

CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

MEETING DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

(ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING)

Present: Vance Raye, Co-Chair; Mark Ghaly, Co-Chair; Sarah Belton; Dana Blackwell; Heather Bowlds; Sheila Boxley, Sanja Bugay; Bobby Cagle; Ebony Chambers, Roger DeLeon, Leonard Edwards; Leslie Heimov; Kathryn Icenhower; Kimberley Johnson; Karen Larsen; Sharon Lawrence; Will Lightbourne; Michael Olenick; Amy Price; Dan Prince; Libby Sanchez; Cherie Schroeder; Shawna Schwarz; Cathy Senderling-McDonald; Debra Silverman; Chris Stoner-Mertz; Daniel Webster; Jevon Wilkes

Absent: Nancy, Bargmann; Stacy Boulware-Eurie; Melissa Cosio; Janay Eustace, Leticia Galyean; Patrick Gardner; Eloise Gomez Reyes; Douglas Hatchimonji; Martin Hoshino; Melissa Hurtado; Aubrey Manuel; Michael Olenick; Cheryl Rave; Vaneshia Reed; Terry Rooney; Susan Rubio; Lindsay Tornatore; Rochelle Trochtenberg; Sarah Tyson; Leecia Welch

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS (FIFTH ZOOM MEETING FOR CWC)

Staff noted that the meeting was going to be recorded and placed on the website. The meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m. by Judge Vance Raye who personally welcomed council members and members of the public, in lieu of taking the time to do personal introductions of members and the public (anticipating that it may take longer on Zoom than in person). Secretary Ghaly then welcomed members and the public.

Approval of the June 2, 2021 Discussion Highlights (Action Item)

Justice Raye directed Council Members to the Discussion Highlights document that had been posted and sent to them prior to the meeting. He asked for comments, and/or suggested revisions from the Council and the public. There being none, he called for a consensus vote and in the absence of any revisions or comments the highlights were approved.

New Parent Partner and Member Introductions

New Parent partners, Ebony Chambers and Roger DeLeon Jr. were introduced. Libby Sanchez from SEIU California was also introduced as a new member of the Council.

Overdose & Suicide Increase in Young Clients (Information Item)

Leslie Heimov came before the Council to address the dramatic increase of overdose and/or suicide in young clients. She stated that although we are only eight months into the New Year, the numbers have quadrupled. She is hoping the Council will be able to address this matter.

Cumulative Rates of Child Protection Involvement and Terminations of Parental Rights in California Birth Cohort (Information Item)

Justice Vance Raye introduced Emily Putman-Hornstein, Co-Director of Children’s Data Network and Distinguished Scholar at the University of California. Emily is also a research specialist at the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, the School of Social Welfare at UC Berkeley.

Ms. Putman-Hornstein walked through the data and the cumulative number of children in California with different levels of child protection involvement for a significant number of children. Observations of notable racial ethnic differences were noted along with other significant differences in socio-demographic and community involvement with the child protection system. She also shared numbers that she believed would reflect a system that needs course correction and reform and has probably become far too large to effectively protect or support families. There are a significant number of reported children in need of protection and families who need the involvement of the child protection system in order to safely parent. What do we have now? What are the important conversations and policy changes that may be needed to move the system in a direction where we could all agree it would be a more desirable system and safe for both families and children? These reflective questions and more were presented and discussed in depth. The information on Ms. Putman-Hornstein’s research and today’s presentation can be accessed by clicking this link: [Cumulative Rates of Child Protection Involvement and Terminations of Parental Rights in a California Birth Cohort](#).

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Implementation – Part IV (Information Item)

Secretary Ghaly introduced Deputy Director of the California Department of Social Services, Angie Swartz. Ms. Swartz provided a quick overview of some of the major provisions in Family First and also a bit of an overview of their approach to prevention services in California. A bulleted review of the many things that were contained in the Family First Prevention and Services Act were reviewed to provide a bird’s-eye view as it relates to this law. Part I deals with the prevention services that are now optional to the state which now has new federal funding for these services. Part IV focuses on the restrictions to federal funds for youth and congregate care settings. The other six sections of the law also did quite a bit in terms of reforming aspects of our child welfare system. This is a very in-depth presentation and can be accessed by clicking this link: [Family First Prevention Services Act \(FFPSA\) Implementation – Part IV](#).

I. FAMILY FINDING IS NETWORK BUILDING (CONTINUED INFORMATION ITEM)

Justice Raye called on Permanency Committee Co-Chairs, Honorable Len Edwards, Bob Friend, and Marymichael Smrdeli continued the discussion from the Child Welfare Council March meeting. The Judicial Council put out a request for proposal on permanency issues and Seneca was a successful bidder of both projects. The National Institute for Permanent Family

Connectedness together with the Judicial Council have two projects underway that will commence over the next 2+ years with hopes that two of them will launch by the end of September. The first is to provide training for sites geared toward the northern region of the state. The focus will be on how to create alignment within each county system in an effort to obtain better legal and emotional permanency. . These invitations will be going out momentarily. The second project in the works will be held in ten county sites across the state. It will be selected by the county itself and the judicial council. A different approach is being taken to include discussions about system alignment. We hope to improve outcomes for our foster kids in California. A presentation was made covering the high duty and legal responsibility of child welfare systems to achieve support improved permanency outcomes for children and youth in foster care. Questions to ponder included: How do we meet these responsibilities? How do we do better? If we want to improve permanency items, our state must address reasonable efforts, alignment, child & family teaming, and relational wealth. Changes will only be seen if we go to the counties. Currently, in California, 30% of children, when removed from parents, are placed with relatives. We believe that not only is it positive for these children to be with family but its negative with stranger care this includes foster care and community care. This presentation can be accessed by clicking this link: [Family Finding is Network Building](#).

V. CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE UPDATE (INFORMATION ITEM)

Secretary Ghaly called on California Health and Human Services' Deputy Secretary, Stephanie Welch to provide an update on California's Children's Behavioral Health Initiative. Stephanie shared about trends occurring in our children and youth and the prevalence and treatment of depression in adolescents and young adults. Rates show significant increases in the need for help with emotional and mental health conditions, serious emotional disturbance, and even some youth mental health hospitalizations. Evidence suggests that while prevalence rates are growing, the availability of treatment and treatment rates remain stable. We want to address this with this initiative. This is a Behavioral Health initiative. There haven't been opportunities within the State to focus on children struggling with substance use and substance misuse. We have been seeing suicide, suicidal ideation and behaviors increasing in our youth. There are higher needs in behavioral and mental health needs for children and young people involved in both the child welfare system and notably in the juvenile justice system. Because the statistics overwhelming prove that our children and youth need help, we really need to double down our efforts to ensure we have the behavioral health professionals, services, and programs that can focus on the untreated needs before the mental health or substance use disorder creates a domino effect of negative things that can happen in their young lives. The goal is to make this service and opportunity available to ALL children and youth under the age of 26. This proposal aims to close gaps and make inclusivity our first focus. The actual initiative is to make good

use of the \$4.4 billion over the course of 5 years and transform the behavioral health system for all of our children and youth in California regardless of payer. This presentation can be accessed by clicking this link: [Creating a World Class Children and Youth Behavioral System](#).

Committee and Task Force Updates

Justice Raye called for committee/task force updates, which primarily focused on what would be discussed at the afternoon meetings. He thanked the Committee chairs for their reports.

Prevention/Early Intervention – Kathy Icenhower & David Hollinger updated that the PEI committee has been working closely and in collaboration with the State as they develop their plan providing input and recommendations. In continuance of this work, today and in the next few months, we are assisting by providing implementation recommendations to hope to present this to the Council at the next meeting. We are also excited about the potential opportunity to partner with First 5.

Permanency – Bob Friend stated that they will continue to have conversations around what is going on in Los Angeles, child and family teaming, and also working on a full report back to the Council on what has transpired.

Data Linkages & Information Sharing – Daniel Webster placed into the chat a webinar link and the audio dial-in for the folks for the data committee. There is a number that needs to be updated. We will be having a conversation with our colleagues from the digital services to get an update on the latest module for the California Automated Response Engagement system. Plan to engage the committee on a discussion around many of the things discussed in our presentations today.

CSEC Action Team – Leslie Heimov updated that their meeting today will focus on the experiences commercially or sexually exploited who are expectant or parenting. The 3-part agenda will include a panel of people with lived experience, a presentation about the nurse-family partnership, and the legal framework that applies to young people who have been exploited are themselves parents.

Behavioral Health Committee – Karen Larsen updated that this afternoon they will have a CSEC panel at the behavioral health committee. They have another small county convening in October. Finally the committee hopes to present their policy recommendation and universal array at the December Council meeting for approval. Ken Berrick announced that he is one of the last founding CWC members where the next meeting will be his last meeting. He has been incredibly lucky to work with the Council members and do such great work. Leticia Galyean is now the CEO of Seneca. Ken will be on a new venture with Just Advocacy so He expects to have many opportunities to continue working with many of the Council members. He expressed gratitude for giving him the opportunity.

Office of Youth & Community Restoration – Heather Bowlds stated there is not a lot to update today as they are still working through the recent legislation and development of the new office. She expects there should be more to report in December.

Other - Jevon Wilkes updated that the CWC system is the actual parent of thousands of California's children and youth; and that as parents, we must do better. We must humble ourselves, be the listeners, the learners, the action-takers that seek justice and equitable opportunity for our children and youth to thrive. We must restore

love, respect, and security for our young people. Currently the CWC is led by many adults without lived experience of being in the system of care. We have three members who have lived experience in this Council and new parents have joined this body. As a member of the Steering Committee, we are currently developing recommendations for the inclusion of young people and a youth committee. This is an opportunity to bring young people to the table. We need their voices here.

Justice Raye thanked the Committees and Jevon Wilkes for the reports and reminded the Committee Chairs and members that staff to the Council are available to the committee's needs, advice, questions, and/or concerns. Also, annual report templates are due on October 31, 2021. Feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with Marymichael and/or Chelsea Rau.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ADJOURNMENT TO COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Secretary Ghaly asked for any final comments from the members of the public.

Laurie Kappe, California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership – Links were placed into the chat that will resonate with everyone in the room. It has a lot of implications for FFPSA implementation.

Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin – Federal Clearing House has selected Parents Anonymous and rated us as supportive to impact mental health, substance abuse, and parenting. We are only one of five programs that actually make a difference about child safety. We save lives and we save money. We are looking to partner with the State to expand the California parent-youth hotline.

Adjournment

Justice Raye and Secretary Ghaly thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting and closed the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:39 pm.