACS. Concern was expressed that a disconnect exists between the law, training, and practice in CPS.

Panel expressed interest in using the learning from these cases to drive policy considerations.

Next steps were suggested including writing to ACS asking for records that were not given to the panel and another request to respond in writing to the panel regarding questions posed.

Panel agreed to reschedule their next meeting from November 30th to December 7th from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.