CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE COUNCIL (CWC)
Discussion Highlights
March 21, 2011

I. Call to Order and Announcements

Secretary Diana S. Dooley called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests. She indicated how delighted she is to step into the role of co-chair of the California Child Welfare Council. She is also looking forward to working with members of the Council and with, Justice Vance Raye, Presiding Justice of the Third District Court of Appeals in Sacramento and an official member of the CWC (the Chief Justice's appointee for this meeting). The Secretary personally thanked Leah Wilson and Wayne Sauseda for their assistance in getting her oriented to the work of the Council. Finally she introduced Sylvia Pizzini, Assistant Secretary, CHHS, whose responsibilities include providing support to the CWC.

After attending to court business, Appellate Court Justice Vance Raye joined the meeting at 11:00 a.m. as the temporary co-chair designee of Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye.

CWC Member Introductions and reflections on CWC Accomplishments and Direction
Introductions were facilitated and members were asked to share their name and role that brought them to the Council. They were also asked to state what they believe the most important things the Council does (or should be doing) are. The following responses, which have been grouped by thematic areas, were offered:

→ Cross system collaboration

- Establish policy across the board for at-risk families or those in the system by integrating services across departments to maximize available services and supports
- Find solutions to serious problems when we all come to the table,
- Integrate focus on problem-solving with courts and mental heath
- Go beyond what Child Welfare Services can do alone by facilitating linkage to other systems that serve children and families
- Increase accountability and force communication between public and private agencies to have a more coordinated approach to services and supports for families.
- Work across systems to prioritize our clients within their systems, particularly alcohol and drug treatment
- Should be doing more to cross over with juvenile justice systems
- Remove barriers to linkages between and among systems

→ Leadership

- Go back to our statutory authority and reporting requirements to refocus our work.
- Serve as the locus of policy and priority for all that touches services and supports for families.
- Recognize the value of sitting together and talking.
- Help shape the dialog on realignment.
- Ensure policies are in place to reduce and eliminate disproportionality of African Americans and Native Americans in foster care.
- Maintain standing items on every agenda until completion.

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→ **Programs and Practice**

- Facilitate access to mental health for children placed out of county.
- Ensure implementation of AB 12.
- Develop an operable and actionable definition of prevention, and make it a target of prioritization.
- Value the contribution that parent partners bring to our families; more parents should be involved in this process, with trained parents coaching other parents.
- Pave the way for more opportunities for former foster youth educationally.
- Continue to move the out-of-county mental health agenda.
- Follow through with out-of-county mental health plan by making recommendations to agencies that would implement the changes.
- Include a focus on sexually exploited youth (one-half of youth prostitutes come from group homes).
- Look beyond permanency to other issue areas, including prevention.

→ **Funding**

- Champion the systemic use of funding across systems to support CWS outcomes.
- Maximize Medicaid reimbursement.

→ **Data Collection and Analysis**

- Continue looking at issues regarding data sharing, decrease barriers to access and linkage so that social workers have the best tools available for working with youth and families.

Secretary Dooley noted the depth and breadth of representation on the Council and among the public attendees. She reflected the wide range of themes ripe for cross fertilization and affirmed the Council's role in facilitating communication as the first step in moving forward together, recognizing that this is just the beginning of a continuing dialogue.

Secretary Diana S. Dooley Introduction

Prior to being appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to lead California's Health and Human Services Agency, Ms. Dooley was President and Chief Executive Officer of the California Children's Hospital Association, which advocates for children's health on behalf of eight non-profit regional children's hospitals in California.

Secretary Dooley began her professional career as an analyst at the State Personnel Board. In 1975 she served as then Governor Brown's legislative Director and Special Assistant until the end of his term in 1983. Before becoming an attorney in 1995, she owned a successful public relations and advertising agency. Ms. Dooley left her private law practice in 2000 to serve as Chief Council for Children's Hospital Central California before moving into the role as CEO for the California Children's Hospital Association.

II. Action Items

- The December 9th, 2010 Discussion Highlights were approved with the following additions:
  - Page 3, issue 1, strike "implying a decoupling…" Place a period after "children".

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- Page 9, last bullet, top section—also talked about CCMS (Court system)
- Page 6 "enrollment in higher education; priority employment for qualified Foster Youth LA County"

III. Governor's Proposed Realignment of Government Services in California

Diane Cummins, the Governor's special advisor on realignment, Department of Finance, provided the CWC with an overview of the Governor's proposal to realign government services in California. At present, the California budget calls for an historic realignment of government services, reversing a 30-year trend that has seen budget authority and decision-making move from local government to the State Capitol. Realignment of government in California will allow governments at all levels to focus on becoming more effective and efficient, facilitating services to be delivered to the public for less money. Many of the programs the state oversees are already administered at the county level. The roles of state and local government in the delivery of services will be more clearly defined to avoid program duplication and limit overhead costs. Further, programmatic and fiscal responsibility will remain at the same level of government, allowing for maximization of federal funds. Where necessary, the state will retain oversight and provide technical assistance. The goal is to find the level of government where a service can best and most cost-effectively be delivered, and then provide a permanent funding source. (Please refer to Realignment handout for further detail.)

Sec Dooley stated that a key issue would likely be how to account for disparity between counties. Inevitably some counties could be allowed to provide fewer services by choice due to local political will. Advocates within counties are charged with helping those responsible in each county to see the need. Part of the goal is to avoid "bus-ticket" services where residents move from one county to the next to obtain services. One of the most appealing aspects of realignment is empowerment at the local level to encourage, support, and require personal responsibility to care for their/our people.

Discussion:

→ **Funding Limitations**

- Given the struggles we are having with out-of-county mental health services when the County share of mental health services is 5%, we can anticipate even more challenges when the County share becomes 50% under a realignment scenario.
- How to manage funding limitations: For example, if resources only permit quality services delivery for eight out of ten mandates, do we do eight of them well or all

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ten of them in a mediocre way? Per Secretary Dooley, "We can't do more with less, we will do less with less." The Council is well-positioned to make recommendations about what to fund and what to eliminate.

- Instability of the general fund is a huge concern.

→ **Pilot Efforts?**

- What will happen to county-specific pilot efforts? Will they have to stop or can they be "salvaged"? Secretary Dooley commented that there are no plans currently to stop pilot projects.
- Substance abuse and mental health services will become part of health care reform within a few years, and the need for realignment of these services could change as a result.
- There will be revenue growth over time that will affect the level of funding for AB3632 (school-based mental health services) programs, and a resolution will be needed between the counties and schools.
- Some of the built-in incentives are counter-intuitive; may dismantle some of the progress built in mental health services.

→ **Disparities in level and quality of services?**

- There will be minimum standards in place to protect against undue disparity among the level and quality of services delivered by counties.
- The role of the state under realignment needs to be defined; an accountability and state oversight mechanism should be developed for ensuring county compliance with federal and state requirements.
- The Federal Child and Family Services Reviews currently ding the state for "pockets of excellence" as opposed to statewide uniformity in services. How will this be addressed?
- Some of the built-in incentives are counter-intuitive; may dismantle some of the progress built in mental health services.

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Public comment:

- Accountability concerns (i.e. manipulation to accommodate preferred programs)
- Implementing change requires people of good faith working well together; bringing program excellence and understanding.

IV. Update: Out-of-County Mental Health Services: Key Issues

- Wayne Sauseda thanked work groups that have been actively involved since January and called on work group Leads (Fiscal, Local Plans, and Data) to update the Council on activity since the December CWC meeting. (He further noted that some work group activity has been delayed somewhat due to the need for county representatives to divert their time and attention to State Budget and Realignment issues.)
    - Rita McCabe—Local Plans work group has met four times, to develop a charter and identify objectives. They reached out to additional participants to broaden representation and found 60 interested individuals, which may affect structure. Goals were reorganized, and the issue of overlapping membership between work groups was identified. Secretary Dooley suggested that all 3 workgroups be invited to March 30th meeting (currently only a Local Plans meeting) to determine whether there should be a combining of work groups).
    - Gary Russell—Fiscal work group will conduct a fiscal analysis, and look at data sets between CDSS, DHCS, and DMH to pinpoint issues that have been discussed. They will work closely with other workgroups to facilitate funding flow and reduction of barriers.
    - Rita McCabe (for Linne Stout)—The Data work group has looked at county plans and identified data currently being tracked, and also identified the percentage of youth placed out-of-county with no mental health services.
- Meeting planned with all three workgroups to discuss overlap and structure for moving the work forward.

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IV. CWC Annual Advisory Report

- The Secretary thanked Leah Wilson for her efforts to date in preparing the CWC Annual Advisory Report, a shared responsibility (of the Courts and the Administration). Going forward, the Report will be released annually on or about July 1.
- **Leah Wilson** provided an update and overview the proposed structure (i.e., potential sections) of the first Council Report, and invited Council Member feedback and suggestions, as the Report has not yet been completed and forwarded to legislature. Secretary Dooley has reviewed the first draft and provided feedback on enhancements.
    - **Section 1--**Foundational—history—committee structure
    - **Section 2—**Outlines our recommendations based on guiding legislation (sections a-m)
    - **Section 3**--Implementation activities related to our recommendations
    - **Section 4**--Challenges:, which currently include:
      -Membership (consistent participation of former foster youth and more caregiver voice)
      -Absence of funding to support the work of the Council, as staff support is not dedicated currently, except for new Assistant Secretary, Sylvia Pizzini.
- Discussion:
    - Create a section to lay out innovations or ideas that Council members have initiated as a result of what they learned at Council meetings.
    - The report should be organized around the role of the Council in terms of what the statute calls for it to do, and what action steps might be taken to more fully align with the statute.
    - End report with call to action.
    - Per Secretary Dooley and Justice Raye, we will circulate a draft to members as a work in progress by April 15th, and request comments back by May 15th to refine for adoption at the June meeting.

V. CWC Structure and Roles

Leah Wilson also facilitated this discussion by recapping prior CWC discussion of roles and structure, and by touching on statutory components of the CWC's charge. Larry Bolton, Chief Counsel, CHHS, stated what the authorizing legislation provides. (Please refer to Assembly Bill No. 2216, Chapter 384, Sections a-m for further detail.)

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Questions to guide the discussion:

1. Are we on track to meeting the goals envisioned by the statute regarding the role of the Council?
2. How will the Council approach legislatively mandated aspects of its work not yet addressed, e.g., role of foster care ombudsman and seeking input from current foster youth?
3. What is working and what could be improved in the way we are structured to achieve our goals?

Discussion:

→ CWC Structure

- Clarity that the CWC Was not intended to be structures as an Agency/organization, but rather as a Forum
- Avoid being duplicative of authority that resides elsewhere. CWC should be a coordinating clearinghouse. The legislative intent was not for the CWC to be an implementing body.
- We are a coordinating body. Have done well to date, imprudent to request additional resources at this time.
- New .5 FTE position in place to enhance coordinating role and make it a priority for Directors to continue participation. AOC staff and consultant roles will continue to be in place.

→ Role of the CWC

- A frustration with Council is in its scope—CWC did not weigh in on many recent pieces of legislation; but rather limited scope to two important issues. Role of the Council should be to provide input and help shape legislation.
- Intent also to create visibility for children's issues, structure meant to bring authority to recommendations made, and integrate leaders involved in implementation.
- Note: To the questions, "Can the Council take positions on legislation?" and "Can the Council sponsor legislation?" Larry Bolton noted that Sections a-m provide specific mandates on what the Council is to do. The guiding legislation does not state specifically that the Council is prohibited from or allowed to do.
- The role of the CWC should be more expansive

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- Much of the substantive work to date has been through the subcommittee structure, as brought back to the Council.
- The role of the Council is advisory—monitoring—reporting, but not enforcement (except for content of report). Because recommendations are brought to the table where those responsible for implementation are seated—in good faith they should leave the meeting and implement as informed by CWC perspective.

→ **CWC Membership & Participation**

- Request for notice of who is and is not still on Council. (And who received notice?) What to do with designated members who do not fully participate?
- Need to consider how we look at county participation on the Council in terms of realignment, possibly increasing number of seats.
- Clarify whether seats are held by individuals, or only while in current position.
- What is the process (beyond staff suggestions) for understanding who we want to represent various constituencies?
- Consider role for valuable continuing members once no longer in their positions.
- Keep numbers small; look to members of subcommittee who have already shown a commitment.

→ **Task Team on CWC Structure and Role Needed?**

- Judge Edwards suggested a task group to think through the role of the Council in greater detail to bring back to the council.
- Some support for a task group to shape a recommendation/frame the issue to bring back to CWC for consideration.
- Discussion of substantive issues should remain with the full Council; technical or process issues OK for task group.
- Premature to form a task team.

NOTE: Secretary Dooley and Justice Raye will discuss and return with more coordinated thinking.

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VI. Subcommittee Breakouts

VII. Subcommittee Reports

- **Data Committee**
  - Data policy sharing statement in place, continuing to work on ways to disseminate. An All County Notice (CAN) will be distributed to CWS partners plus other ways.
  - Looking for ways to highlight best practices, have website, continuing to link to other sites.
  - Regional forums last year surfaced the need for a standardized consent form. AOC has draft forms available for public comment.
  - Federal discussions to make systems interoperable. CWMS and CCMS. Stewards of change ensure most robust, successful systems—technology not necessarily the barrier.

- **Prevention/Early Intervention**
  - For the next full council, DR Framework will be brought forward for approval. Will be posted for review prior to the June meeting per Bagley Keane.
  - Given realignment, HCR, requesting an expert speaker at next meeting to frame what impact has been so we can determine if changes to recommendations need to be made accordingly.
  - Request a member of HCR and realignment to sit on our committee and a member of those efforts to sit on P/EI.

- **Permanency**
  - *Family Finding* was the first approved recommendation of the subcommittee. Proposal to create a toolkit resulted in issuance of RFP by the AOC. The American Humane Association was selected to develop a statewide permanency toolkit that will be integrated into one system—training, case work practice, etc.
  - A next goal is around reunification. Subcommittee will meet between meetings.

- **Child Development**
  - The committee will participate in a webinar in May to gather information and others are welcomed. Log on information to follow if there is interest outside of the subcommittee.

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- Post secondary education AB 12 extends benefits and service to former foster youth past the age of 18. In a significant implementation phase. Request to bring someone to the next CWC.
- Prioritizing foster youth in post secondary education. Dramatic increase in enrollment. Gives priority enrollment to foster youth so they don't cap out. Looking to support for that policy at the June meeting.

VIII. Closing Remarks

Secretary Dooley offered her observations and thoughts on the day's proceedings and expressed her commitment to working in partnership with the Council Members. She thanked those present and indicated that she is looking forward to seeing them again in June (Sacramento).

IX. Adjourn

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