



Illinois Citizen Review Panels

Comprehensive
Report
2003-2004

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Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

Bryan Samuels, Director

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

Comprehensive Report for 2003-2004

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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 basis for government's intervention in child maltreatment is grounded in the concept of *parens patriae*—a legal term that asserts that government has a role in protecting the interest of children and in intervening when parents fail to provide proper care. Beginning in the late 19th century, States and local jurisdictions started initiating mechanisms to assist and protect children. The Federal Government established the Children's Bureau in 1912 to guide Federal support for child welfare programs. Direct Federal aid to families was initiated with the Social Security Act of 1935.

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. The Director of DCFS has ultimate responsibility for CAPTA-related activities and the responsibility of the state to meet requirements set out in federal law. As the DCFS division most concerned with the safety of children from abuse and neglect, 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. The Illinois Citizen Review Panels were developed according to requirements set forth in the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as amended in October 1996 and subsequent Program Instructions provided by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). Requirements established in CAPTA include:

- States must establish at least three citizen review panels;
- States may designate one or more existing entities to satisfy the citizen review requirements; and
- Each panel shall be composed of volunteer members who are broadly representative of the community, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

Authorizing legislation for the Illinois Citizen Review Panels was introduced as part of Senate Bill 1109 in February 1999 amending the Illinois Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 505/5). The legislation was passed by the General Assembly and became effective with the Governor's signature in June 1999.

DCFS formed a Citizen Review Panel Steering Committee in May 1999 to oversee the process and to formulate basic guidelines regarding the operation of the individual panels. The Steering Committee includes:

- DCFS administrators in the Division of Child Protection;
- DCFS administrators in the Division of Program Operations;
- DCFS staff in the Division of External Affairs;
- The DCFS panel coordinators; and
- The chair and vice-chair for each Citizen Review Panel.

In forming the individual panels, the Steering Committee invited several existing DCFS advisory committees to take on citizen review activities in addition to their other interests and statutory responsibilities. Each group identified some specific areas 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. Following a period of orientation, the DCFS Coordinator assigned to each panel provided general orientation and training at panel meetings throughout the year. The Citizen Review Panels identified through this process 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, most of whom have relevant experience in the field of social services to children and families. The first two panels (*CFS Council* and *SCAN*) have members who represent professional organizations, child welfare agencies, volunteer associations, and concerned citizens. The other panels (*CJTF* and *CDRT*) have members from numerous disciplines including medicine, mental health, law, criminal justice, public health, education, social work, and child advocacy. A complete list of current Steering Committee members and Panel members is included in the appendix to this report.

Overview of 2003-2004 Activities

The Illinois Citizen Review Panels have continued to grow in their knowledge of the DCFS child protection system during the past 18 months. Following a period in early 2003 when Illinois and DCFS were transitioning to a new administration under Governor Rod Blagojevich, the Citizen Review Panels have worked closely with DCFS Director Bryan Samuels and Ms. Gailyn Thomas, Deputy Director of Child Protection, to address current priorities for child safety, permanency and well-being. The panels experienced some changes in membership, but all of the DCFS coordinators and CRP chairs remained constant from 2002. Thus, the CRP panels retained their focus on Citizen Review priority topics and broadened the scope of their inquiry as they became more familiar with DCFS policies and practices. *The Illinois Citizen Review Report of 2002* has been reviewed by all the panels and has served as an orientation tool for new members. Beginning in July 2004, all of the current members and prospective members of the Illinois Citizen Review Panels will be educated on their responsibilities with the newly prepared *CRP Orientation Guidebook*. The Guidebook incorporates a number of new topics and re-orientates the members to changes in CAPTA instituted through the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of June 25, 2003.

With the increased availability of Citizen Review Reports from other states, the panels in Illinois have also benefited from information developed by and for citizen review panels across the nation. Cheryl Peterson, CRP Coordinator, presented information on the Illinois Citizen Review Process at the 14th National Convention on Child Abuse and Neglect held in St. Louis, April 2003. Gail Jackson, SCAN Coordinator, attended the 3rd Citizen Review Conference in Lexington, Kentucky during May 2004. Materials from these conferences have been shared with the Illinois panels, and the panels have found support for their mission in learning about the recommendations of similar groups dealing with issues confronting state child protection systems. The Citizen Review Panels also received regular reports from DCFS staff related to the actions which the Department has undertaken to implement their recommendations made in 2002.

During 2003-2004, the Illinois Citizen Review Panels continued their process of Case File Review as this relates to DCFS investigative files. Each panel devoted at least one meeting to the review of randomly selected case files gathered from DCFS offices throughout the state. The panels usually specified their desire to review certain types of investigative case files (according to allegation, age of child, status of perpetrator, or presenting circumstance) that related to previous policy issues or recommendations discussed at committee meetings. Each Citizen Review Panel has utilized the case file review process to guide its further understanding of DCFS policy and procedure and to generate new topics for inquiry.

The Illinois Citizen Review Panels continue to serve an important role in advising DCFS and affiliated private child welfare agencies about issues of concern related to the safety and protection of children from abuse and neglect. The members have approached their responsibilities with dedication and resolve, working to make the panels an integral part of the Department's outreach to communities throughout the state. The Citizen Review Panels have been involved in the Federal CFSR process and will continue to work with DCFS staff on implementation of the Program Improvement Plan for Illinois. The CRP Steering Committee which met by teleconference on October 25, 2003 is planning another meeting by videoconference during August 2004. The Steering Committee has been reorganized to include new members and take on new oversight and coordinating responsibilities. Cheryl Peterson, Division of Child Protection, continues as the DCFS administrator in charge of coordinating the Citizen Review Panels.

PANEL ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Panel 1. Children and Family Services Advisory Council

Organization

The Children and Family Services Advisory Council is statutorily established in 20 ILCS 505, the *Act Creating the Department of Children and Family Services*. Members of this advisory committee to DCFS are appointed by the Governor, and the 17 members serve staggered four-year terms which can be renewed. The CFS Advisory Council meets quarterly and alternates meeting locations between Chicago and Springfield. Micki Chulick, Executive Director, Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) in DeKalb, and Barbara Cempura, President and CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters in Belleville, serve as co-chairpersons. The DCFS Coordinator is Michael Byrd, Advisory Council Coordinator, Division of External Affairs.

Meeting Dates from 2003 through June 2004

The CFS Advisory Council held meetings on the following dates:

- April 3, 2003
- June 5, 2003
- September 10, 2003
- January 8, 2004
- April 28, 2004
- June 9, 2004

On September 17, 2003, the CFS Advisory Council represented by co-chair Micki Chulick participated in a meeting in Chicago with Federal Reviewers conducting the Child and Family Services on-site review for Illinois.

Areas of Interest and Inquiry

The CFS Advisory Council has identified the following areas of DCFS policy and practice for purposes of exploration, education and ongoing discussion:

- Illinois procedures for reporting and investigating suspected instances of abuse and neglect, particularly as these may involve older children who are DCFS wards;
- Procedures for DCFS training of mandated reporters and DCFS notification or feedback to mandated reporters, especially personnel working in public schools;
- Services available to DCFS wards who are experiencing problems in placement (i.e. runaways from residential placement) or who are involved with the criminal justice system (i.e. serving detention, probation or assigned to Corrections).

Educational Presentations

Beginning with the June 5, 2003 meeting held in Chicago, the CFS Council organized a schedule of several meetings to provide information on new directions for the Department of Children and Family Services following a change in administration. Bryan Samuels served as chairperson of a special Governor's Task Force on DCFS during the early months of 2003. Mr. Samuels was subsequently appointed on April 28, 2003 by Governor Rod Blagojevich to serve as the new DCFS Director. Reports by

individual members (as these related to previous recommendations and interests of the CFS Council) were also presented during Council meetings. Over the past year, the following educational topics were explored during presentations and discussions with members of the CFS Advisory Council.

June 5, 2003—The featured presenters were *Joan Nelson-Phillips with the DCFS Division of Quality Assurance and Yolanda Green, Director of the Foster Care Utilization Project, University of Illinois.*

- The presenters provided a detailed explanation of the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and the Department's self-assessment report to be submitted on July 15, 2003. Illinois is one of the last states to complete this review process. Federal reviewers will arrive on September 15th.
- A PowerPoint presentation described the purpose of the CFSR, the outcome and systemic factors to be reviewed, and the data that Illinois had gathered in support of its current operations to provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.
- Members had numerous questions and asked to be kept informed of the CFSR site visit and final report.

This meeting also included a very dynamic presentation by *Sister Catherine Ryan, Chief of the Juvenile Justice Bureau, Cook County State's Attorney's Office.* She spoke of the services provided to youth through the Balanced and Restorative Justice programs that deflect older children from the criminal justice system into victim/offender conferences and peer juries. She indicated that the juvenile justice system wants to refer youth to diversion programs that stress accountability, competency development, and community safety.

September 10, 2003—At this meeting, *Tom Berkshire, DCFS Chief of Staff* provided an overview of the Department's Management Team and explained several of the emerging priorities set forth by Director Samuels.

- The number of children in DCFS care has declined over the past several years. DCFS is looking for programs that are client-focused, particularly as these relate to services needed by the older youth in foster care and institutions.
- Reference was made to the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force and the report issued in April 2003. Copies will be sent to all CFS Council members.
- The Department is already planning for formation of Program Improvement Plan committees to respond to the Federal CFSR review. No states have met the federal standards to-date.

Other presentations at this meeting were delivered by *Keith Langston, Associate Deputy Director of Child Protection for Community Involvement and Judith Dunning, Administrator in charge of the Child Location and Support Unit.*

- Mr. Langston spoke about the current vacancies in the Division of Child Protection and the 97 positions authorized for new hires. He also gave a report on his work with the Infant Homicide Task Force and the need to bring additional state and county agencies together for solutions to the problems of public health, domestic violence, and community violence that influence the rise in child deaths.

- Ms. Dunning presented information on the new DCFS initiative to locate kids who run away from foster care placement. A tracking and coordination unit has been formed in Chicago, staff are being selected and trained, the community is being tapped to provide more resources, and new collaborations are being forged with law enforcement.

January 8, 2004—This meeting featured *DCFS Director Bryan Samuels* who held his first dialogue with the CFS Council. Director Samuels also introduced *Mr. Gene Griffin, Management Team Coordinator, and Ms. Gailyn Thomas, Deputy Director for Child Protection* who participated in presenting information for discussion.

Director Samuels:

- Stressed the need to focus on the needs of youth in the DCFS system. These are often adolescents with multiple placements, mental health or criminal justice difficulties who stand little likelihood of being adopted.
- Explained efforts of DCFS to provide better educational resources for DCFS wards, to work closely with schools to correct student deficiencies, to focus on special tutoring or enrichment programs, and to get younger children enrolled in Head Start.
- DCFS is planning statewide implementation of Integrated Assessment to determine the needs of children and families as they first enter placement.
- DCFS will focus on training and incentives for foster parents to work with older wards. Most foster parents are not prepared for parenting difficult teens.

Mr. Griffin:

- Spoke about the need of DCFS and private agencies to address a range of mental health needs. Younger children need good resources using preventive resources to keep their initial level of trauma from escalating. DCFS is reshaping many of its foster care contracts with this in mind.

Ms. Thomas:

- Cook County has completed a staff realignment and most child protection vacancies have been posted and filled. Spanish-speaking positions are difficult to fill and will require extra recruitment efforts.
- The Hotline has added 10 new positions to keep up with the high volume of calls and requirements of SACWIS tracking.
- The Program Improvement Plan for CFSR is coming together. Gailyn chairs the Repeat Maltreatment committee which is looking at improved assessments and standards for opening/closing of intact family service cases.

April 28, 2004—The educational component of this meeting was focused on Integrated Assessment, presented by *DCFS Downstate Coordinator Brenda Owen and Health Policy Coordinator Elizabeth Bernahl*. In addition, *Sherry Barr, Administrator in Child Protection*, gave a summary of the Child Death Review Teams and their process of making recommendations to the Department and to other systems. Ms. Barr distributed copies of the CDRT Annual Report from 2001.

- Integrated Assessment is a new DCFS program that has been piloted in Cook North and will be implemented statewide by the end of the year. It involves the

- hiring of intake coordinators and clinical screeners to work with children, birth families, and foster families when a child first comes into placement.
- There is a 45 day timeline for completing the assessment. IA includes a comprehensive health exam and age-appropriate developmental screening for all kids.
 - DCFS is working closely with its educational partners (universities) to recruit, hire, train and supervise clinical social workers and psychologists to provide the assessment services and prepare the recommendations for services.
 - The presenters answered questions about available services for the kids and families, indicating that shortages in specific geographical locations will be tracked and improved as the IA process proceeds.

June 9, 2004—This meeting was given over to a discussion by the members of new topics to be identified, researched, and studied in the upcoming year. There were no educational topics.

Case File Review

The CFS Council did not conduct a case file review in this reporting period. However, the meeting on April 3, 2003 was used to further discuss member observations from the case review of December 5, 2002. For several members, the case review provided their initial exposure to the investigative process tracked through DCFS using the electronic SACWIS documents. The cases selected proved interesting based upon the selection of adolescent victims who had involvement with some other part of the child care or child welfare system (hospitalization, mental health, substance abuse, probation, corrections, foster care placement). The members learned a great deal about DCFS investigative requirements and procedures from this activity. Another case review activity is being planned for September 2004.

Recommendations

During 2003 and 2004, the Children and Family Services Advisory Council gave its attention to further follow-up on recommendations made in 2001 and 2002. Members continue to recommend that school personnel receive more systematic training in mandated reporting. Several members from southern Illinois would like to see additional research on the effect of HB 3055, which requires indicated DCFS child abuse findings to be maintained and transferred as a part of a student's temporary school record. An informal phone survey of school principals indicated that most were receiving appropriate reports from DCFS and sharing them with teachers/counselors/school nurses. The issue of transferring records (since it involves a request from a student's new school) is less clear.

Recommendations

- Teachers should be provided with ongoing training for their role as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.
 1. Information should be readily available to train educators on their responsibilities as mandated reporters
 2. Training on mandated reporting should be required as part of the certification for early childhood personnel

- DCFS should work with the State Board of Education (ISBE) on implementation of HB 3055 to make sure that DCFS Final Finding Reports on children indicated for physical/sexual abuse are properly incorporated in a student's school record.
 1. State clearly in all communications that the DCFS record must be transferred with other student records if the child moves to a new school
 2. Identify steps that DCFS and ISBE are taking to implement HB 3055
 3. Obtain feedback from schools on their concerns or issues with regard to HB 3055.
- DCFS must examine the needs of its wards who are involved with or placed in other systems (mental health, substance abuse, probation, corrections, institutional care) and develop appropriate services to meet these needs.
- DCFS should develop communication between foster caregivers and schools in order to strengthen the attention given to children's educational needs. A child's educational needs should be addressed during every Administrative Case Review.
- DCFS should work more closely with courts to monitor DCFS wards who are adjudicated delinquent and to support the delivery of appropriate services.

Accomplishments

The Council commended DCFS on the several improvements related to previous recommendations made by the panel.

- The Council appreciates the staffing increases that DCFS has approved in order to improve the Hotline's responsiveness to callers.
- DCFS has worked hard to replace front line child protection workers and supervisors (lost to retirement or job transfers) in the field offices.
- DCFS has adopted procedures to guide the implementation of 2001 legislation (HB 3055). The information is being sent to school principals on a consistent basis. There is still work to be done, however, in getting more cooperation and assistance from the State Board of Education.
- The Department has distributed many excellent resources for mandated reporters. *Protecting the Children* for school administrators and the *Manual for Mandated Reporters* have both been updated in 2003. The *Manual for Mandated Reporters* has recently been translated into Spanish. All of the publications are available on the DCFS web site in addition to print versions.
- DCFS has taken steps to improve the advertisement of its web site and the information that is available to consumers online.
- Under the direction of Bryan Samuels, DCFS is making good progress on providing better services to its wards, especially with regard to educational services, mental health services, and location of missing or runaway children.

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

Panel Organization

The Statewide Citizen's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) is statutorily established under Section 11.7 of the *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act* (ANCRA, 325 ILCS 5/11.7). SCAN is a group of twenty individuals who are selected from across Illinois to represent individuals of distinction in fields of human service, neonatal medical care, needs and rights of the disabled, and diverse social and economic communities. SCAN members are appointed by the Director of DCFS for three-year staggered terms. The committee advises the Department on child abuse prevention services and other services to abused and neglected children that it deems appropriate. Meetings are scheduled bi-monthly. Gwen Mastin, President and CEO, New Phoenix Assistance Center in Chicago, serves as the 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, 2003 through June 2004

The SCAN Committee held meetings on:

- February 19, 2003
- April 16, 2003 (case file review)
- June 18, 2003
- August 20, 2003
- October 3, 2003
- December 3, 2003
- February 18, 2004
- April 21, 2004
- June 16, 2004

Focus Topics

SCAN has identified the following areas of DCFS policy and practice to be the focus of its inquiry, discussion and educational review:

- DCFS procedures for the investigation of Hotline reports alleging child abuse and neglect in licensed facilities;
- Analysis of HB 3055 (enacted 2001) as implemented by DCFS and public schools as an effective means to prevent repeat maltreatment of children;
- Availability of training for mandated reporters, especially those professionals who are in private practice, affiliated with smaller agencies, or teaching in private schools.
- Assessment and referral of children for medical and mental health problems, particularly as this involves children with multiple foster care placements;

Special Presentations

The SCAN Committee was pleased to have DCFS Director Bryan Samuels make two presentations to the panel in June 2003 and again in June 2004. Director Samuels, who chaired Governor Rod Blagojevich's Task Force on the Department during early 2003,

was appointed as the new DCFS Director on April 28, 2003. During his first presentation, Mr. Samuels spoke of improvements in the following areas:

- DCFS is looking at the needs of children in placement, especially adolescents;
- DCFS needs a range of options with regard to residential placement of wards, from facilities with intensive, high-end services phasing down to those with lower intensity services;
- Public and private agencies need to focus attention on performance quality;
- DCFS will work on service integration with other state agencies;
- There should be more coordinated staff training and professional development for DCFS and private POS agencies.

The second meeting on June 16, 2004 was a dialogue between Director Samuels and members of SCAN. Following the introduction of members, Director Samuels addressed a number of their questions. In a wide-ranging presentation, Director Samuels spoke at length about the following topics:

- The FY 05 state budget crisis indicates DCFS is likely to receive reductions of \$100 million. This amounts to a 6.5 to 7.5% cut in funding from FY 04. Any program innovations will need to be offset by discontinuing something else.
- DCFS is working with the Federal CFSR Report on quality improvements in several performance areas. The draft Program Improvement Plan (PIP) has been submitted.
- Prevention is very important, but a new focus will be on services to DCFS wards in order to stabilize and optimize their placements and education.
- DCFS will work to redesign its independent and transitional living programs for older adolescents. Director Samuels supports efforts to provide Medicaid coverage for all former DCFS wards through age 21; most of these youth have entry-level jobs that do not offer health insurance.
- Director Samuels feels strongly that 3 new initiatives will be helpful in addressing service needs for DCFS wards. These initiatives are: 1) clinical assessments for all children coming into care; 2) reducing the POS caseload to a 15-1 ratio; 3) pilot programs for the older children (about 150) who chronically disrupt their foster care placements.
- DCFS is dedicated to building bridges with state agencies in the areas of employment, mental health, and housing.

Educational Activities

Updates on the Division of Child Protection: Ms. Gailyn Thomas, MSW, was appointed to the position of Deputy Director of Child Protection in April, 2003. She attended a majority of the SCAN meetings throughout 2003 and early 2004 and gave regular presentations about issues of: 1) SACWIS implementation; 2) preparation for the Federal CFSR review process; 3) committees working on the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in response to the Federal CFSR Report; and 4) vacancies and recruitment for field office staff. Throughout 2003, DCFS had a number of frontline staff vacancies due to the early retirement option selected by many state workers in December 2002. However, DCFS Director Bryan Samuels was very supportive of filling essential positions as quickly as possible, and the Department has made steady progress in hiring over the past

12 months. SACWIS, Phase 1 (Investigations) was implemented successfully in 2002 and SACWIS, Phase 2A (Risk Assessment & Service Planning) was implemented in 2003. SACWIS implementation has increased the intake time needed by workers responding to Hotline calls, so DCFS has hired additional staff at the Hotline.

Infant Homicide Task Force: At SCAN meetings in October 2003 and April 2004, Mr. Keith Langston, Associate Deputy Director of Child Protection & Community Services, provided information about the *Infant Homicide Task Force Report of March 2003*. The report was prepared in response to an unusually high number of infant deaths in one Chicago neighborhood during August 2002. A DCFS-sponsored multi-agency workgroup has been formed to address the recommendations made in the report. SCAN members expressed concern about how police maintain records of residential addresses with a history of violence because criminal activity and domestic violence were prominent risk factors in the deaths of the infants. Questions were also raised about the involvement of public health personnel and the medical community in assessing potential abuse. It was recommended that the Department of Professional Regulation (DPR) insist that all licensed personnel under its purview receive mandated reporter instruction prior to being issued a state license. Unfortunately, the DCFS workgroup was not able to engage a participant from DPR in the discussion. A Response Report based on the workgroup recommendations is being prepared by DCFS for distribution in July 2004.

Other Presentations to SCAN

- ***February 2003*** Bobby Hall, Chief, Office of Program Development, spoke about new state and federal initiatives related to child abuse prevention, children's mental health, faith-based child welfare initiatives, and healthy marriages.
- ***June 2003*** Christy Levin, Jennifer Eblen, and Carol St. Amant presented on the Federal Child and Family Services Review process. They gave a presentation on the outcome standards with regard to safety, permanency and well-being and discussed the research done by DCFS as part of the Illinois Self-Assessment Report. In September, 2003 federal reviewers will be on-site in Illinois to examine 50 DCFS permanency and intact cases, half from Cook County and half from downstate offices.
- ***August 2003*** Randy Wells, Deputy Director for Legislative Affairs provided a summary of 2003 legislation affecting DCFS. He indicated that DCFS will work with legislators who are concerned about policies for terminating parental rights on children in the DCFS system.
- ***October 2003*** Kathy Roman, Associate Deputy Director for Child Protection, provided an update on staffing improvements in the field. Linda Williams, Administrator of the State Central Register, updated everyone on Hotline procedures and staffing, particularly related to SACWIS implementation. She also spoke about implementation procedures for HB 3055 (2001, effective 1-1-02 as P.A. 92-295) and the notifications and final finding reports sent to public school principals when children are indicated for sexual or physical abuse. This latter topic generated considerable discussion.
- ***December 2003*** Beth Solomon, an attorney with the Office of DCFS' General Counsel, spoke about recent developments in the *DuPuy* lawsuit. Under new

regulations, child care workers who are “indicated” as the subject of an abuse or neglect investigation receive an administrative conference with a DCP Manager and an expedited hearing (35 days) if needed. All other appeal hearings of child abuse/neglect findings are required within 90 days.

- **December 2003** Larry Chasey, Associate Deputy Director for Program Operations, presented on Local Area Networks (LANs). He discussed the various transformations of LAN services due to System of Care, funding, staffing, agencies involved, and kinds of services. SCAN members are supportive of the community-based approach of LANs and hope that Director Samuels will continue to strengthen LAN services and programming.
- **February 2004** The SCAN committee heard a presentation by Jerry Lyons, Manager in the Office of Information Services, who discussed the security features for the SACWIS system. SACWIS is a closed network and only a few outside agencies host any DCFS data. Virus scanners are constantly updated and no hackers have been detected. Linda Williams and Jerry discussed the backup system for disaster recovery (i.e. major equipment or power malfunction).
- **April 2004** Gailyn Thomas, Deputy Director, gave a special report on FY 05 Budget issues and revisions being proposed for use of the CERAP (Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol).
- **Nancie Brown**, DCFS Office of Program Development, gave periodic updates about the Illinois Tax-Checkoff donations to the Child Abuse Prevention Fund. She also explained how to obtain a state Commemorative Birth Certificate. Proceeds realized from the certificate are donated to the Child Abuse Prevention Fund and the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

SCAN Participation in the Federal Child and Family Services Review

Gwen Mastin, Chairperson, and Don Schlosser, Vice-Chairperson, participated with other Citizen Review Panel leaders in a meeting with the Federal Reviewers who came to Illinois for the on-site CFSR review. The meeting was held on September 17, 2003 in Chicago. All of the Citizen Review Panel leaders were disappointed that they had only about 45 minutes to share their comments with the federal reviewers. Subsequently, two of the SCAN members volunteered their time to work with a PIP (Program Improvement Plan) committee. Diane Scruggs and Cynthia Savage were active from November-February as members of PIP committees on 1) Repeat Maltreatment and 2) Assessment and Case management.

Case File Review

SCAN members met together in Chicago on April 16, 2003 to conduct a case file review. The group divided into five teams and reviewed eight case files of investigations with alleged abuse or neglect of children in licensed facilities. The cases represented investigations that were “indicated” (credible evidence of abuse/neglect) and investigations that were “unfounded.”(insufficient evidence of abuse/neglect) in day care centers, schools, residential facilities, and foster care homes. Each team reviewed at least one file utilizing a checklist of required forms and documents to assess the completeness of the information in the investigative case file. Preceding the case review, DCP Manager

Womazetta Jones discussed the arrangement of the file according to the SACWIS system of case management and reporting.

Case Review Discussion

In general, SCAN members found the investigative files to be complete and well-documented. There were several topics that received considerable discussion, including the ability of DCFS to require a drug test on an employee of a private agency. Questions in four cases related to whether or not school/institutional employees had correctly followed their own private agency policies in disciplining a child or reporting an instance of possible abuse. In these situations the group determined that it was very important for licensing to be involved. Some members commented that the SACWIS forms seemed repetitive, but Womazetta Jones and Gail Jackson noted there was a need to preserve the integrity of each individual investigative contact rather than relying on a worker's summary of contacts.

Case Review Recommendations—The following recommendations were made in conjunction with the case review process:

1. The investigative file should include LEADS checks on all alleged perpetrators.
2. Substance abuse screenings must be done promptly on alleged perpetrators. Drug testing policies related to child care staff/teachers employed by agencies other than DCFS should be clarified.
3. Forms used in the field must be updated; forms should clearly identify the name of the worker/staff completing the form.
4. The coordination of DCFS with POS agencies and other investigative personnel need to be clearly documented in SACWIS.
5. Safety plans in institutional reports need to be coordinated with school or agency procedures to address possible systemic problems with policies.

Recommendations

The SCAN Committee made the following major recommendations during 2003-2004:

1. DCFS child protection staff and licensing staff must work together on reports of abuse and neglect in schools, residential facilities and child care agencies to assure that private agency policies and practices for child safety and well-being are implemented and followed.
2. DCFS should continue to support the concept of Local Area Networks (LANs) and encourage the development of community-based services for DCFS wards and other children needing assistance with child abuse and neglect prevention.
3. The Department should gather documentation from the Hotline and from Field Office staff on the effectiveness of ANCRA 325 ILCS 5/8.6, *Reports to a child's school*, and the ability of this statute to help schools assess and report suspected child abuse.
4. DCFS should work with professional groups designated as mandated reporters to assure better training on how to detect and report possible child abuse and neglect.

Follow-up to Previous Recommendations

The SCAN Committee made two recommendations in 2001 related to domestic violence. The first recommended that DCFS be better equipped to assess the impact of domestic violence as it contributes to potential trauma and harm for children. Despite some delays, DCFS is formulating a Domestic Violence Protocol to be incorporated into DCFS Procedures. A DV Project Director has been appointed at DCFS, and the protocol is soon to be finalized. The second recommendation suggested that DCFS support research and demonstration projects to explore the linkages between domestic violence and situations of child abuse. Following an RFP and review process, 12 projects throughout the state were funded from January 2002 to June 2004. SCAN is recommending that the most successful projects be refunded if state revenues are available.

Future Directions

SCAN is committed to its responsibilities as a Citizen Review panel. Discussions of DCFS priorities in policy and practice 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. Topics to be pursued in 2004-2005 will likely include the continuation of several discussions and inquiries begun in this current Citizen Review reporting period. The group is definitely interested in further evaluation of P.A. 92-295, section 325 ILCS 5/8.6 on *Reports to a child's school* as explained in ANCRA. A subcommittee is looking further into a provision for mandated reporting training be tied to requirements for professional licensure. SCAN will also continue to explore its interest in DCFS domestic violence procedures and increase its knowledge of prevention strategies in situations involving the co-occurrence of child abuse and domestic violence.

Panel 3. Children's Justice Task Force

Panel Organization

The Children's Justice Task Force is a multidisciplinary advisory group to DCFS. It was organized in 1989 under requirements specified in Section 107 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Task Force 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 Task Force makes annual recommendations to the Department for improving the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect 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-related problems. Recommendations are focused on reducing child trauma, enhancing the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action, and reforming state laws, regulations, and procedures while ensuring fairness to all affected persons. DCFS receives an annual grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to fund projects based upon the Task Force recommendations.

The Director of DCFS appoints 28 members of the Children's Justice Task Force to staggered 4-year terms. Meetings are held quarterly with an added Annual Meeting scheduled in April. The chairperson for 2003 and 2004 is Mr. Jerry Lowell, Clinical Director, Aunt Martha's Youth Services in south suburban Chicago. The vice-chairperson is Teresa Maganzini, JD, Chief of the Child Protection Division of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. The DCFS Administrator is Cheryl Peterson, Ph.D.

Meeting Dates

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

- January 31, 2003
- March 20-21, 2003
- June 16, 2003
- September 26, 2003
- November 21, 2003
- February 27, 2004
- April 22-23, 2004 (case file review)

Focus Topics

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

- 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.
- Multidisciplinary coordination of law enforcement, State's attorneys, DCFS, and Children's Advocacy Centers in the interviewing and investigation of child abuse reports;

- Policies and practices used in the process of appeal hearings contesting a DCFS “indicated finding” of abuse or neglect;
- Collaboration of medical and mental health professionals in the investigation and treatment of sexual abuse and serious child physical abuse.

Case File Review

The CJTF conducted a case file review during the Annual Meeting of April 22-23, 2004. All of the members present reviewed files of “indicated” and “unfounded” investigations for allegations of sexual risk of harm (DCFS Allegation #22). The case files represented a sample from throughout the state. An orientation to the case review process was presented by Cheryl Peterson, CJTF Administrator, and by Marcia Heitz, DCFS Child Protection Manager.

Comments from the Task Force

- The case files were easy to follow and easy to read as a result of the SACWIS requirements for recording information;
- DCFS caseworkers do a lot of work to make sure an investigation is complete;
- SACWIS promotes a very thorough and detailed investigative record;
- Contact information is presented in a standardized format—this has good and bad aspects, but was generally perceived as positive for completeness of information;
- Risk of harm definitions are quite narrow and may not always protect children;
- Cases reported/accepted under allegation #22 often gather additional allegations following information provided by interviews with the child or the parent;
- Interviews with the children are often conducted in settings/locations that may be uncomfortable for the child;
- DCFS child protection workers and supervisors should be complimented on their thoroughness of investigation and documentation based on the files reviewed.

Case Review Recommendations

1. DCFS needs to review Allegation #22 to further explain and possibly expand the definition of substantial risk of sexual harm.
2. Whenever possible, children should be interviewed at a Children’s Advocacy Center or in a neutral location without caretakers present;
3. Risk of harm cases must always include a domestic violence screen and substance abuse screen on adults and older adolescents in the household.

Educational Activities

Special educational presentations were made to the Task Force throughout the year. Many of these presentations focused on new initiatives being undertaken by Director Bryan Samuels and the DCFS Management Team following Mr. Samuels’ appointment on April 28, 2003. Some of the topics were discussed by the Task Force members on two or more separate occasions, with speakers providing updates on recent activities. The Task Force was pleased to have Director Samuels speak to the group and answer questions at the meeting in Chicago on November 21, 2003. Highlights of his remarks are summarized below:

Director Bryan Samuels

- Many children currently in the DCFS system have been in foster/residential care for a long time. Adoption has reduced the population of kids in care from 51,000 in 1996 to about 19,000 in 2004.
- Most of the children in DCFS care are older and have special needs. Many are in need of mental health services and preparation for independent living. The Department will address these issues in FY 04 and FY 05.
- DCFS will concentrate on developing more performance-based contracting in its relationship with private agencies. Monitoring of residential providers will be a priority. Agencies/providers will be asked to revise their services based on the needs which DCFS identifies for the adolescents in its care.
- Director Samuels also provided an overview of educational initiatives with the Chicago Public Schools and Head Start programs. The Department will use funds from the Orphanage Act (formerly administered by the Illinois Board of Education) to support increased educational services to wards, many of whom may not be benefiting from their current special education, grade, or school assignment.

Director Samuels spoke about recent changes at Maryville Academy. DCFS is asking all agencies to provide more accountability for their residential programs and services.

Other Educational Topics and Discussions

1. Integrated Assessment—There were 2 presentations on this program. Gayle Hansen, SPSA in the Division of Clinical Services, discussed the pilot program underway in Cook North Region at a meeting in 2003. Jennifer O'Brien, Chicago Project Director for Integrated Assessment, provided an update on statewide plans for implementation during the meeting in February 2004. Integrated assessment offers special diagnostic services (medical, developmental, behavioral) for children entering foster care. A licensed clinical social worker or psychologist will assess needs of the child, the parents, and the foster family so that appropriate services can be identified within 45 days of case opening.
2. Risks of methamphetamine manufacture to children—Nancy Roncancio, Office of Health Policy, presented protocols being worked out between DCFS and the Illinois State Police. The southern region of the state has seen a large increase in children exposed to the manufacturing of methamphetamine. The home environment can be extremely hazardous to children, to DCFS workers, and to police. Investigative and medical protocols are needed to determine if children have been seriously harmed by their exposure to meth chemicals. At the meeting in April 2004, Judge George Timberlake urged the Task Force to be more aggressive in addressing the issues, especially since meth manufacturing is spreading rapidly to other areas of the state.
3. Juvenile Sexual Offenders—DCFS Rule and Procedure changed in early 2003 regarding investigating juveniles as perpetrators of sexual abuse. Children under age 10 will not be "indicated" by DCFS, although a parent or other caregiver may be indicated for lack of supervision or other abuse/neglect allegations. Children

age 10-17 may be indicated as perpetrators, but their retention schedule will be limited to 5 years or age 21 (23) whichever occurs first. This DCFS rule change is concerning to police who want children's DCFS information to be available if their offending behavior continues or escalates. A state's attorney raised the point that DCFS needs more alternative placements for adolescents with severe sexual behavior problems; many residential facilities do not have properly trained staff and the Department of Corrections is too punitive. The Chicago CAC is developing a S.T.O.P. program for intervention with younger sexual offenders, but it is voluntary in nature and there may be a need for court-ordered treatment. DCFS is working on treatment standards that offer a variety of approaches based on the child's age and behavior.

4. Federal Child and Family Services Review—In June 2003, Kay Clark and Christy Levin presented DCFS data and information from the CFSR Self-Assessment Report submitted to HHS. They explained the process which the Department would be going through during the on-site federal review in September 2003. The federal standard is 90% substantially achieved on 7 outcome measures and no state has reached that level. Illinois is already organizing its PIP (Program Improvement Plan) committees. Gailyn Thomas, Deputy Director for Child Protection, gave updates on the PIP committees at the November 2003 and April 2004 meetings. Jerry Lowell, CJTF Chair and Connie Blade, CJTF member participated in the meeting with federal reviewers on September 17, 2003. Erin Sorenson, Director, Chicago CAC, served on the Quality Assurance PIP committee. The CJTF will continue to work with DCFS to implement proposed improvements, especially related to the Safety Outcomes for the CFSR.
5. Confidentiality Guidebook—Cynthia Arotti, a Loyola University law student, spoke to the Task Force about her preparation of a document designed for professionals working with children. A committee of the Task Force has continued to work on this project to make it user friendly and include some updated health policy materials related to the HIPAA requirements. DCFS plans to have the Guidebook available in printed form and on its website in 2004.
6. DuPuy Lawsuit—Following a ruling by the federal judge, DCFS implemented Policy Guide 2003.10 regarding appeal hearings for childcare workers. Gailyn Thomas explained that childcare workers may request an administrative teleconference and an expedited appeal hearing if an investigation “indicates” them for abuse or neglect. The policy was effective 9-14-03. DCFS will hire additional Administrative Law Judges to hear appeals.
7. Impact of Crawford v. Washington—Larry Bauer, Illinois Appellate Prosecutor's Office, provided information about this Supreme Court decision on April 23, 2004. The decision limits the admissibility of hearsay evidence that is “testimonial” in nature when a person is not available to testify in person. This has significant ramifications for children, who have traditionally benefited from fewer restrictions on hearsay evidence and who sometimes are not emotionally or

physically able to testify in court. Children's Advocacy Centers need to be made aware of this ruling and guide their investigations accordingly.

Throughout the year, the Children's Justice Task Force also received regular updates from Tom Berkshire, DCFS Chief of Staff, and 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

Recognizing that many system improvements, contracts, and pilot projects have been addressed by DCFS to address its previous Citizen Review recommendations, the Children's Justice Task Force reiterates its long-term support for the following recommendations:

Long-Term Recommendations

- Continued expansion of Children's Advocacy Centers (new and satellite CACs) to provide services to every child in every county of the state.
- More multidisciplinary education and training on the medical aspects of child abuse investigations, particularly serious physical abuse allegations.
- Continued outreach to Mandated Reporters for training on reporting child abuse and neglect.
- Publication and distribution of a Confidentiality Handbook for professionals working with children.
- DCFS should continue to improve the appeal hearing process in order to: 1) minimize trauma to victims; 2) promote fairness to all parties; and 3) provide feedback to DCFS staff on improved investigative procedures and practices.

New Recommendations for 2003-2004

- DCFS should work with Children's Advocacy Centers to incorporate physical abuse investigations into all county protocols. A physical abuse protocol should include provisions for 1) a timely response from doctors; 2) procedures for an expeditious transfer of medical records to DCFS; and 3) training of investigative team members on the protocol.
- DCFS should adopt interdisciplinary protocols to handle investigations of children exposed to methamphetamine manufacturing and support regional training for DCFS, law enforcement, medical, CAC, and other personnel.
- DCFS should consider expanded outreach efforts for Mandated Reporter training, specifically a web-based training curriculum that could be accessed by any mandated reporter to receive individualized instruction.
- Completion of mandated reporter training should be required for all licensed professionals or certified professionals working directly with children.
- DCFS must provide more training to its staff and affiliated private agencies and foster parents on 1) children with sexual behavior or sexual offending problems; and 2) families experiencing domestic violence.

Accomplishments

The Children's Justice Task Force commends DCFS for progress on:

- Implementation of SACWIS Phase 1 and SACWIS Phase 2A which provides an electronic management system to support casework procedures;
- Continued development and support of forensic interviewing curriculums, including a two-day curriculum and a five-day curriculum;
- Support for multidisciplinary medical programs providing child abuse diagnosis, assessment, and treatment at centers in Chicago, Peoria, and Anna, Illinois
- State funding support for the expansion of Children's Advocacy Centers.

Future Directions

The Children's Justice Task Force did a comprehensive review of recommendations during 2003. The Task Force formulated a list of 17 recommendations and organized them according to the requirements of the Children's Justice Act Grant. Some of these recommendations overlap with the Citizen Review recommendations listed above. But a number of the Citizen Review recommendations address issues that the Task Force has taken up more recently (in late 2003 or 2004) or which were the focus of previous citizen review activities (i.e. case file reviews) conducted in years 2001 and 2002. The Task Force has designated one of its sub-committees to follow-up on Citizen Review responses and improvements, but the entire Task Force has been involved in most citizen review activities of the past year. During the summer of 2004, the Task Force will work out new procedures for its Executive Subcommittee to meet with key DCFS staff and work through some implementation plans for the current Citizen Review recommendations. Jerry Lowell, CJTF Chairperson, and Teresa Maganzini, Vice-chairperson, will guide and direct the subcommittee efforts along with the leaders of subcommittees devoted to Medical/Mental Health Needs; Investigative/Case Handling/Mandated Reporting Procedures; and Legal/Legislative/Court Issues.

Panel 4. Child Death Review Team Executive Council

Panel Organization

The Child Death Review Team Executive Council was formed in 1998 to coordinate the operations of the nine regionally-based Illinois child death review teams. The membership of the CDRT Council consists of the chairpersons/vice-chairpersons of the regional teams. Some of its objectives are to serve as the voice of child death review teams in Illinois; to ensure that the data, results, findings, and recommendations of the teams are adequately used to make any necessary changes in policies, procedures, and statutes in order to protect children; to collaborate with the General Assembly, DCFS, and others to develop any legislation needed to prevent child fatalities and to protect children; to ensure that the regional teams' review processes are standardized in order to convey data, findings, and recommendations in a usable format; to develop an annual statewide training symposium; and 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; Mary Loken, Safe Schools Director, Sangamon Regional Office of Education, is vice-chairperson. Ms. Sherry Barr is the DCFS Coordinator.

Meeting Dates

The Child Death Review Team Executive Council met on:

- January 24, 2003 by teleconference
- March 5, 2003 (case file review)
- April 11, 2003
- July 25, 2003
- October 17, 2003
- November 10, 2003
- March 26, 2004

Focus Topics

Areas of attention for the CDRT Council (and its nine regional teams) include DCFS policies and practices related to the following situations:

- DCFS cases where a child has died. Cases can be reported for DCFS investigation (currently or within the past year) or open for DCFS follow-up (intact family or permanency cases—child is in foster care/residential placement).
- Other suspicious child deaths where there are risk factors for maltreatment;
- DCFS investigations of children with medical neglect allegations;
- Infant homicides due to violence in the home.

Activities

During 2003, the CDRT Executive Council developed Best Practice standards for regional team meetings. The Best Practice approach will help in assuring that a similar process is followed by each of the regional CDRTs when child death cases are presented and reviewed. The Best Practice guidelines will be incorporated into the Illinois CDRT Protocol which was prepared in 2002. The Executive Council is working with DCFS and appropriate legal staff to craft a statement on ethical issues and conflict of interest to

be included in the Best Practice standards. In April 2003, the Executive Council made revisions to the CDRT team report form to capture more information on situations involving domestic violence, substance abuse, and criminal background history. These improvements will allow for more thorough recording and tracking of important data.

The Executive Council hosted a presentation on the National Center for Child Death Review by Teri Covington and Sara Rich of Michigan. The goals of the National Center are focused on providing assistance to states to standardize organizational procedures (protocols for case review, best practice guidelines) and data tools. The Center is funded by the Bureau of Maternal Child Health and has established a national CDRT database. Illinois, which has recently revamped its state CDRT database operation, will monitor the progress of pilot programs developed under the national database program and determine how best to interface with this system. DCFS Quality Assurance has been invited to make a presentation in 2004 to the CDRT Executive Council and other team members to explain the new features of the updated Illinois CDRT database.

A presentation on the National Violent Death Reporting System was given to the Executive Council by Kathleen Monahan from Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago. She spoke about a pending grant application that would allow researchers affiliated with Children's Hospital to analyze data from a state and national trauma registry, which might have some overlap with child death review data. The Executive Council was supportive of the research and several members volunteered to participate on an advisory panel if the grant received funding.

A major activity of the CDRT Executive Council during 2003-2004 was its leadership of a statewide public awareness campaign on child drownings. In collaboration with DCFS, Department of Human Services, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, the Red Cross and the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Executive Council launched an initiative based on recommendations from regional CDRTs whose members noticed a high number of child deaths from drowning. The campaign slogan, *Get Water Wise...Supervise!*, was selected to emphasize the importance of parental oversight whenever young children are in or around water. Toddlers are particularly prone to accidental drowning in buckets of water, and all young children must never be left alone in bath water or a pool, no matter how shallow. A press conference was held in each CDRT region of Illinois, and numerous posters and brochures were passed out by the sponsoring organizations. The campaign has continued to generate ongoing interest, and *Get Water Wise...Supervise!* has been featured during other child abuse and child safety events/conferences.

The annual Child Death Review Team Symposium is a well-planned and well-attended conference event coordinated by the CDRT Executive Council. In October 2003, the symposium was held at the Northfield Inn Conference Center in Springfield. The presentations covered topics of child fatality investigation, the link between domestic violence and child maltreatment, and legal defenses utilized in child fatality cases. Brian Holmgren, JD, and Master Sergeant Richard Roderick were featured speakers for this event, which attracted over 100 attendees from all of the nine regional CDRTs. An

orientation for new CDRT members was held prior to the start of the symposium. The 9th Annual Symposium is being planned for late September 2004 in the Chicago area.

Special Projects

In November 2002, DCFS and the Chicago Police Department convened a special meeting to discuss an unusually high incidence of infant deaths occurring in the city during the prior August. Following this meeting, selected members of the two Cook County Child Death Review Teams formed a special Task Force to look at a group of 14 infant homicides. The Task Force met on several occasions during January and February 2003 and issued the ***Infant Homicide Task Force Report*** in March 2003. The report contained 25 total recommendations in seven categories. Dr. Neil Hochstadt, Chair of Cook CDRT "A" and Chair of the CDRT Executive Council, presented the report to the Council at the meeting on April 11, 2003. The Executive Council members passed a unanimous motion requesting that DCFS and the Chicago Police Department prepare a response to the Infant Homicide Report. A multi-agency workgroup was organized by DCFS in July, 2003 and a response report is being prepared for completion in 2004.

During 2003, the CDRT Executive Council continued to participate in the Illinois Morbidity and Mortality Review Support Program, a project of the Illinois Department of Human Services which coordinates four separate review processes: 1) Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR); 2) Perinatal Mortality Review; 3) Maternal Mortality Review; and 4) Child Death Review. The four groups conducted collaborative meetings, educational seminars, and case reviews. Although the project has enhanced cooperation between the groups, the project resulted in limited benefits to the CDRTs and official participation will be discontinued in 2004.

Other projects of the CDRT Executive Council are:

- Participation in a meeting with Federal reviewers conducting the on-site Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Dr. Neil Hochstadt and Ms. Diane Scruggs represented the Child Death Review Executive Council at this meeting on September 17, 2003.
- Expansion of the public awareness campaign on *Get Water Wise...Supervise!*
- Preparation of the 2002 Annual Report in collaboration with the Child and Family Research Institute at the University of Illinois.

Accomplishments

The CDRT Council celebrated several major accomplishments in 2003-2004. These included:

- Printing and distribution of the ***Illinois Child Death Review Teams Annual Report 2001***. This report expanded upon the concept of the 2000 report by presenting comprehensive information on numerous categories of child death, providing detailed statistics for Illinois child deaths, and presenting charts of CDRT recommendations and DCFS responses in the areas of 1) primary prevention; 2) DCFS systems; and 3) other systems.
- New procedures for assuring a DCFS response to CDRT recommendations. The DCFS Child Death Review coordinator has also implemented an electronic

- tracking system for the recommendations, the DCFS responses, and the implementation of related policies and practices based on monthly meetings with DCFS Associate Deputy Directors from all divisions.
- Heightened awareness within DCFS of child death review teams and their contributions for the improvement of child safety and child protection.
 - Adoption of a Protocol and Best Practice guidelines to organize and standardize the roles and responsibilities of each CDRT in conducting child death reviews.

Case File Review

As part of the CDRT Citizen Review process, selected members of the Executive Council participated in case file review on March 5, 2003. The discussion was conducted by teleconference and a group of four looked at two cases of medical neglect from the Bloomington Field Office. Both cases involved young children with young, single mothers. The reviewers raised a number of concerns about the support systems available to the mothers and felt that the investigative file did not contain as much information as might be desirable in this regard. Although the group of reviewers hesitated to make any broad recommendations based on the particulars of just two investigations, they did offer the following specific case recommendations. Several other members of the CDRT Executive Council suggested a second case review be conducted on investigations involving older children reported for medical neglect. This has not yet been scheduled.

Case Recommendations

Case 1: The case notes indicated concern from a nurse that the older sister (age 5) of the alleged victims (boys aged 2 and 6 months with recurring, chronic health problems) was being emotionally abused by mom. The reviewers recommended that the older child should be interviewed at a location away from mom (i.e. at a Child Advocacy Center) to make sure that she was not a victim, particularly since she had a different father and had lived with another relative for a period of time.

Case 2: The teenage parents were very unconcerned about respiratory problems suffered by their child, age 3 months. The grandmother, who was allowing the parents and infant to live at her house, was experiencing financial and emotional problems and planning to move everyone to another community. The reviewers did not see sufficient evidence in the file that the grandmother would protect the infant or supervise her daughter's parenting to keep the baby healthy.

Recommendations for 2003-2004

- It is important that DCFS continue to revise, update, and develop interstate child protection agreements. Interstate agreements with Iowa and Missouri should be reviewed and new agreements should be developed with Indiana, Wisconsin, and Kentucky.
- DCFS should continue to monitor the recently developed tracking system for CDRT recommendations to ensure that proposed actions or policy changes by the Department are carried out within a reasonable timeframe.
- DCFS must respond in a timely fashion to the recommendations contained in the *Infant Homicide Task Force Report* from March 2003. The response should also

- address issues raised about the roles and responsibilities of other agencies like the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Department of Public Health.
- DCFS should continue to carefully investigate reports of medical neglect and be prepared to provide appropriate support services for young parents who are unable to cope with a child's serious developmental or medical conditions.

Future Directions

The CDRT Executive Council is improving its database and implementing changes that will make the database information more useful to the child death review teams on an everyday basis. The Council continues to work closely with DCFS on appropriate response activities generated from CDRT recommendations. Ongoing collaboration for improved public awareness of child deaths will be undertaken when appropriate with DCFS and other public and private organizations.

In its work as a Citizen Review Panel, the CDRT Council will continue to investigate situations of medical neglect and will follow-up on responses and recommendations coming from the *Infant Homicide Task Force Report of 2003*.

A SUMMARY OF DCFS RESPONSES TO CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the Citizen Review Panel recommendations of year 2002, the Department of Children and Family Services has followed-up with the targeted activities and initiatives as listed below.

CFS Council recommends: Teachers should be provided with ongoing training for their role as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

- The Department is working on a standardized training curriculum on child abuse and neglect reporting. A portion of this will be directed specifically to teachers in both private and public schools. The curriculum will be available for use by individual professionals in a web-based format.
- The DCFS *Manual for Mandated Reporters* was revised in August 2003. A Spanish version of the manual is also available. The Department distributes over 25,000 copies of the Manual each year, primarily to schools, day care centers, and social service agencies. An updated version is being prepared for August 2004.
- The Department continues to distribute copies of *Protecting the Children: A School Administrator's Guide*.
- Both publications are available on the DCFS website: www.state.il.us/dcfs

CFS Council recommends: DCFS should work with the State Board of Education (ISBE) on implementation of HB3055 (P.A. 92-295) effective 1-1-02 to make sure DCFS *indicated* reports of child abuse are incorporated into a student's school record.

- Within its SACWIS case management system, DCFS has included an automatic prompt which alerts the caseworker to send the school information to the State Central Register (SCR). SCR then generates a letter and sends the abuse notification to the child's school.
- Members of the CFS Council conducted an informal survey of school principals. Most were receiving information from DCFS, filing it in the student temporary record, and sharing it appropriately with teachers or social work staff.
- Training on this process will be included in the mandated reporting curriculum for teachers.

CFS Council recommends: DCFS needs to examine the services offered to its wards who are involved with or placed in other systems (mental health, substance abuse, probation, corrections, institutional care) to determine how best to work with this population of adolescents and prepare them for independent living.

- DCFS Director Bryan Samuels has given priority to serving older children who are wards of DCFS. He has proposed new initiatives to address the placement

and service needs of these adolescents and has formed several workgroups to look at issues of mental health, education, incarceration, and preparation for independence.

- DCFS has formed a unit to address the problem of missing and runaway children who are in the Department's care. The Child Location and Support Unit is located in Chicago. It has been successful in locating 95% of the children missing from care within a six month timeframe.

CFS Council recommends: DCFS should develop communication between foster caregivers and schools in order to strengthen the attention given to children's educational needs.

- Education of DCFS wards has been at the forefront of Director Bryan Samuels new initiatives during 2003-2004. A variety of community-based programs and LANS-based services are being revamped in order to incorporate referrals of children with educational needs. Educational enrichment programs are a priority.
- DCFS is taking an active role to see that pre-school children in foster care are enrolled routinely in Head Start. Special tutoring of school-age children is being stressed with schools and foster parents. Children attending sub-standard public schools are requesting transfers to other public schools.
- A former residential facility in Cook County is being reorganized as an academic center to serve children of high school age and prepare them for entrance into vocational schools or colleges.
- DCFS has increased the number of college scholarships to its wards.

SCAN Committee recommends: Foster parents should be adequately trained and monitored for follow through on a child's recommended mental health and medical treatment.

- DCFS has piloted a project called Integrated Assessment since 2002. Children who enter foster care are immediately assigned an intake coordinator and clinical screener who works with mental health and medical providers, the birth family, and the foster family to assess the needs of the child. This occurs within a 45-day timeframe so that services to all parties can be initiated in a timely manner.
- The Integrated Assessment Model has been adopted for statewide implementation and staff have been hired. Training in the Cook County and Northern Regions has been initiated with completion of the Central and Southern regions planned for Fall 2004.
- Private agencies and foster parents are being trained on the SACWIS case management system. This will allow for better monitoring of service plans and regular access to progress reports from treatment specialists and caseworkers.

SCAN Committee recommends: Long-term foster care or day care licensees should be required to obtain new background checks at periodic intervals on all adults residing in the home or working in the day care setting.

- DCFS agrees that this an important area for further policy development. Other groups have made similar recommendations. Therefore, the Department is exploring the feasibility of conducting periodic checks through LEADS and other information systems. This issue will be referred to the Best Practice and Practice Advancement Committee for consideration during the upcoming year.

CDRT Council and SCAN Committee recommend: DCFS needs to better assess situations of domestic violence in order to prevent trauma and harm to children who live in homes affected by domestic violence.

- During 2003, DCFS continued to develop a domestic violence protocol for use in situations where the occurrence of domestic violence poses risks to children for abuse and neglect. The protocol is currently pending final approval and incorporation into the SACWIS system. The protocol will include: 1) domestic violence assessment during a child abuse/neglect investigation; 2) a decision tree to guide DCFS child protection specialists; 3) services provided to children at risk of/affected by domestic violence; 4) a screening tool which can be used by child protection/child welfare workers to assess risk to the child.
- Through an inter-agency committee responding to a CDRT Report on Infant Homicides in Chicago during 2002, DCFS has become more familiar with law enforcement strategies for dealing with domestic violence. Whenever possible, DCFS will collaborate with local and state police regarding domestic violence reports that may place a child at immediate risk of harm.
- DCFS has continued to support prevention-oriented projects targeted to assist children living in homes with domestic violence. Twelve community-based agencies representing all areas of the state were awarded grants in January 2002 from the DCFS tax check-off fund. The projects have provided a variety of support services to parents and their children, including mentoring, counseling, and educational groups. Some programs have joined with the courts to provide workshops targeted to the offenders. Most of the programs received funding to expand and refine services in FY 03 and FY 04.

CDRT Council recommends: DCFS should continue to pursue interstate child protection agreements with surrounding states.

- The DCFS State Central Register maintains a listing of contact numbers for all child protection hotlines and record keeping departments throughout the United States. This information is posted on the Department's electronic web site for staff (D-Net). DCFS staff can readily access other states for information related to child abuse and neglect reporting or case investigations in other states.
- Working with local Children's Advocacy Centers near state borders, DCFS has continued to promote local inter-agency agreements and collaborations for abuse and neglect investigations that involve families and/or agencies in both states. Formal arrangements have been made with Missouri and Iowa, but local cooperation is developing in many counties adjacent to Indiana and Wisconsin.

CDRT Council recommends: DCFS should establish a tracking system that will provide better feedback on child death review recommendations to ensure that proposed actions or policy changes are carried out within a reasonable timeframe.

- During 2004, the Department has substantially improved its data tracking system with regard to child death cases and child death review recommendations. More information is collected for the Child Death Review Teams Annual Report, the most recent of which (calendar year 2001) was issued in October, 2003.
- DCFS formed a special CDRT Response Committee to address the recommendations of CDRT teams. The Committee includes administrators from five DCFS Divisions and meets on a monthly schedule. Activities are initiated within the appropriate Division and feedback is provided to the regional CDRT teams.

CJ Task Force recommends: Programs for joint training to DCFS and law enforcement on forensic interviewing of children should be developed as quickly as possible.

- DCFS implemented a two-day curriculum on Forensic Interviewing of Children beginning in September 2002. Trainers were drawn from the ranks of DCFS child protection supervisors, juvenile law enforcement officers, assistant State's attorneys, and children's advocacy center forensic interviewers. Eight training teams conducted 15 multi-disciplinary seminars during Fall 2002. A second round of 26 seminars, including 10 for Cook County, was conducted in 2003 and 2004.
- A five-day forensic interviewing curriculum, *Finding Words*, was introduced to Illinois in March 2004 under the sponsorship of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois (CACI). Additional sessions are scheduled for a week in July 2004 and a week in November 2004. The curriculum uses a model of interviewing developed at Cornerhouse in Minneapolis and adapted to meet the statutes, policies, and practices of Illinois by the American Prosecutors Research Institute.
- Both types of forensic trainings will continue throughout 2004 and 2005. The two-day curriculum is being incorporated into the DCFS specialty training curriculum for Child Protection Specialists.

CJ Task Force recommends: DCFS should work to link medical providers into a statewide network that will consult with the Department on cases of serious physical abuse.

- During 2003-2004, DCFS continued to expand its statewide medical network of physicians and nurse practitioners dedicated to diagnosing children who have been sexually and physically abused. Three medical programs supported by DCFS serve children throughout the state. These programs are: 1) MPEEC (Multidisciplinary Pediatric Education and Evaluation Consortium) in Chicago and Cook County; 2) Pediatric Resource Center in Peoria; and 3) Children's Medical Resource Network in Anna, Illinois that networks medical professionals in southern Illinois. Each program provides training and outreach to medical professionals, hospitals, DCFS and law enforcement.

CJ Task Force recommends: DCFS should continue the expansion of Children's Advocacy Centers to areas that remain underserved.

- Illinois has 36 Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) which serve children in 80 counties throughout the state. Two of the CACs located in DeKalb County and Whiteside County were established during 2003-2004. Several other CACs have expanded their service networks to additional counties. DCFS is working with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois, a statewide coordinating organization, to continue the development of new and expanded Children's Advocacy Centers in the remaining 22 counties.

CJ Task Force recommends: DCFS should develop procedures and interdisciplinary protocols to handle investigations of children exposed to drug manufacturing, specifically methamphetamine.

- DCFS and the Illinois State Police signed a Drug Endangered Children Operational Agreement in the fall of 2003. The two agencies have agreed to work cooperatively to facilitate a coordinated response to families involved in clandestine methamphetamine laboratories or other illegal drug manufacturing, sales and possession when children are expected to be present and found in the home. Local protocols are under development in the 34 counties of the DCFS southern region of Illinois, which has the largest number of methamphetamine labs and drug endangered children.
- Training of DCFS staff conducting child protection investigations in the Central and Northern regions is planned for FY 05. DCFS administrators are also working closely with a number of task force groups established by the Attorney General's Office and the Illinois State Police to address the increasing spread of meth manufacturing situations to rural areas throughout the state.

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