

Meeting Summary for California Child Welfare Council Meeting

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Quick recap

The meeting focused on the importance of data accuracy and its role in policymaking and decision-making, with discussions on the formation of the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee and the Behavioral Health Committee's recommendations for improving outcomes for children in child welfare and juvenile justice. The need for better integration of data systems to improve the behavioral health needs of children in the child welfare system was emphasized, with a focus on making data accessible to families and youth. Updates were provided on ongoing work to improve Child and Family Team meetings and the priorities of various committees.

Next steps

Here are the key action items from the meeting:

Judicial Council to finalize and launch the California Children and Youth in Child Welfare report tool dashboard in 2024.

Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC) to identify and confirm tri-chairs and members by end of February 2024.

MRAC to develop implementation plans for the 14 recommendations on shifting from mandated reporting to community supporting.

MRAC to provide quarterly updates to the Child Welfare Council on progress.

Behavioral Health Committee to work with CDSS and DHCS on implementing the approved recommendations around behavioral health data integration and CANS implementation.

Prevention and Early Intervention Committee to review MRAC work and prepare recommendations for 2025.

Permanency Committee to continue discussions with CDSS on child and family team implementation support.

Data Linkage Committee to receive updates on CARES data system and substance use disorder data workgroup.

Youth Justice Committee to bring memo in March on adopting UCLA practice briefs as Stepping Home model for California.

CSEC Action Team to hold training on hiring and supporting lived experience experts on January 23rd.

Empowerment Committee co-chairs to meet and determine next steps for the committee.

Summary

New Members and Judicial Council Report

The meeting began with AllenbyBuildingManager@dgs.ca.gov welcoming new members and thanking outgoing co-chair Dr. Ghaly for his leadership. AllenbyBuildingManager@dgs.ca.gov also introduced new members including Jen Troia, Dr. Erica Torres, Tamisha Wallace, Pete Cervinka, and Carlos Marquez. Secretary Johnson then took over, expressing her appreciation for the diverse perspectives in the council and her excitement for the future work, including rate reform and preventative measures to keep families together. The meeting then proceeded to public comment, where Dr. Lisa from Parents Anonymous shared their work in providing emotional support to millions of people through their helpline and online support groups. No other public comments were made. The meeting then moved on to the first information item, the Judicial Council Report, presented by Sophia Belotti.

New Data Dashboard for Foster Youth

The building manager presents a draft prototype of a new data dashboard tool for foster youth outcomes. The tool compiles publicly available data from sources like the Child Welfare Indicators Project and the California Department of Education. It provides visual data displays on topics like safety, permanency, family connections, health, education, and housing for foster youth in California. The tool aims to give a comprehensive overview of the experiences of foster youth in an accessible format. Key points are that this is still a draft for feedback, it currently only has state-level data but will expand to county-level data, and it repackages existing data sources in a user-friendly dashboard rather than creating new data. Feedback is solicited on the data measures included, layout, and ways to improve usability for different stakeholders like judges.

Foster Care Data and Policy Discussion

In the meeting, Sarah Saria from the Judicial Council reminded everyone to state their names for the record. Leslie raised questions about the definition of 'children in foster care' and the inclusion of children living with their parents but having an open court case. She also asked about the inclusion of data related to substance use, overdose, fentanyl poisoning, suicide ideation, and suicidal attempts. AllenbyBuildingManager@dgs.ca.gov clarified that the data is not included in the dashboard but could be considered for addition. Judge Craig Arthur and Judge Martin discussed the usefulness of the data for their work, particularly in understanding the needs of specific populations and guiding policy changes. Jevon expressed concern about the data reflecting poorly on the system's ability to support foster youth and suggested tracking Medi-Cal beneficiaries' healthcare visits and housing status.

Data Accuracy and Policy Impact

The meeting focused on the importance of data accuracy and its role in policymaking and decision-making. Jevon emphasized the need for a deep dive into the data and its alignment with the urgency of the outcomes for the children in their care. Allenby highlighted the importance of data in identifying problems, such as the drop in petitions filed in the dependency court, which led to

structural changes in the system. The meeting also discussed the formation of the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC) to address unnecessary reporting of children and families to child protective services. The committee will work on implementing the recommendations from the task force and will report back to the Child Welfare Council quarterly. The conversation ended with a presentation from Karen Larson and Chris Stoner on the Behavioral Health Committee's recommendations for improving outcomes for children in child welfare and juvenile justice.

Improving Behavioral Health Data Integration

Allenby Building Manager from DGS discussed the need for better integration of data systems to improve the behavioral health needs of children in the child welfare system. They emphasized the importance of making data accessible to families and youth to help them understand and use it effectively. The State has been working on integration across departments, and Allenby Building Manager recommended utilizing existing data to track changes in needs and strengths over time. They also suggested looking at other data sources to answer questions not readily available in the current systems. The importance of training and ongoing technical assistance to ensure fidelity to the CANS was also highlighted.

Behavioral Health and Permanency Updates

The Behavioral Health Committee presented recommendations that were approved by the Child Welfare Council. The recommendations focus on improving the integration of behavioral health services, including addressing the need for culturally relevant approaches and better coordination between different systems like child welfare and juvenile justice. The committee emphasized the importance of engaging families and utilizing data sources beyond just the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment. Next steps will involve working closely with state departments to support implementation of the recommendations. The Permanency Committee discussed ongoing work to improve Child and Family Team meetings, including addressing gaps in understanding and implementation. Other committees provided updates on their priorities and upcoming meetings.