

Illinois Citizen Review Panels

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STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS
Report for FY 2005

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Citizen Review Panels

The Illinois Citizen Review Panels are established pursuant to Section 106 (c) of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Their function is to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of State and local agencies and where appropriate, specific cases, to evaluate the extent to which State and local child protection system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.

In particular, the Citizen Review Panels must evaluate:

- The Illinois state CAPTA Plan and the specific areas of the child protective system which are addressed therein;
- The state's compliance with federal child protection standards and assurances set forth in the CAPTA law; and
- Any other criteria that the panels consider important to ensure the protection of children, including: 1) a review of the extent to which the State and local child protective services system is coordinated with the foster care and adoption programs; and 2) a review of child fatalities and near fatalities.

The Child Abuse Prevention And Treatment Act

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was signed into law in 1974. It is one of the key pieces of federal legislation that guides child protection and is fully elaborated in U.S. Code (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq; 42 U.S.C. 5116 et. seq.). It was reauthorized with significant amendments and additions in 1978, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2003. The Citizen Review Panels were first introduced in the CAPTA amendments of 1996 and were further delineated by additions in the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the agency designated in Illinois to implement the provisions of CAPTA and meet requirements set out in federal law. Within DCFS, the Division of Child Protection administers many of the programs and grants required under CAPTA, including the Citizen Review Panels. CAPTA also includes a range of requirements in other areas including community-based prevention, adoption opportunities, and assistance to abandoned infants.

The Development Of Citizen Review Panels In Illinois

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services established four Citizen Review Panels to examine the policies and procedures of state and local child protective service agencies. Authorizing legislation for the Illinois Citizen Review Panels was introduced as part of Senate Bill 1109 in February 1999. It amended the Illinois Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 505/5) and became law in June 1999. According to the provisions of CAPTA, the individual states may: 1) designate one or more existing entities to satisfy the citizen review requirements; and 2) appoint volunteer members who are broadly representative of the community, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Illinois' population size required that 3 panels be formed.

In forming the panels, DCFS invited 4 existing advisory committees to take on citizen review activities in addition to their other interests and statutory responsibilities. Each group identified a specific area of inquiry (i.e. child abuse reporting, investigative procedures, multidisciplinary coordination of agencies, child fatalities) for their initial review of the DCFS child protection system. These areas of inquiry have expanded as the panels have become oriented to the full range of DCFS child protection policies and practices. The 4 Citizen Review Panels are listed below:

- The Children and Family Services (CFS) Advisory Council;
- The Statewide Citizen's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN)
- The Children's Justice Task Force (CJTF)
- The Child Death Review Teams (CDRT) Executive Council

Each panel includes a variety of members who have experience in working with children and families. The CFS Council and SCAN have members who represent professional organizations, child welfare agencies, volunteer associations, and concerned citizens. The Children's Justice Task Force and CDRT Executive Council have members from numerous disciplines including medicine, mental health, law, criminal justice, public health, education, social work, parent advocacy and child advocacy.

DCFS formed a **Citizen Review Panel Steering Committee** in May 1999 to oversee the process, to formulate guidelines for consistent operation of the panels, and to aid in

communication between the panels and DCFS. The Steering Committee includes DCFS administrators and program supervisors as well as the chair and vice-chair of each Citizen Review Panel. A list of Steering Committee members and Panel members is included in the appendix to this report.

Overview of 2005 Activities

The Illinois Citizen Review Panels have continued to grow in their knowledge of the DCFS child protection system during the past year. Ms. Gailyn Thomas, Deputy Director of Child Protection, has addressed the CRP Recommendations of 2004 in a letter to the Citizen Review Panels. She regularly meets with the panels to discuss current priorities for child safety and the protection of children from abuse and neglect.

Members of the Illinois panels are educated on their responsibilities with the **CRP Orientation Guidebook** prepared in June 2004. The Guidebook delineates various citizen review responsibilities and provides members with practical information on the operation of the various committees. With the increased availability of Citizen Review Reports from other states, the Illinois panels have also benefited from information developed by and for citizen review panels across the nation.

Cheryl Peterson, CRP Coordinator, and Kathryn Roman, Associate Deputy Director for Child Protection, attended the 4th annual Citizen Review Conference in Nags Head, North Carolina during May 2005. The conference highlighted the diversity of approaches and activities which various states have used to develop their citizen review panels and engage the state child protection in a dialogue regarding recommendations to improve child protection policies and practices.

The Illinois Citizen Review Panels have an important role in advising DCFS and affiliated private child welfare agencies about the safety and protection of children from abuse and neglect. The members have approached their responsibilities with dedication and resolve, and they continue to serve as an integral part of the Department's outreach to communities throughout the state.

PANEL ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Panel 1. Children and Family Services Advisory Council

The Children and Family Services Advisory Council is appointed by the Governor to advise the Department of Children and Family Services on its services and programs for children and adults under its care. The Council is established in Illinois law, 20 ILCS 505, and consists of 17 members who serve staggered 4-year terms which can be renewed. In June, 2004, the CFS Advisory Council modified its rules of procedure to incorporate its mandate as a Citizen Review Panel for the purpose of evaluating the extent to which the DCFS and private agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.

The CFS Council meets quarterly in either Chicago or Springfield. During FY 05, two meetings were held by teleconference to accommodate the schedules of members. Micki Chulick, Executive Director, Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) in DeKalb, and Barbara Cempura, President and CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters in Belleville, served as co-chairpersons until December 2004 when Ms. Cempura resigned her responsibilities in preparation for her retirement from the Council. DCFS Coordinator Michael Byrd took a different position with DCFS in January 2005. Mr. Keith Langston, Associate Deputy Director, Division of Child Protection is serving as the new coordinator.

Meeting Dates for FY 05

The CFS Advisory Council held meetings on the following dates:

September 23, 2004

December 9, 2004

March 3, 2005

June 23, 2005

Focus Areas of Interest

The CFS Advisory Council identified the following areas of DCFS policy and practice for exploration and discussion during 2005:

- Tracking of DCFS youth (wards) who are involved with the Juvenile Justice system, particularly those who may be housed in local detention facilities.

- Community services available to DCFS wards who are experiencing problems in placement (i.e. runaways from residential placement) or who are involved in delinquency situations.
- Educational programs and job training services available to youth who are aging out of the DCFS system.
- Outreach to mandated reporters and the capacity of the DCFS Hotline to respond to incoming calls.
- Methamphetamine awareness and substance abuse resources to counter the risk that meth poses to children and youth.

Educational Presentations

Juvenile Justice—Ms. Anne Studzinski, coordinator of the Juvenile Justice Steering Group, presented information on the needs of DCFS wards who are assigned to the Department of Corrections or who are in local detention. DCFS needs to encourage the establishment of better relationships with probation departments for purposes of tracking children who are arrested and arranging for appropriate services during their detention period. She indicated that there is a need for transitional living programs that will help youth work out relationships with their families of origin and encourage their employment and engagement with restorative justice programs.

Youth Transition and Education Services—An extensive overview of DCFS services for older youth was presented by Dr. Sharon Latiker, Associate Deputy Director, Division of Service Intervention. She stressed that the Department has put educational services at the forefront of its services to wards by expanding college scholarships, providing educational training vouchers for those age 16-23, and locating summer jobs and internships for career development. For younger children, the emphasis is on referral to early childhood, pre-school, and Head Start programs. Working in conjunction with Chicago Public Schools, DCFS staff have regular contact with school administrators and have advocated for services needed to promote special education students into regular classrooms. LAN services throughout the state are being refocused to deal with children and families on issues of truancy, suspensions, and school behavior problems.

Child Protection Update—There was a child protection update provided by Keith Langston, Associate Deputy Director, at three of the meetings. He spoke about increased

hiring of child protection staff in Cook County and at the Hotline; the ways in which DCFS is addressing requirements of the federal PIP (Program Improvement Plan); recent accomplishments in drafting a protocol with law enforcement to address investigations involving methamphetamine and assure the safety and health of children; training programs and distribution of information to mandated reporters; and DCFS outreach to its community partners at Regional Resource Fairs scheduled for fall 2005.

Recommendations

The Children and Family Services Advisory Council, based upon its research and discussion over the past year, makes the following recommendations for FY 2005:

1. DCFS needs a strategy for tracking DCFS wards who are in the Illinois Department of Corrections or local detention facilities in order to network with those facilities and effectively plan and implement services to promote successful reentry of wards into their home communities.

2. DCFS needs to work more closely with probation and community organizations to develop resources for juveniles who are approaching independence and need housing, health care, and jobs, especially youth who may be involved in the juvenile justice system.

3. DCFS needs to advocate for the development and implementation of effective substance abuse education, prevention, and treatment approaches for children, parents, and family members who are affected by addiction to methamphetamine.

4. DCFS should continue to expand its training outreach to mandated reporters, especially early childhood and day care programs, and should establish an easily accessible web-based training curriculum for access by all mandated reporters.

Future Directions

The CFS Council is looking forward to the appointment of new members to replace those members whose terms expired in early 2005. An upcoming meeting will provide an opportunity to recognize many long term members who have resigned or retired from the Council during the past year. Orientation of new members to the Council and to its Citizen Review responsibilities will be a high priority during FY 2006. The Division of Child Protection will continue to provide leadership to the Council in conjunction with the Division of External Affairs.

Panel 2. Statewide Citizen's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect

The Statewide Citizen's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) is established in Illinois law under Section 11.7 of the *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA, 325 ILCS 5/11.7)*. SCAN members are selected for their contributions in various types of human service, neonatal medical care, needs and rights of the disabled, law and community life, and family advocacy. The Director of DCFS appoints members of SCAN to 3-year staggered terms. The committee advises the Department on child abuse prevention services and services to abused and neglected children that address the health and safety of children throughout the state.

SCAN meets bi-monthly via videoconference between Chicago, Springfield, and a location in southern Illinois. The October meeting is a face to face meeting held in conjunction with the annual Prevent Child Abuse Illinois Conference. Gwen Mastin, President and CEO, New Phoenix Assistance Center in Chicago, serves as the SCAN chairperson; Donald Schlosser, retired executive of Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, is the vice-chairperson. Gail Jackson, Administrator, Division of Child Protection, is the DCFS Coordinator.

Meeting Dates for FY 2005

The SCAN Committee held meetings on:

August 18, 2004

October 8, 2004

December 1, 2004

February 16, 2005

April 20, 2005

Focus Topics

During 2005, SCAN focused its meeting discussion on the following areas of DCFS policy and practice:

- The role of DCFS in promoting training for mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, especially as this relates to educators and school administrators and other professionals who are licensed or certified by the State of Illinois.
- The availability of appropriate training for mandated reporters.

- The ability of domestic violence programs to effectively address the impact of family violence on children.
- Fatherhood initiatives and their ability to work with younger males on issues of child abuse prevention.
- The impact of methamphetamine on the health and safety of children who reside within a meth manufacturing environment.

Presentations on DCFS Activities and Projects

Updates on the Division of Child Protection: Ms. Gailyn Thomas, Deputy Director of Child Protection, attended a majority of the SCAN meetings during 2005 and gave regular updates regarding: 1) SACWIS implementation; 2) the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and the response which DCFS has made to findings of the Federal CFSR Report; and 3) reorganization of the Division of Child Protection. Throughout FY 2004-2005, DCFS struggled with caseload variances and staff vacancies that strained services to children and families in some areas of the state. However, DCFS worked with the representatives of AFSCME and the Governor's Office to successfully realign current staff assignments and hire new workers for more consistent caseloads throughout the state. In addition, Child Protection will oversee intact family services in all regions. There are newly revised Intact Family procedures and teams of specialized intact workers who will provide several different levels of in-home services.

Legislative Updates: There were several bills on mandated reporting introduced by members of the Illinois House and Senate during the Legislative Session of 2005. In general, the bills sought to increase the penalties for school personnel or school board members who failed to report suspected abuse or neglect of children enrolled in their school or school district. One bill addressed the responsibility of mandated reporters to pursue training and education with regard to their mandated reporter responsibilities. Randy Wells, DCFS Legislative Liaison, provided the text of the bills to SCAN members and followed up on the status of the bills during the legislative session. None of the bills was passed by both the House and Senate at the end of the spring session. SCAN members did not believe that increased penalties for failure to report would be helpful and, instead, encouraged further training requirements for mandated reporters in conjunction with professional licensure or certification.

Methamphetamine Presentation: Mr. Sam Gillespie, DCFS Office of Healthcare Policy, gave an extensive overview of methamphetamine and its impact on children and families at the October meeting of SCAN. The Department is currently working with Illinois State Police, the Attorney General's Office, and the Governor's Office to draft an Investigative Protocol and a Medical Protocol to deal with the problem of meth effects on children, particularly when they are residing in a meth manufacturing environment. The Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Protocol was distributed to DCFS and law enforcement in July 2005.

Hotline Updates: Linda Williams, SCR Administrator, was present at two SCAN meetings to provide information on new procedures and practices at the Child Abuse Hotline. She also discussed a telephone survey of school principals who had received Final Finding Reports from the State Central Register on children indicated for sexual or physical abuse in accordance with requirements of ANCRA, Section 8.6 (P.A. 92-295, 1-1-02). Ms. Williams is setting up a process for this survey and results will be presented at an upcoming meeting.

Recommendations

The SCAN Committee is making the following major recommendations for FY 2005:

1. SCAN recommends that DCFS should sponsor or support changes to the *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA)* that would require a minimum level of in-service training for mandated reporters of suspected child abuse/neglect. Additionally, SCAN recommends that this training be required as a condition of licensure or certification for those mandated professionals listed in ANCRA who must be licensed or certified in order to practice their professions in Illinois.

2. SCAN recommends that DCFS form a task force of professionals who represent different sectors of mandated reporters (i.e. doctors, nurses, teachers, school administrators, substance abuse counselors, day care employees etc.) to develop guidelines for the content of in-service mandated reporter training and how it will be delivered.

3. SCAN members are working with and in support of the initiatives proposed by Director Samuels in addressing the production of methamphetamine and its use as having a high health impact on children. SCAN's perception of the issue is that meth is a major

contributing factor to the abuse and neglect of children in Illinois, making this initiative a high priority to the committee.

4. DCFS should survey a representative sample of school principals to determine the outcomes of HB3055/ P.A. 92-295 that requires schools to receive, maintain, transfer, and appropriately purge DCFS indicated findings of child abuse in a student's temporary record. The statute, which is intended to alert school personnel to children at risk of further abuse, also has the potential to compromise a student's confidentiality and should be evaluated.

Follow-up to Previous Recommendations

The SCAN Committee reviewed the accomplishments of demonstration projects that explored the linkages between domestic violence and situations of child abuse. Following an RFP and review process in 2001, SCAN recommended 12 projects throughout the state receive contracts for prevention funding related to family violence. The projects were funded from January 2002 to June 2005 resulting in specialized services to approximately 473 families/parents and 1,972 children.

Future Directions

SCAN has added several new members during 2005. The committee remains focused on its mission as a Citizen Review panel and will be working on follow-up to this year's recommendations as well as setting new goals for FY 2006. Discussions of topics are frequently carried over to several meetings in order for members to gather research, review new materials, or meet with key DCFS staff and administrators working in a specific area. SCAN expects to explore a number of prevention initiatives and projects that will significantly impact services to children at risk of child abuse and neglect.

Panel 3. Children's Justice Task Force

The Children's Justice Task Force is a multidisciplinary advisory group to DCFS. It was organized in 1989 according to requirements in Section 107 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Task Force makes recommendations to DCFS for improving the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse/exploitation, cases of maltreatment related fatalities, cases involving a combination of jurisdictions, and cases involving children with disabilities or serious health problems. Recommendations are focused on reducing child trauma, enhancing the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action, and reforming state laws and regulations while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.

Children's Justice members represent the fields of child protection, law enforcement, medical and mental health, attorneys for the prosecution and defense, criminal and civil court judges, education, children with disabilities, child advocates, and parent advocates. The Director of DCFS appoints 28 members to staggered 4-year terms. Meetings are held quarterly with an added Annual Meeting scheduled in March. The chairperson for 2005 is Teresa Maganzini, JD, Chief of the Child Protection Division of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office; the vice-chairperson is Karen Kuchar, Executive Director, Family Shelter Service in Wheaton. The DCFS Administrator is Cheryl Peterson, Ph.D.

Meeting Dates

The Children's Justice Task Force met on the following dates:

September 17, 2004

November 19, 2004

February 17, 2005

March 10-11, 2005

May 13, 2005

Focus Topics

The panel focused inquiry on the following areas of child protection policy:

- DCFS coordination with law enforcement in responding to situations of domestic violence and/or substance abuse, particularly methamphetamine, that can put children at risk for abuse and neglect.

- The impact of federal and state legislation on victim services, juvenile sex offenders, and children's testimony in court.
- DCFS initiatives to provide improved assessment and treatment/support services to children and families at the front end of the child protection system and to deflect children from entering placement.
- Methods to preserve confidentiality of children's records as well as methods to share information needed for multidisciplinary investigation and intervention in cases of child abuse and neglect.
- Coordination of law enforcement, State's attorneys, DCFS, medical providers, mental health providers, and Children's Advocacy Centers in the investigation of child abuse reports.

Educational Presentations

Methamphetamine manufacture and children—Dr. Deanna St. Germain, Director, Children's Medical Resource Network, discussed the dangers which methamphetamine poses for adult users and for children who may be residing in meth manufacturing environments. She addressed the growth of meth problems in the southern region of the state and noted the increasing number of children needing foster placement because their parents are in jail on drug charges. Dr. St. Germain is working with DCFS on a medical protocol to guide the intervention of police and child protection workers when children have been exposed to meth. She urged the CJ Task Force to support upcoming meth awareness conferences.

Juvenile Sexual Offenders—Jerry Lowell discussed proposed federal legislation that may require juveniles to be listed on state and federal sex offender registries. This is in direct contrast to recent changes in DCFS Rule and Procedure which specifically limit the DCFS retention at the State Central Register of indicated reports on juvenile perpetrators (age 17 or below) to 5 years or age 21 (or age 23 for repeated indications), whichever occurs first. Juvenile sexual offenders are often reacting to their own victimization and can be effectively treated for their offending behaviors. Robin McGinnis, CEO of Alternative Behavior Treatment Center, discussed new assessment, treatment and training standards for children with sexual behavior problems, including those who are in juvenile correctional facilities.

Domestic Violence—Marion Houston spoke about the DCFS domestic violence policy which has been under development. The Department is strongly committed to screening for domestic violence but has been hampered by budget constraints in hiring the resource staff and implementing the training that is needed. A domestic violence handbook directed to DCFS clients is being prepared, and SACWIS tracking of domestic violence concerns has been integrated into service planning documents.

Strengthening Families—Anne Studzinski, Special Assistant to the DCFS Director, presented information about Illinois' participation in a national project to strengthen protective factors for young children by working together with early childhood centers. The early childhood centers will collaborate with community agencies to offer concrete resources and support services to parents.

Impact of Crawford v. Washington—This U.S. Supreme Court decision limits the admissibility of hearsay evidence when a person is not available to testify in person. The ramifications for children—those who are not emotionally or physically able to testify in court—is significant. The Illinois Supreme Court is currently debating the 115.10 hearsay exception which has been ruled unconstitutional in a Cook County case dating from 2004. The Task Force continues to follow this issue for its impact on child abuse investigations and court proceedings.

Integrated Assessment—Integrated assessment offers special diagnostic services (medical, developmental, behavioral) for children entering foster care. A licensed clinical social worker or psychologist assesses the needs of the child, the parents, and the foster family so that appropriate services can be identified within 45 days of case opening. This is an important new “front-end” service which DCFS fully implemented in February 2005. The Task Force is committed to following this program's progress in meeting the needs of children and facilitating family reunification.

Throughout the year, the Children's Justice Task Force also received regular updates from Gailyn Thomas, DCFS Deputy Director for Child Protection, about a number of concerns related to DCFS operations including staffing, changes in policy and practice, training, management team, and budget.

Recommendations

1. DCFS should increase funding support for the expansion of Children's Advocacy Centers so that children in every county of the state have access to CAC services. DCFS should also work with the Children's Advocacy Centers to incorporate the handling of serious physical abuse cases into investigative protocols.

2. The Children's Justice Task Force strongly supports the DCFS initiative on Integrated Assessment and recommends that DCFS provide quality assurance monitoring, data tracking, and outcome evaluation to assure that Integrated Assessment reaches its intended goals and is implemented effectively and consistently throughout the state. The CJTF would like to receive annual updates of Integrated Assessment processes and outcomes.

3. DCFS should continue to expand its training outreach to mandated reporters, and should definitely pursue the establishment of a web-based training curriculum that can be accessed by any mandated reporter to receive individualized instruction.

4. DCFS must fully implement the Domestic Violence Protocol and provide training to DCFS staff and private agency staff to assure its integration into risk and safety assessments, casework services, and progress monitoring.

5. Members of the Task Force are opposed to federal legislation that would mandate a possible lifetime registration for juvenile sex offenders. The CJTF urges DCFS to express its opposition to this legislation as being contrary to the intent of DCFS Rule and Procedure regarding juvenile perpetrators.

Future Directions

The Children's Justice Task Force is preparing for a comprehensive review of recommendations during 2005-2006. This process is required by federal regulations. During this process, the Task Force will also conduct outreach to additional groups and individuals to meet the mandates of its participation as a Citizen Review Panel, targeting some of its efforts around specific topics of ongoing concern. The Task Force has recently formed an Executive Subcommittee to meet by teleconference throughout the year and work through some implementation plans for the current Citizen Review recommendations.

Panel 4. Child Death Review Team Executive Council

The Child Death Review Team Executive Council was formed in 1998 to coordinate the operations of the 9 regionally-based Illinois child death review teams. The CDRT Executive Council consists of the chairperson and vice-chairperson of each regional team for a total membership of 18. The Illinois child death review teams were statutorily established in P.A. 88-614 enacted in September, 1994; amendments in 2001 authorized the executive council.

Objectives for the CDRT Executive Council are: 1) to serve as the voice of child death review teams in Illinois; 2) to ensure that the data, results, findings, and recommendations of the teams are adequately used to make changes in policies, procedures, and statutes needed to protect children; 3) to collaborate with the General Assembly, DCFS, and others to develop any legislation needed to prevent child fatalities and to protect children; 4) to ensure that the review process for the regional teams is standardized; 5) to develop an annual statewide training symposium; and 6) to assist in the preparation of an annual CDRT report. Dr. Neil Hochstadt, Vice-President for Behavioral Science, LaRabida Children's Hospital, serves as CDRT Council chairperson; Dr. Mary Loken, Sangamon Regional Office of Education, is vice-chairperson. Ms. Sherry Barr is the DCFS Coordinator.

Meeting Dates for FY 05

The Child Death Review Team Executive Council met on:

July 16, 2004

October 1, 2004

January 14, 2005

April 22, 2005

Focus Topics

The CDRT Executive Council reviews statewide issues and concerns regarding:

- DCFS-related cases where a child has died, including any cases opened for investigation within the previous 12 months; cases where the child is under guardianship of DCFS; and cases open for DCFS services.
- Other suspicious child deaths with risk factors for abuse or neglect.

- DCFS handling of investigations involving medical neglect allegations.
- Prevention of injury from dangerous toys or equipment in the child's environment.

Activities

During 2005, the CDRT Executive Council continued to modify and refine its Best Practice standards for regional team meetings. The Best Practice approach has helped assure that each of the regional CDRTs follows a similar process when child death cases are presented and reviewed. The Executive Council has recently incorporated statements on ethical issues and conflict of interest into the Best Practice standards.

At meetings in April and July 2005, the Executive Council made revisions to the CDRT team report form to capture more information on situations involving domestic violence, substance abuse, and sleeping arrangements. These improvements will allow for more thorough recording and tracking of data. Following recommendations of the Executive Council for more access to data, DCFS was able to relocate the CDRT database in 2004 to the Division of Planning and Performance Management, making use of statistical reporting personnel and systems that are better aligned with SACWIS technology.

A central activity of the CDRT Executive Council during 2005 was its interest in public awareness of child safety issues and the dangers of certain infant play equipment. The Council reviewed research on baby bath seats and baby walkers. Despite warnings and the risk posed by inappropriate use of this equipment, the government has not banned their manufacture. CDRT, however, has been successful in urging DCFS to adopt a ban on baby walkers in licensed child care facilities. CDRT also continued its collaboration with DCFS, Department of Human Services, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, the Red Cross and the Illinois Department of Public Health for a statewide public awareness campaign on child drownings. This campaign, *Get Water Wise---Supervise*, was launched in 2003 to emphasize the importance of parental oversight whenever young children are in or around water.

The annual Child Death Review Team Symposium was held on September 30-October 1, 2004 in Elk Grove Village, a Chicago suburb. The presentations focused on topics of: 1) child and adolescent suicide review teams; 2) injury prevention techniques in the home environment; 3) abuse by pediatric condition fabrication/Munchausen by proxy; and 4)

mental illness and violence against children. An orientation for new CDRT members was held prior to the start of the symposium.

The CDRT Council supervised the printing and distribution of the *Illinois Child Death Review Teams Annual Report 2002*. This report provides detailed information and statistics on numerous categories of child death. It also presents charts of CDRT recommendations and DCFS responses regarding: 1) primary prevention; 2) DCFS systems; and 3) other systems. The Annual Report for 2003 is nearing completion.

Recommendations for 2005

1. DCFS should work more closely with the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois SAFE KIDS project in distributing information to minimize the health and safety risks posed by baby bath seats and baby walkers.

2. The CDRT Executive Council will form a Committee for Statewide Review and Advocacy to examine the issues involved in developing and promoting public education campaigns and public policies about child deaths due to inappropriate supervision, co-sleeping, substance misuse, and gun violence. The CDRT Executive Council recommends that representatives of other public and private agencies serve on this committee and work together with DCFS on funding at least one major public education campaign during each fiscal year.

3. DCFS should expand its training outreach to mandated reporters, especially hospitals, medical doctors, nurses, coroners, and public health personnel who are in regular contact with infants and young children who may be at risk for abuse or neglect.

4. DCFS must emphasize ongoing staff training to provide child protection investigators and caseworkers with skills and tools to assess substance abuse and domestic/family violence in the home as these pose substantial risk of harm to children.

Future Directions

In its work as a Citizen Review Panel, the CDRT Council has formed a committee that will consider issues on services to DCFS teens who are parenting; services to older children who are experiencing medical neglect or coping with chronic illness; and services to children who are exposed to toxic substances like methamphetamine. The meetings will be held quarterly by teleconference, and case reviews will be conducted as appropriate.

**DCFS RESPONSE TO CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL
RECOMMENDATIONS 2004**

April 27, 2005

Dear Citizen Review Panels:

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services values the dedicated service of the Citizen Review Panel members who have been providing recommendations to DCFS on policies and practices related to the protection of children since July 1, 1999. The volunteers who give their time and attention to the important work of the four Illinois Citizen Review Panels are to be commended for their efforts of the past 5 years. Through their contributions, the Illinois child welfare system has become more responsive to the needs of abused and neglected children. New procedures and projects have been implemented that support children in attaining safety, permanency, and well-being. The Citizen Review Panels provide a vital link between DCFS and local communities as they work together for the benefit of children throughout the state.

During 2003 and 2004, the Illinois Citizen Review Panels explored many topics of concern with regard to protecting children from abuse and neglect. The panels gathered information, reviewed DCFS policies, heard presentations from expert researchers and practitioners, conducted case reviews, and discussed child protection issues from a variety of perspectives. Each panel made several major systemic recommendations as well as recommendations specific to the case review process conducted on one or more occasions. The recommendations addressed the following major concerns:

- Training for Mandated Reporters;
- DCFS collaboration with the State Board of Education and public schools regarding information sharing on indicated abuse reports (HB 3055, P. A. 92-295, eff. 1-1-02);
- Training of DCFS staff and investigative partners on methamphetamine and its potential harm to children who are living where it is manufactured and used;
- Expansion of Children's Advocacy Centers, especially in coordinating investigations of serious physical abuse;
- Updating of interstate child protection agreements and related training for DCFS staff;
- Training of appropriate DCFS staff on protocols and screening tools for Domestic Violence and its risks for children;
- Support of LANs-based services for child abuse prevention and intact family services;
- Increased DCFS attention to situations of medical neglect, especially as this relates to young or first-time parents;
- A DCFS response to the *Infant Homicide Task Force Report*, March 2003.

In response to these recommendations, the Department has initiated a number of actions to address the concerns of the Citizen Review Panels. The information which follows outlines DCFS actions taken to improve the safety of children and address specific suggestions made by the Citizen Review Panels. Some of the responses also reflect the way in which DCFS is meeting certain Illinois statutory mandates as well as the requirements of the federal Children and Family Services Review.

Training for Mandated Reporters:

The Department of Children and Family Services has made considerable efforts to reach out to agencies and fields that employ mandated reporters. To achieve this goal the following steps have been taken:

- Assigning a statewide contact person to coordinate requests for in-service presentations and Mandated Reporter training;

- Instituted a process for tracking Mandated Reporter and in-service presentation requests for all entities whose staff are governed by mandated reporting requirements;
- Provide for coordinated scheduling and matching of the most appropriate Department staff to present during in-service and mandated reporter training sessions;
- Updated the Mandated Reporter manual and securing copies for mass mailing to entities bound by these requirements;
- Working with the Illinois State Board of Education to secure a current listing of school addresses and principals' names to forward copies of updated Mandated Reporter manuals, newly revised posters and contact information for in-service presentation requests;
- On-going in-service presentations are available upon request to any agency/entity for Mandated Reporters. A revised cover letter mailed with Mandated Reporter manuals provides updated contact information;
- The Department is open to consideration of a web-based Mandated Reporter training curriculum;
- The Department supports the requirement of Mandated Reporter training for all licensed and non-licensed professionals working with children.

Implementation of HB 3055, P.A. 92-295:

DCFS met with the Illinois State Board of Education to discuss the law in February 2002. Additionally, the ISBE liaison met with the Foster Parent Association to discuss impacts of the bill.

State Central Register (SCR) administrator Linda Williams has spoken with several schools about HB 3055 and their major concern was retention of these reports after students graduate. SCR will be contacting some of the schools to obtain feedback about the reports and how the schools utilize them to prevent further abuse.

Upon notification of an indicated physical or sexual abuse investigation, SCR sends a letter to the school principal, advising of the law and how records are supposed to be filed.

Development of Methamphetamine Protocols and Training:

- The Division of Child Protection is currently in the process of revising DCFS Procedures 300, allegations #10/60 (Substantial Risk of Physical Injury) to include language applicable to investigating families in which the use of methamphetamines impacts the safety of children and contributes to risk of harm for involved children.
- The Department is in the process of developing Procedures 302, Services to Intact Families. Appendix O of Procedures 302 includes specific guidelines for services to families in which substance misuse is an underlying condition.
- The Department entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Illinois State Police for responding to cases in which methamphetamine use or manufacture has been identified as an issue. DCFS is currently in the process of collaborating with the ISP for a half-day training for field staff.
- As a component of the Department's Program Improvement Plan filed with the Administration for Children and Families, DCFS Policy 99.13 (Substance Affected Families) is under review. The Division of Quality Assurance finalized the review protocol and will begin case record reviews within all downstate regions. This will establish a baseline analysis for compliance with provisions of the policy. The assigned committee will make recommendations for practice and training based upon outcomes of the review.

Expansion of Children's Advocacy Centers:

DCFS is in the process of reviewing the feasibility of Children's Advocacy Centers incorporating physical abuse cases into their protocols based upon each center's resources.

Services Delivered through the LANs:

The Department is in the process of reviewing FY 06 program plans for Family Centered Service providers in support of community-based prevention services.

Interstate Agreements:

The Department agrees there is a need to revisit, update and revise interstate child protection agreements with neighboring states.

Medical Neglect:

The Division of Child Protection is currently in the process of updating allegation #79, Medical Neglect. The workgroup is consulting with the Department's medical director and other medical consultants relevant to servicing these cases and the families which include medically complex children.

Infant Homicide Task Force Report:

The Department prepared a *Response Report* for the Infant Homicide Task Force which was finalized and distributed in May, 2004. The report addressed each item of concern brought forward by the Task Force. In particular, the Task Force recommended that DCFS and the Chicago Police Department work together on better tracking of households where there is a history of domestic violence and crime. As a result, the Chicago Police Department has instituted new policies and procedures with regard to the tracking of 911 calls by address and will make updated information more readily available to Beat Officers. DCFS has recently hired a former CPD Commander to be the Department's liaison to law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

Case Review Recommendations:

With regard to recommendations from the case reviews conducted by some of the Citizen Review Panels, DCFS has considered the concerns raised. Many of the recommendations are already addressed by current policies and procedures. Where appropriate, DCFS has done some additional staff training to emphasize the importance of specific policies of concern to the Citizen Review Panels.

The following responses are directed to the SCAN Committee and the review of investigations conducted in licensed facilities.

- Investigations of abuse and neglect reports in licensed facilities are conducted according to provisions established in Policy Guide 2001.11, Concurrent Child Abuse/Neglect and Licensing Investigations. The Policy Guide states, "*A licensing complaint investigation shall be initiated for all Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and private agency foster homes, day care homes and all other licensed facilities named in reports of alleged incidents of abuse and/or neglect. When appropriate (See Note), the child protection and licensing complaint investigations shall run concurrently. This does not mean that the Child*

Protective Investigator (CPI) and licensing investigator are required to conduct all investigative activities together, although such cooperation is encouraged.”

- LEADS checks are required for alleged perpetrators in the following types of reports:
 1. A paramour is involved;
 2. There is confirmed or suspected substance misuse;
 3. There is an allegation of sexual abuse;
 4. There is an allegation of physical abuse.

- With regard to timely drug screenings for alleged perpetrators, investigative staff are required to complete the Alcohol and Other Drug Assessment (AODA) document on all alleged perpetrators and adult members of the household. Additionally, as cited earlier, an important component of the Department’s *Program Improvement Plan* filed with ACF as part of the federal Children and Family Services Review includes a review of Policy 99.13 for services to Substance Affected Families.

The issue of drug screening for parents and household members was also raised by the Children’s Justice Task Force. This issue surfaced as part of the case reviews where the Task Force looked at risk of sexual harm investigations under allegation #22. Additional DCFS responses listed below are related to further issues that the CJTF identified with regard to allegation #22..

- A DCFS workgroup is currently meeting to revise aspects of the risk of harm allegations number 10, 60, and 22. Allegation #22 will be revised and updated by the DCFS staff assigned to the Procedures 300 workgroup.

- The new Domestic Violence Policy Guide—once implemented—will establish parameters for completing domestic violence screens on adults.

The Department of Children and Family Services welcomes continued suggestions, comments, and recommendations from the Citizen Review Panels. With the assistance of these important and vital advisory groups, DCFS will be more aware of the ways in which Department policy, procedures and practices impact upon the citizens of the state and their concerns for keeping children protected against abuse and neglect. I look forward to an ongoing dialogue with the CFS Advisory Council, the SCAN Committee, the Children’s Justice Task Force, and the CDRT Executive Council as we work together on improvements to the child welfare system throughout the state.

Sincerely,

Gailyn Thomas
Deputy Director for Child Protection

APPENDIX
LIST OF CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

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Donald Schlosser
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