

## Washington County Citizen Review Panel Minutes: January 20, 2009

Present: Jolene Abelson, Rick Backman, Ann Bebeau, Bob Benson, Dani Horan, Melissa Charley, Anita Keyes, Sue Lewis, Gail Peavey, Don Pelton.

Anita Keyes will contact Heidi Nakatani, who is currently on leave from the panel, to see what her plan is. The terms of Dani and Mary are up in June (boo-hoo) and we will need two new members.

### Washington County Update: Rick Backman

- \*County revenue is down, which makes budgeting very difficult, plus the state has pulled county money (the county is receiving 1.5M less)
- \*As a result, the county is considering rolling back services in a first round of cuts. Currently, there are 2 retirements and 2 others who have or will be resigning in Children's Services; these positions are on hold until more is known.
- \*The second round of cuts will depend on the governor and the legislature.
- \*Core services will be maintained. Some child welfare cases that don't meet statutes may not be serviced.
- \*TCM (Target Case Management), a federal reimbursement program, will end March 31, but may come back under President Obama's stimulus plan, at least until October.
- \*We have been fully staffed since April and have made great strides in meeting goals and cutting case loads (2007: 335 children in placement; 2008: 310 children in placement).
- \*Children's Mental Health Placements (ages 14-16): numbers have decreased but costs have skyrocketed, so we are exploring ways more children can be kept in their homes.
- \*Child Custody matters very time consuming: main sources of problems are alcohol use, drug use, and mental health issues.
- \*Don Pelton reported that response time is down from 114 hours to an average of 24 hours.
- \*The staff is dedicated to making sure kids are safe in spite of budget concerns.
- \*CRP report to County Board - possibly February 17.

### DHS Update: Anita Keyes

- \*The final report of the Recruiting Committee was passed out. The plan is to start using the new procedures; the counties will have a larger role in recruiting new members. Melissa Charley was our rep to the committee. Thanks, Melissa!
- \*The proposed topic for CRPs for 2009 is "Involving Fathers in Child Protection Cases." This is a response to the CFSR review. The intent is not to make more work for staff but to gather information about this topic, possibly by working in teams of two. Next month we will get organized and receive more information.
- \*Hennepin County is in the process of forming a CRP; they have 9 applications.
- \*Reminder: National CRP Conference is coming up – registration is open. Bob Benson and Mary Nelson are planning to go.
- \*April 17 is the date for the All-Panel Recognition and Dinner; details later.

### New Business

- \*Sue Lewis will call the Stillwater School District to inquire about the timeline for including the flyer, "It's Not Safe Under Eight," in their spring packet of notices to families.
- \*February 17: video conference to prepare for Child Abuse Month (April)
- \*After some discussion about what we would do for Child Abuse Month, we settled on sending some information and possibly letters to the editor of local papers. Dani and Ann will work on this and bring some possibilities to the February meeting.

## **Committee Work**

The Shared Family Care Committee has decided to table their work for now, partly to work on the new topic, and partly to wait and see how budget cuts play out and to see if Chisago County continues their program. We may request further information from them and may consider an educational presentation to the Washington County Board. We will revisit this matter in August or September.

The Independent Living Skills Committee commented that legislation regarding housing for teens aging out of foster care needs to change. They missed Mary, who has lots of their info!

**Adjournment at 6:30; next meeting is February 17.**