

It is the mission of the Region 2 Oversight Committee to be a presence in the community by reaching out and advocating for the needs of children and families across Region 2.

**Region 2 Children's Administration Oversight Committee
Citizen Review Panel**

2010 CAPTA Report and Work Plan

April 19, 2011

Purpose

The purpose of the Citizen Review Panel (CRP) is to evaluate the extent to which the state is fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) State plan.

Areas of Focus

The Region 2 Oversight Committee also serves as a Citizen Review Panel (CRP) for Washington State. As in previous years, the Oversight Committee CRP invited and included local community members in Committee meetings to discuss the accessibility and effectiveness of CA services, with emphasis on policies, practices and community collaborations that support child safety and well-being. Specific areas of focus in 2010 included: child fatalities, CA Region 2 performance in meeting State and Federal requirements (per current data), foster parents and kinship/relative caregivers support and training opportunities, emergency child placement resources, racial disproportionality in services provided by CA, and staff turnover. The committee also continued to follow the agency's progress in implementing recommendations from prior years.

Process

The Region 2 Oversight Committee CRP met six times during 2010. Due to continued budget concerns related to travel expenses, the Committee met every other month beginning in January. The meetings were conducted in various communities, in six of the seven counties which comprise Region 2. Meetings were held in a variety of locations, including smaller communities. Meetings were held as follows:

January 5	Kennewick	(Benton/Franklin Co. Dept. of Health)
March 16	Sunnyside	(Central WA Comprehensive Mental Health)
May 11	Bingen	(Bingen City Hall)
July 13	Walla Walla	(Walla Walla Juvenile Justice Center)
September 14	Ellensburg	(HopeSource, Elmview)
November 9	Toppenish	(DCFS Office)

At each meeting, comments were heard from invited local community representatives who are knowledgeable about child and family service needs and service gaps. The CA Regional Administrator, Area Administrators, Deputy Regional Administrator and regional program consultants regularly attend the Oversight CRP meetings. Regular attendees and guests who participated in 2010 meetings included:

- Education personnel from ESD 105 representing Readiness to Learn, 25 public school districts and more than 20 state-approved private and tribal schools in South Central Washington; and educational personnel from Lyle/Dallesport.
- Northwest Community Action Council (YVFWC) Education services representative
- Yakama Indian Nation LICWAC members
- A teen parent and two teen youth involved with Independent Living and Transitional Living services
- Catholic Family & Child Services staff
- "Fostering Hope" and "Friends" Programs staff
- Kittitas County Child Advocacy Center (County Prosecutor)
- Walla Walla Police Department, Detective Miguel Sanchez
- Walla Walla County Human Services, Director Daryl Daugs
- Walla Walla Superior Court, Judge John Lohrmann
- Walla Walla Community Network Coordinator
- Member of State Advisory Committee (presented action updates at each meeting)
- Member of State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee (presented action updates at each meeting)
- Local CA office Supervisors, Social Workers and regional Foster/Kinship Care Consultant (Terry Lockett), and Regional CPS Consultant (Robert Rodriguez)
- Solution-Based Casework Practice Model Coach assigned to Reg. 2 (June West)

Findings

1. **Community collaboration is essential to child protection and well-being; family and community strengths, current and projected service needs, and gaps in services are common themes for committee discussions.**
 - Stakeholders in various localities have continued to highlight the importance of engaging with community partners to assure that reports of abuse/neglect are made, to strengthen the effectiveness of CPS interventions, and to reduce gaps in the service array. Mental health service needs remain a high need and priority for resource development. The 2-Rivers Landing adolescent inpatient treatment program in Yakima, operated by CWCMH, continues to serve youth from around the region, and from other areas in the state. The 16-bed facility includes a detoxification bed, and provides short-term crisis care utilizing evidence-based trauma-informed treatment model. The 3-Rivers Wraparound Program, operating in Benton/Franklin Counties since 2003, now has an expanded service capacity to 40 families. This unique program follows the National Wraparound Initiative model values and practices, receives consultation from the U. of WA and other nationally-recognized wraparound experts. Program components include parent and youth groups, which are facilitated by

the program's Parent and Youth Partners. Data gathered monthly show reductions in child psychiatric hospitalizations, juvenile justice involvement, school suspensions, and increases in family utilization of community resources and natural supports.

- A Children's Advocacy Center (one of several centers in WA State, part of the National Children's Alliance) has been developed in Kittitas County. The results of a Community needs survey found a high degree of support from stakeholders and the community, and a Victim Survey is being planned for. The center's purpose is fighting child abuse through community trainings and special events.
- During this last year, CA Region 2, Readiness to Learn, and the Northwest Community Action Council (YVFWC), has joined with the Outlook community (including law enforcement, churches, schools, businesses and residents) to create the "Stand Up for Outlook" Team. The first thing completed was a door-to-door survey. The survey concentrated on the downtown (5-6 blocks) infrastructure which included a post office, 3 churches, a school and residents. There was a public meeting to share the survey results and 3 areas were identified to work on: Poor Street lighting, starting a neighborhood watch program and graffiti cleanup. The team continues to work on and identify needs to improve the safety within the community for all, and to reduce gang activities.
- Meetings held in the smallest rural communities in Region 2 continue to focus on strategies for serving youth locally with very limited resources. School districts, churches, and civic organizations play a critical role in preventing child abuse/neglect by providing direct assistance to challenged families.
- Each member of the Oversight CRP has agreed to serve on teams to help review child fatalities as needed.
- Two CA Social Workers from the Yakima office continue to be out-stationed in 3 schools in Yakima and one school in Selah. This arrangement allows for immediate assistance for students and school staff, maintains communication, and builds school/community relationships.

2. Appropriate crisis placement resources and a sufficiency of suitable foster families (for children of various ethnic and language origins) are needed region-wide.

- CA Social Workers from the Yakima and Richland offices continue to be out-stationed at Yakima, Selah, Kennewick, and Richland Police Departments, and at the Yakima and Benton County Sheriffs' offices. Officers and Social Workers work together in assisting with crisis situations where children may be harmed. Two Social Workers in the Walla Walla office are assigned as liaisons to the Dayton and Walla Walla Police Depts. These arrangements increase overall communication and build inter-agency relationships, and continue to be an important, positive collaboration.
- Efforts to expand emergency placement resources (see above) resulted in development of "Options" beds (2 in Walla Walla/Columbia Counties) which are available to any youth in need of placement.

Funding these resources, especially in rural areas, is complex, requiring collaborative efforts among Oversight CRP members, law enforcement, private child-placing agencies, county Human Services Depts., and CA. The Options beds are co-funded by Walla Walla Co. Juvenile Justice Dept., and CA Region 2. There continues to be a shortage of crisis placement resources in the lower Yakima Valley.

- A chronic, region-wide shortage of licensed foster homes has been somewhat alleviated by legislation that allows for children to be placed with "suitable" persons, and by the increases in placements with relatives. The region-wide FTDM process, while very labor-intensive, has had a significant impact in maintaining stability and reducing trauma for children who can be cared for by family members. However, there is still a need for well-trained, licensed foster parents, particularly foster parents who can provide culturally-appropriate care for children of various ethnic origins.

3. Remediation of racial disproportionality in child welfare services will require in-depth study and broad community involvement.

- The Oversight CRP members have committed to challenging us and all parties involved in child welfare in our home communities to assure that all children and families have access to quality services.
- Our Oversight CRP chairperson, Mary O'Brien, also serves on the legislatively-mandated WA Racial Disproportionality Review Committee. The study of incidence of racial disproportionality, released in late 2008, provides the focus for ongoing review of practice and policies that may be related to this issue. Mary provides updates at each meeting. She was asked to participate as the DAC representative on the Transformation Design Committee and began attending meetings in June 2010. The TDC has been working on implementation of 2SHB 2106 and getting ready to contract with Lead Contractors for children services.
- In Region 2, the most significant disproportionality of children placed in out-of-home care is among Native American children. The Oversight CRP undertook to increase members' awareness and ability to lead change by devoting one meeting to education on case planning, and the framework, purpose, and importance of LICWAC for Native American families. As presenters, Helen Zack (DCFS Tribal Liaison), Lila Ambrose (LICWAC member), and Augustine Howard (LICWAC member) were able also able to address many questions related to enrollment, and permanency needs for Native American children.
- Judge Patty Zack, new incoming Judge for Children's Tribal court, and Tammy Saluskin, new Chair of the Yakama Nation HEW Committee will be invited to become members of the R2 Oversight Committee CRP.

4. In order to continue the best implementation of Solution-Based Casework region-wide, a Practice Model Coach continues to work with Region 2 staff. June West, a long-time Region 2 Social Worker,

Family Group Conference facilitator, and SBC trainer/coach, continues to provide regular training and assist CA staff with specific case consultation. Child safety remains top priority, while family strengths and goals determine the course of service.

- 5. Foster parent HUBS have been established in the Walla Walla, Tri-Cities, and Yakima areas. The HUBS (SPOKES in Tri-Cities) foster parents share expertise and experience in supporting children with special needs, in providing respite care, and particularly in training opportunities. These groups are modeled after the Mockingbird HUBS in western WA.**

Issues and Challenges (for ongoing discussion, 2011)

1. Recruiting/licensing therapeutic foster homes is an ongoing challenge.
2. Accessing mental health treatment/support for Dependent children/youth is sometimes hampered by systems problems, rather than acuity of child's needs.
3. Reducing systems barriers continues to be an ongoing focus.

Committee Work plan for 2011

1. Committee members will continue their involvement in Child Fatality Reviews and in resource-development regarding fatality prevention.
2. Foster youth and alumni will be invited to Committee meetings to share their experiences, make recommendations for improving practice.
3. Committee will continue to meet every other month, rather than monthly.
4. Committee members will communicate by e-mail, in order to share current/critical information, receive special event news, and share training opportunities.
5. Committee will recruit additional members from under-represented areas, including Yakama Tribal member(s) Tammy Saluskin (new Chair of the HEW Committee) and Patty Zack (new Judge for Children's Court), reps from Klickitat and Benton/Franklin Counties, an alumnus of foster care, former service recipient(s). New member(s) may be alumni of foster care and service recipients from those areas. Committee may consider starting a list of potential members.
6. Committee will consider holding some meetings at local CA offices in order to meet with Social Workers and Supervisors (this has occurred in past years).

Recommendations to the Agency

- 1. The agency should place priority on the expansion of emergency placement resources for children and youth in crisis. These resources should be available within reasonable proximity of larger and rural communities.**
- 2. The CRP should continue to hold meetings in small communities in order to increase outreach and establish a presence for CA in its efforts to eliminate child abuse/neglect.**
- 3. The agency at all levels should continue to support the Disproportionality Advisory Committee and commit itself to the remediation plan. A member of Region 2 Oversight CRP should participate on this Committee.**

Submitted by: Region 2 Oversight Committee CRP

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