

**Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
Citizen Review Panel
CAPTA Report for CY 2009
June 2010**

Purpose

The purpose of the Citizen Review Panel (the Panel) is to evaluate the extent to which the state is fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. This is done through examining policies, procedures and practices of state and local child protection agencies, reviewing specific cases where appropriate, and examining other criteria that are important to ensure the protection of children. The Children, Youth, and Family Services Advisory Committee serves as the Statewide Citizen Review Panel for Washington state.

Area of Focus Selected for this Report

During the 2009 reporting period, the Panel continued the work begun in 2007 on racial and ethnic disproportionality related to child protection. The primary focus was on the results of the work of the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee (WSRDAC). The WSRDAC, created in 2007 by the Washington State Legislature, investigated and reported on disproportionality in the Washington State Child Welfare System. Their report of June 2008, “Racial Disproportionality in Washington State”, shows that disproportionality in the child welfare system exists and identifies the decision points where it is most prevalent. The WSRDAC developed a remediation plan to address disproportionality in December 2008.

The Panel focused on the efforts of the state to plan and implement the remediation plan recommendations, with primary focus on referrals and the effect of mandated reporters on this decision point.

Process

The Citizen Review Panel met through conference calls or in person seven times during 2009. The Panel reviewed relevant documents and research, received information from key staff and stakeholders, and used group discussion as its primary methods for review and education.

Examination of Racial Disproportionality within Washington State Child Welfare Services

This is the third year of the Panel's multi-year study on Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality and Disparity. They focused on continuing education of disproportionality in Washington state, collaboration with the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee (WSRDAC), and gaining an understanding of how the department tracks race and ethnicity in the child welfare system in order to determine if remediation efforts work.

Panel members were briefed in June 2009 on the efforts of the Department to plan and implement the recommendations in the WSRDAC remediation plan for reducing and eliminating disproportionality in the Washington state child welfare system. They discussed how to monitor and help the department achieve the goals of the plan. Upon review of the remediation plan, the Panel members:

- Decided to focus on mandated reporters and their effect on the disproportionate number of referrals on children and families of color.
 - Discussions ensued concerning how to educate mandated reporters regarding racial disproportionality and other ways to effect disproportionate referrals.
 - Collaboration with DSHS staff resulted in ideas for training and updating mandated reporter materials to address disproportionality.
- Agreed to participate in completing the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) Agency Disproportionality Diagnostic Tool and to provide input for further use of the tool. This

assessment helps users examine societal, system and individual factors that may contribute to disproportionality.

The Panel joined the WSRDAC at a two day meeting in November. Washington state regions presented information on their disproportionality efforts and responded to questions by committee members. DSHS research staff presented updated baseline data through CY 2008 on disproportionality in Washington. Staff and committee members discussed differences from the initial baseline information and potential causes that influenced these changes.

The Panel keeps a focus of disproportionality on all of the work and information that comes before it. This includes review and discussions of major initiatives, policy, practice, and legislation that may impact children and families of color. In 2009, the Washington State Legislature passed into law legislation that requires DSHS Children's Administration to:

- Convert to performance based contracts
- Develop two demonstration sites where case management for children and families involved in the child welfare system will be performed by private contractors.

DSHS staff update the Panel at every meeting on progress and possible effects of either of the above mandates on children and families of color, including unintended consequences. Staff request input and advice on plans for implementation, language in contracts, and other areas where the panel can provide guidance and input.

Recommendations:

- The Department and Children's Administration Technology Services should research and, if possible, develop a method to track data regarding mandatory referrals from schools to evaluate compliance with the mandatory reporting law.
- The Department and Children's Administration Technology Services should expedite changes in FamLink to address data and reporting of Family Team Decision Making efforts. Sufficient data should be available from FamLink to determine if Family Team Decision Making meetings impact disproportionality in the Washington state child welfare system.

Future Plans: Continue to focus on Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality and Disparity in Washington State

The CRP plan to address racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparity in Washington State is multi year. In the first three years of this plan, the Panel focused on education about racial disproportionality, the effect of disproportionality in Washington state and nationally, and the effectiveness of efforts to address disproportionality and disparity.

Plans for 2010 include:

- Review the Washington State Institute for Public Policy reports on Solution Based Casework and Family Team Decision Making. Based on the reports, develop recommendations for the department.
- Review the proposed contract language for Performance Based Contracting relative to cultural competency and disproportionality. Make recommendations to the department regarding the language in the contracts.

2009 Citizen Review Panel members:

Jim Sherrill, Indian Policy Advisory Committee, Longview- **Chair**

Robert Alexander, formerly of EPIC Place Youth Services, retired, Yakima

Janis Avery, Treehouse, Seattle

Michael Bates, Juvenile Court Administrators, Walla Walla County

Lucy Berliner, Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress, Seattle

Juelanne Dalzell, Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney, Port Townsend

Robert Faltermeyer, Excelsior Youth Center, Spokane

Ron Hertel, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia

Jana Heyd, Society of Counsel, Seattle

Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society, Seattle

Byron Manering, Brigid Collins Family Support Center, Bellingham

Ron Murphy, Casey Family Programs

Lissa Osborne, Greater Seattle Alumni Network, Seattle

Tess Thomas, Thomas House, Seattle

Gwendolyn Townsend, OCOC/UJIMA Community Services, Seattle

Kitty-Ann Van Doorninck, Superior Court Judges, Tacoma