

STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

Report for Year 2001

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Citizen Review Panels

In 1996, the U.S. Congress amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). In its amendments to CAPTA (SEC.106 [42 U.S.C. 5106a]), Congress required states to establish Citizen Review Panels in order to maintain eligibility for funding from the Child Abuse and Neglect State Grants Program.

The federal statute indicates that the purpose of the Citizen Review Panels is to “evaluate the extent to which the agencies (state and local) are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.” The panels must examine the policies, procedures, and, where appropriate, specific cases, handled by the state and local agencies providing child protective services. In particular, the panels must evaluate:

- The State CAPTA plan and 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 legislation; and
- Any other criteria which the Panels consider important to ensure the protection of children, including the coordination of child protection with foster care and adoption services and the state’s review process for child fatalities and near fatalities.

The revised CAPTA requirements called for each state to establish Citizen Review Panels by July 1, 1999. The panels must meet at least quarterly and must produce an annual, public report of their activities. A state has the option to designate existing committees or advisory entities to serve as Citizen Review Panels if these entities meet the federal requirements.

Development of Citizen Review Panels in Illinois

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services has established four Citizen Review Panels to examine the policies and procedures of state and local child protective service agencies. The Illinois Citizen Review Panels have been 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).

Authorizing legislation for the Illinois Citizen Review Panels was introduced as part of Senate Bill 1109 in February 1999 amending the Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 505/5). It 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 divisions of Child

Protection, Program Operations, and Administrative Case Review as well as the coordinator, chairperson and vice-chairperson of each individual Citizen Review panel.

In forming the individual panels, the Steering Committee invited several existing DCFS advisory groups to consider adding citizen review activities to their overall mission and responsibilities. Each group identified specific areas of interest (i.e. child abuse reporting, investigative procedures, multidisciplinary coordination of agencies, child fatalities) for their initial inquiry and review. A DCFS Coordinator appointed to guide each group provides general orientation and training at panel meetings throughout the year. The individual Citizen Review Panels are:

- 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 has a variety of members who are experienced 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. Supporting documents listing all of the panel members are included in the Appendix.

The Illinois ***Citizen Review Panel Report for Year 2001*** is the second annual report. It covers the period from September 2000 through September 2001, based upon the Federal Fiscal Year. The report highlights the activities and recommendations of each of the Citizen Review Panels. A section is provided to indicate the planning and follow-up which DCFS has initiated during the past year to respond to Citizen Review Panel recommendations.

Overview of 2001 Activities

Each panel continued to receive DCFS orientation and training in 2001 on what it means to be a "Citizen Review Panel." Some panels experienced changes in membership or leadership, and the DCFS coordinators reviewed copies of the First Annual Report and the general guidebook, *Citizen Review Panels for the Child Protective Services System: Guidelines and Protocols* of 1998 published by the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse.

The Citizen Review Panels also received regular reports related to the actions which DCFS has undertaken to implement their recommendations made in FY 2000. For several of the panels, this second year of operation resulted in fewer new recommendations as they continued to explore the ramifications of follow-up implementation based on their previous work.

During this second year of operation, the Illinois Citizen Review Panels engaged in a process of Case File Review as this relates to DCFS investigative files. Each panel devoted two meetings to the review of randomly selected case files gathered from DCFS offices in the Central Region of the state and in Chicago/Cook County. 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 had been the focus of previous recommendations by the group. The case file review process has been utilized by each CRP panel to guide its further inquiry into DCFS policy and procedure and to generate new topics for discussion.

As in the first year, each panel identified a particular part of the Illinois child protection system (based on a list of CAPTA assurances) for in-depth inquiry and study. This approach allowed the various panels to self-select a relatively specific topic which they found appealing and manageable. The list of CAPTA Assurances is provided in the Appendix.

All of the Citizen Review Panels gained considerable knowledge about DCFS child protection operations during their second year of meetings. This knowledge gave them confidence to undertake new activities. The CRP Steering Committee met on January 18, 2001 and May 31, 2001 to discuss the progress of the panels and plan for further follow-up with DCFS administrators on the recommendations from FY 2000. At various points throughout the year, the DCFS panel coordinators have met to plan upcoming meetings and to review recommendations. Dr. Cheryl Peterson continues as the DCFS administrator in charge of coordinating the Citizen Review Panels.

ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Children and Family Services Advisory Council

Panel Organization--The Children and Family Services Advisory Council is a statutorily established advisory committee to DCFS that is appointed by the Governor. Its 17 members serve staggered 4-year terms which can be renewed. It meets bi-monthly and alternates meeting locations between Chicago and Springfield. Micki Chulick, Director, Community Coordinated Child Care in Dekalb, and Barbara Cempura, President and CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters in Belleville, serve as co-chairpersons. The new DCFS meeting coordinator, LaPrica Mims, assumed her duties in July, 2001. Martha Allen, DCFS Chief of Staff, oversees coordination of the panel's activities.

Meeting Dates--The CFS Advisory Council held meetings on the following dates:

- September 20, 2000 (case review Cook County)
- November 15, 2000 (case review Central Region)
- January 31, 2001 (cancelled due to bad weather)
- May 16, 2001 (new member orientation)
- July 18, 2001
- September 19, 2001

CAPTA Focus—The panel has identified the following CAPTA assurances for purposes of education and discussion:

- Procedures for reporting known and suspected instances of abuse and neglect;
- Immunity from prosecution of individuals making good faith reports;
- Procedures for prompt expungement of records available to the public for unsubstantiated or false claims.

Case Reviews--The meeting of September 20, 2000 was held at the DCFS Child Protection Office at 2033 S. Indiana in Chicago in order to review case files. John Goad, Associate Deputy Director for Cook County, provided an overview of child protection responsibilities within DCFS and discussed some recent trends in case handling, case services, and case outcomes. Following a brief orientation to the information contained in an investigative file, the 9 members split into 4 groups to review case files. Each group looked at two files with allegations of child neglect, one "indicated" and one "unfounded." Another case file review was held in Springfield on November 15th. Cases were from the Pekin Field Office in central Illinois. One case involved a family who had moved a lot, especially between Missouri, Tennessee, and Illinois. The panel discussed problems in gathering information on families who move frequently.

Case Review Observations (a generalized summary of comments by panel members)

- Files were thorough and complete, although sometimes difficult to read and to follow due to handwritten notes and a complex set of forms/abbreviations
- Situations of neglect varied a great deal. Many were complex and involved young children at high risk and families with multiple problems. Others were very straightforward and involved a single incident.

- Difficult for reviewers to determine how the DCFS investigator arrived at the decision to “indicate” or “unfound.”
- Some of the unfounded cases contained an element of risk (parent uncooperative, children poorly supervised, suspected drug use) that worried the reviewers. Wanted more information on follow-up.
- One case involving an abandoned infant (left at the hospital) was noted for its excellent documentation of attempts to find the missing mother.
- Reviewers asked questions and gained insights regarding timeframes for gathering information, the appropriate contacts that investigators must make to complete a case, and the role of the reporter.

Educational Activities--The panel received reports on recent legislation affecting the Department and updates from Director Jess McDonald and other staff on a number of topics (see below). The Council discussed projects undertaken by individual members as these related to the recommendations and work of the CFS Council over the past year. Several new members were welcomed to the CFS Advisory Council in May, 2001.

Summary of educational activities conducted at panel meetings:

- Director Jess McDonald and Don Vacca, Manager SACWIS/Best Practice, presented information on “Best Practices” and how this new approach to quality investigations would be implemented through staff training and computer support (SACWIS).
- Director McDonald and Chief of Staff Martha Allen discussed the importance of DCFS accreditation, continuity in services and staffing, recent trends in intake, caseloads, adoptions, and guardianships.
- Linda Williams, SCR Administrator, reviewed DCFS statutes on the retention schedule for indicated reports and the expungement of unfounded reports. She also provided information on new policies and procedures at the DCFS Hotline.
- Jim Kaufmann, Legislative Liaison, explained the implications of several new bills passed by the Illinois Legislature.
- Frances Pace Barnes, Director, Volunteers of America in Chicago and panel chairperson for 2000, presented a letter that she had written to Governor George Ryan explaining the CFS Council’s recommendations as recounted in the Citizen Review Panel Report for FY2000.
- Sue Cook, school counselor in Marion and CFS member, distributed copies of a survey she had sent out to school teachers in southern Illinois asking about their involvement with DCFS. She also informed the group of an advisory committee from American Humane Association that was studying DCFS responses to recent child death cases.

Recommendations—The CFS Council spent considerable time and effort in examining the follow-up to 3 major recommendations made in 2000. New recommendations were limited. The Council will continue to look at issues involving the operation of the DCFS Hotline and will consider additional topics in 2002.

The items listed below are 2000 recommendations reemphasized for 2001:

- Teachers should be provided with ongoing training for their role as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. DCFS and schools should facilitate this training and require certification of successful completion.
- DCFS must work with the State Board of Education (ISBE) so that DCFS Hotline reports on a child that **are indicated** can be included as part of a student's school record and transferred to his/her new school.
- DCFS needs to work with other states on policies to facilitate the exchange of child abuse information when families reported for abuse/neglect in Illinois have recently moved from another state.

New recommendations for FY 2001 are:

- DCFS should more prominently advertise its Website and the information that is available to consumers online.
- The CFS Council would like DCFS to further develop its collaboration and communication with other "systems" (i.e. schools, health, day care).

Accomplishments—The Council commended DCFS on the implementation of numerous improvements related to previous recommendations made by the panel.

- The response time of the DCFS Hotline has improved considerably in terms of phone call backs to reporters. Staffing increases have made a noticeable improvement.
- Hotline workers have been more helpful in responding to those callers reporting child abuse/neglect, and the Hotline's prompt call response has reduced the number of abandoned calls.
- The Hotline's policy of taping calls will improve functioning and facilitate training of workers.
- The newly revised manual for SCR employees provides thorough information and improves the comprehensive training offered to Hotline workers.
- DCFS support for 2001 legislation (HB 3055 and SB 839) will significantly improve the ability of all mandated reporters and school personnel to be informed of Department investigative actions taken to protect children who are victims of indicated child abuse reports (see more discussion in Section III, DCFS Follow-up to 2000 recommendations).

Statewide Citizen's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect

Panel Organization--The Statewide Citizen's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect is established under Section 11.7 of Illinois' Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA). Its twenty members are selected from across the State and include individuals from various fields of human service and community life. SCAN members are appointed by the Director of DCFS for 3-year terms and advise the Department on child abuse prevention services and other aspects of child abuse and neglect. Meetings are scheduled bi-monthly. Sue Walton, retired school teacher from Rolling Meadows, served as chairperson during 2001; Gwen Mastin, President and CEO, New Phoenix Assistance Center in Chicago, was the vice-chairperson. Gail Jackson, Division of Child Protection, is the DCFS Coordinator.

Meeting Dates—The SCAN Committee held meetings on:

- October 10, 2000 and October 18, 2000 (case review)
- December 1, 2000 (case review)
- February 21, 2001
- March 22, 2001
- June 19, 2001
- August 15, 2001

CAPTA Focus—The panel identified the following CAPTA assurances for the focus of its educational activities and discussion during the year:

- Procedures for immediate screening, safety assessment, and prompt investigations of reports;
- Procedures that outline immediate steps that can be taken to ensure child safety;
- Cooperation of law enforcement, courts, and appropriate state agencies in CPS.

Case File Review—Following an orientation and training at the meeting of August 16th, 2000, SCAN conducted its first case file review at the Springfield Field Office on October 10, 2000. Eight members gathered to review indicated and unfounded cases from Peoria. They reported back to the full SCAN committee on October 18th regarding their findings. Another case file review occurred on December 1, 2000 at the DCFS Child Protection Office, 2033 S. Indiana, Chicago. John Goad, DCFS Associate Deputy Director, provided orientation. The committee reviewed several cases with institutional involvement (i.e. allegations involving a foster home or residential setting), two of which involved a child death.

Case Review Observations (generalized comments made at the 2 reviews)

- In general, the investigations were all documented very thoroughly.
- Some investigations would benefit from additional interviews and background checks on the alleged perpetrator.
- Verbatim recording of children's statements should be in the file.
- Files should contain more information on service referrals and service monitoring, especially if children have been placed in temporary protective custody and then returned home.

- Several cases were discussed where members had concerns about the balancing of child safety vs. the family's right to privacy. The CANTS 8 notification letter, which provides information about the allegations and DCFS investigation, should always be handed out to the families at the initiation of the investigation.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the placement of an infant in a relative home where basic licensing regulations were not being met. The private foster care agency involved did not appear to be adequately monitoring the situation.
- Discussion of what happens in DCFS "indicated" reports when a family refuses follow-up services and the court is not involved. Is there any way to monitor the safety of the child?
- Concerns of several panel members that investigations may be too narrowly focused on reported allegations. Children may be suffering other abuse that is not investigated.

Educational Activities --The SCAN meeting in February 2001 involved presentations on DCFS projects and new programs dealing with HIV infected mothers and children and new initiatives looking at the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse. Illinois is looking to replicate good model programs that address the needs of children, battered women, and batterers.

- Elizabeth Monk from DCFS described the First Love project for HIV mothers and newborns. She also discussed services provided under the Family Options Program and the Day Care-Respite Care Program for HIV children.
- Margaret Francis, DCFS Domestic Violence Coordinator, presented a dramatic tape recording of a child reporting a situation of domestic violence. Discussion ensued on the effects that DV has on children who observe it as well as those who experience direct effects to themselves (i.e. child abuse).
- Lori Fuller, Prevent Child Abuse-Illinois, provided information and handouts on the new Prevention Resource Development Project. Special coordinators located in each DCFS region will help coordinate family services involving domestic violence, substance abuse, and child welfare agencies that may be involved with services to a family.

At the meetings in March and June, SCAN committed itself to an intensive discussion and review of grant proposal criteria for prevention projects that DCFS will fund from the state Child Abuse Prevention Tax Check-off Fund to address the needs of children involved in homes with domestic violence. This topic received continuing attention for the duration of the year. New members were appointed to SCAN in July, 2001.

Recommendations—SCAN made the following recommendations:

- 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
- DCFS should support research and demonstration projects that explore the linkages between domestic violence and situations of child abuse. Appropriate and effective services must be explored to address both patterns of family violence.

- DCFS needs to be vigilant in monitoring family situations and services provided to assure that children remain safe, especially when families remain intact or have children returned home after a serious incident of abuse or neglect.

Accomplishments—The SCAN Committee devoted its energies to one major project during FY 2001. This project involved research, study, discussion, and deliberation on the subject of the Co-Occurrence of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence. A Request for Proposal asking for prevention projects addressing this topic was issued by DCFS on August 27, 2001. Over 80 proposals were received in response to the RFP, and twelve projects will be funded beginning in January, 2002.

Future Directions--During the June meeting, SCAN reviewed the continuing focus that the panel will pursue for Citizen Review activities in the next year. The group will continue to examine reports of child abuse and neglect in licensed child care facilities and will consider Best Practice standards for gathering and evaluating information provided by various people during an investigation. The panel will also request ongoing case file reviews that will help in understanding investigations involving the overlap or co-occurrence of child abuse allegations with situations of domestic violence.

Children's Justice Task Force

Panel Organization--The Children's Justice Task Force is a multidisciplinary advisory group to DCFS in accordance with requirements in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The Task Force has 28 members representing child protection, law enforcement, medical and mental health, attorneys for the prosecution and defense, criminal and civil court judges, education, child advocates, and parent advocates. The Task Force makes annual recommendations to DCFS for improving the coordination of investigations of child sexual abuse and physical abuse, the investigation of child fatalities, and the conduct of civil and criminal court proceedings involving the child and/or perpetrator. DCFS receives a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to administer projects based upon the Task Force recommendations.

The Director of DCFS appoints members of the Children's Justice Task Force to staggered 4-year terms. Meetings are held quarterly with an added Annual Meeting scheduled in early May. The chairperson since 2000 is Dr. Bette Ann MacIntosh, child psychiatrist, Mental Health Centers of Illinois in Springfield; Jerry Lowell, Clinical Director, Aunt Martha's Youth Services in Chicago, was elected vice-chair in 2001. The DCFS Coordinator is Dr. Cheryl Peterson.

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

- September 8, 2000 (case review)
- November 30, 2000 (case review)
- February 2, 2001
- May 10-11, 2001
- June 29, 2001
- September 7, 2001

CAPTA Focus—The panel focused inquiry on the following child protection areas:

- Methods to preserve confidentiality of records;
- Cooperation of law enforcement, courts, and appropriate state agencies in CPS;
- Provisions for appointment of guardian ad litem in cases with judicial proceedings;
- Provisions for appeal of official findings of abuse or neglect.

Case File Review—The CJTF conducted a case file review on September 8, 2000 at the Springfield Field Office. Members reviewed a total of 7 case files selected randomly from cases investigated during FY 2000. All of the files reviewed were Priority 1 cases of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse with an "indicated" finding. Six of the cases involved allegations of sexual abuse (both intra-familial and caretaker situations) and one case involved an infant with head injuries. The reviewers made comments on their cases, which were then compiled into a summary listing of common questions, concerns, or recommendations. The Task Force used its November 2000 meeting to discuss the first case review session.

Case Review Observations (a summary of comments)

- Concern that files did not usually contain reports from police or indicate involvement of Child Advocacy Center, even though the cases were handled jointly.
- Concern that investigators did not assess the child's situation for risks other than those contained in the original allegation.
- Suggested that interview notes should include the questions asked as well as the answers given. Interview notes were difficult to follow.
- Some cases lacked appropriate signatures on safety plan
- Some cases lacked evidence of regular, timely oversight by the caseworker's supervisor. Members expressed concern over staff hiring practices that would leave a position unfilled for several months
- Wanted to know more about services provided.
- In general, the reviewers felt that file documentation was complete but not always well organized; CERAP evaluations were always completed on time.
- Special commendation was given to a file on a serious physical abuse allegation which was very thorough and well-organized.

The panel felt that looking at only 7 cases was not sufficient to make across-the-board recommendations for improvement. They did, however, urge DCFS to look at staff assignments in the identified field office in order to reduce vacancies and improve supervision of cases.

Educational Activities--During its meeting in February, the Task Force heard a presentation on Best Practices and how this initiative is going to affect the scope of DCFS investigations. Task Force members compared old and new versions of "Allegation #11—Cuts, Bruises, Welts, and Abrasions." The Task Force also reviewed the DCFS Inspector General's report and recommendations on a child death case and discussed how the use of Best Practices guidelines might have altered the outcome.

The meeting of May 10-11 provided the Task Force with opportunities to discuss current projects—Forensic Interviewing Training, Medical Network, Multidisciplinary Training Institute—that have been making strides to implement recommendations from the previous year. Tom Ward, Office of Quality Assurance, gave a presentation on the peer review process in the regions and explained the preparation which Illinois is doing for an upcoming federal review. He invited Task Force members to get involved with this process.

Recommendations—The Task Force emphasized its continuing interest in the following recommendations from FY 2000:

- DCFS should encourage the expansion of Children's Advocacy Centers to areas that remain underserved.
- There should be more education and training for medical and mental health professionals on child abuse assessment and treatment within a multidisciplinary setting.

- Programs for joint training to DCFS and Law Enforcement on forensic interviewing of children should be developed as quickly as possible.
- DCFS needs to reexamine issues of confidentiality in order to clarify the roles of different investigative entities and encourage communication between DCFS and other agencies participating in serious child abuse investigations.

Accomplishments—The Children’s Justice Task Force commends DCFS for progress on:

- Adoption of new Best Practice standards for investigations of child abuse and neglect
- Support of recommendations from the Forensic Interviewing Workgroup and development of a statewide forensic interviewing curriculum
- Support for special medical programs on child abuse assessment in Chicago, Peoria, and southern Illinois
- Increased state funding for Children’s Advocacy Centers and for financial support to staff the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Illinois, a state chapter organization affiliated with the National Children’s Alliance.

Future Directions—Due to limited meeting times and the need to follow several ongoing projects, the Children’s Justice Task Force suggested that a separate sub-committee be selected to regularly pursue topics related to Citizen Review of DCFS child protection assurances and investigative procedures. The sub-committee met during the September 2001 meeting and indicated an interest in examining documents and case files of “indicated” sexual abuse investigations where the perpetrator appealed the DCFS finding. The committee will request access to case hearing summaries prepared by the Office of Administrative Law Judges who hear the appeals. Representative cases will be reviewed for the November 2001 meeting. A presentation on the DCFS Appeals Process was delivered by Matt Franklin, Chief of Administrative Hearings, at the meeting on September 7, 2001.

Jerry Lowell, vice-chair, agreed to serve as the leader of the Citizen Review Subcommittee. The members suggested that future case reviews include the presence of a DCFS child protection supervisor or manager who can answer specific questions that come up during the review.

Child Death Review Team Executive Council

Panel Organization—The Child Death Review Team Executive Council was formed in 1998 to help coordinate the operations of the 9 regionally-based Illinois child death review teams. The membership of the CDRT Council consists of the chair and vice-chair from each of the regional teams. Its purpose is to provide statewide leadership and advocacy for the recommendations of the teams, plan an annual statewide training symposium, and oversee the preparation of an annual CDRT report. The CDRT Council members regularly review individual child death cases and files at the regional meetings, so a separate case review process was not undertaken this year by the Executive Council. Dr. Neil Hochstadt, Vice-President for Behavioral Science, LaRabida Children’s Hospital in Chicago, serves as CDRT Council chair; Mary Loken, Safe Schools Director, Sangamon Regional Office of Education, Springfield, is vice-chair. Sherry Barr was appointed as DCFS administrative coordinator in November, 2000 and is assisted by Yvette Reed, team coordinator, from Prevent Child Abuse-Illinois.

Meeting Dates-- The Child Death Review Team Executive Council met on:

September 24, 2000

January 5, 2001

April 20, 2001

May 24, 2001

July 13, 2001

The meeting of the CDRT Council on September 24, 2000 was held in conjunction with the 5th Annual CDRT Training Symposium in Itasca, a Chicago suburb.

Recommendations for FY 2000 were circulated for final review, and Cheryl Peterson requested that any additional comments be mailed to her by October 31st.

CAPTA Focus—The panel is looking at information related to the following assurances:

- Provisions for public disclosure of findings about cases of child abuse or neglect resulting in fatality or near fatality;
- Provisions not requiring reunification in certain circumstances;
- Procedures for reporting and dealing with medical neglect.

Recommendations—At the meeting in January, 2001, the CDRT Council received follow-up information on their recommendation from 2000 concerning the need for improved DCFS procedures for “failure to report” on the part of a mandated reporter. Linda Williams, SCR Administrator, explained the current process of case review conducted by the State Central Register and the procedures used to notify the State Board of Education, the Department of Professional Regulation, and the Illinois Medical Disciplinary Board about negligent mandated reporters. She suggested that specific instances of “failure to report” from a child death review team be submitted directly to her for review and follow-up. Guidelines on this topic were discussed further at the April 10th meeting.

New recommendations for 2001

- DCFS should have a listing with Directory Assistance that gives the 24-hour number at the Child Abuse Hotline for out-of-state callers.
- DCFS should implement an “800” number for the Hotline that is available to callers throughout the country.
- DCFS should pursue interstate Child Protection Agreements with Indiana, Wisconsin, and Kentucky.
- Current interstate agreements with Iowa and Missouri should be regularly reviewed and renewed. The agreements should be used to facilitate the development of systematic data collection and data compatibility between states that could be useful in gaining knowledge of child death statistics.

Accomplishments--At the July meeting, the CDRT Council reviewed major accomplishments of the past year. These included:

- Development of a comprehensive database on all Illinois child deaths.
- Publication and distribution of the *1999 Child Death Review Teams Annual Report* (the first one to utilize database information)
- Improved response of DCFS to CDRT recommendations, including community forums for public input.
- Better awareness within DCFS of child death review teams and their contribution to public education about serious child abuse.
- Passage of Senate Bill 373 which amends the Illinois Child Death Review Team Act to officially recognize the role and responsibilities of the Executive Council.

Special Projects--On May 24, 2001 the Illinois CDRT Council hosted the 2nd Annual Midwest Regional Consortium to discuss common procedures and issues in reviewing child deaths. Six states (Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois) sent representatives and the Illinois child death review teams around the state were well represented. DCFS Director Jess McDonald and Deputy Director Ed Cotton addressed the participants. Discussion groups focused on 1) Data Collection; 2) Adolescent Deaths; and 3) SIDS Deaths vs. Child Abuse Deaths.

Other Special Projects of the CDRT Council

- Planning and organization of the 6th Annual Symposium for Child Death Review Teams on October 18-19, 2001
- Preparation of the *2000 Child Death Review Teams Annual Report* in an extensively revised format.

Future Directions--The CDRT Executive Council expects to improve and expand its data collection on child deaths. It will promote this information to the Illinois Legislature, the directors of public and private agencies, and the citizens of the state in order to more fully address problems in the area of child protection.

As a Citizen Review Panel, the CDRT Council will continue its focus on situations of medical neglect and will explore relevant child abuse cases for data on the overlap of domestic violence and child abuse.

A SUMMARY OF DCFS RESPONSES TO CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the Citizen Review Panel recommendations of FY 2000, the Department of Children and Family Services has initiated a number of projects. Some of the accomplishments are highlighted below.

CFS Council recommends: DCFS should promote ongoing training of mandated reporters.

- In October, 2000, DCFS did a thorough update and revision of its *Manual for Mandated Reporters*. 50,000 copies were printed. A related manual for school administrators, *Protecting the Children*, was also updated and reprinted. Distribution of the new manuals has been extensive, and a special training on mandated reporting was presented to more than 300 social workers from the Chicago Public Schools.

CFS Council recommends: The DCFS Hotline should work to reduce the rate of abandoned calls. When call-back messages are taken by the Child Abuse Hotline, the time to return a call should be 30 minutes or less.

- The State Central Register has expanded to add more Child Abuse Hotline workers during peak periods of reporting. This has reduced the length of time needed for the Hotline to make call-backs to mandated reporters and decreased the percentage of abandoned calls. Incoming calls to the Hotline are recorded for quality assurance purposes; this new policy went into effect September, 2000.
- A Procedural Manual for workers at the State Central Register was updated and revised in FY 2001. Members of the CFS Advisory Council reviewed the manual and made comments prior to its completion.

CFS Council recommends: DCFS should work with the State Board of Education so that DCFS Hotline reports on a child that are indicated can be included as part of the student's school record if the student transfers to another school.

- DCFS supported legislation that was introduced in the 2001 Legislative Session.
 1. House Bill 3055 was signed into law as P.A. 92-295 on August 9, 2001. It amends the Illinois School Student Records Act (105 ILCS 10/2) and the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/7.9 and 8.6) to require that the final finding report for a DCFS investigation of sexual abuse or physical abuse that is *indicated* be forwarded to the child's school and included in the student's temporary record. The law is effective January 1, 2002.
 2. Senate Bill 839 was signed into law as P.A. 92-319 on August 9, 2001. This law amends the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA) and requires DCFS to provide mandated reporters with

information about the actions that Child Protective Services took to ensure a child's safety. Upon request, DCFS may also inform extended family members about safety planning for a child if that family member provided relevant information during the CPS investigation. The law is effective January 1, 2002.

- DCFS and the State Board of Education are working together on implementation plans for the laws. Training will be offered to DCFS child protection staff and school administrators. Information (the Final Finding Report) and instructions will be sent to the schools from the DCFS State Central Register, with follow-up by local staff.

CDRT Executive Council recommends: DCFS needs to provide better information on procedures that occur when a mandated reporter is cited for "failure to report" and communicate this to staff and Child Death Review Teams.

- The State Central Register has agreed to review cases referred by Child Death Review Teams where a "failure to report" is suspected. Further training of DCFS staff to better detect and report instances of failure to report will be formulated based on the SCR findings. Mandated reporters who fail to report child abuse or neglect will be referred to the appropriate professional disciplinary agency.

SCAN Committee recommends: DCFS child protection workers and law enforcement officers need to receive joint training on child abuse and neglect investigation.

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

- A DCFS workgroup on forensic interviewing training has finalized a proposal to incorporate two curriculum modules into multidisciplinary training seminars around the state. The first module will be a 2-day curriculum on Coordinated Investigation and Forensic Interviewing of Children, which will be incorporated into the standard curriculum required for child protection workers. The second module will be a 5-day curriculum on Advanced Forensic Interviewing. Training will begin in June 2002 and will be delivered by a 3-person team of trainers representing DCFS, law enforcement, and children's advocacy centers.

CJ Task Force recommends: There should be more education and training for medical and mental health professionals on child abuse assessment and treatment within a multidisciplinary setting.

CDRT Executive Council recommends: Medical providers and health departments need to be educated about the serious medical conditions of children that require close supervision and regular follow-up.

- A statewide Medical Network of physicians and nurse practitioners has been expanded to include major programs at children's hospitals in Chicago and Peoria and to establish a long-needed clinic program in the Southern Region. This

network will assist child protection and law enforcement with consultation and referral on investigations of sexual abuse and physical abuse.

- DCFS, Illinois State Police, and the G.E.M. Foundation sponsored three multidisciplinary training workshops between November 2000 and October 2001 on Child Homicide and Serious Physical Injury Investigations. Each workshop featured presenters from medicine, law enforcement, and child protection; 100 attendees from throughout the state participated.

CJ Task Force recommends: DCFS should encourage the expansion of Children's Advocacy Centers and the development of protocols for coordinated investigation of child abuse.

- DCFS staff attended a meeting in March, 2001 of the Illinois Child Advocacy Commission and reported progress with regard to development of child sexual abuse investigation protocols, support for forensic interviewing training, and support for Child Advocacy Center development. The Commission will help focus a discussion on the procedures relevant to videotaping children's interviews that are conducted at Children's Advocacy Centers.
- DCFS funding support for Children's Advocacy Centers increased by \$1.2 million for the SFY 2002 beginning July 1, 2001. Funding has been allocated to annualize support for centers starting up in SFY 2001; initiate support for the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois, a statewide coordinating organization affiliated with the National Children's Alliance; and provide support for new and expanded Children's Advocacy Center programs.

CJ Task Force recommends: Better coordination of services between DCFS and state/local domestic violence programs should be developed.

- The prevention-oriented projects supported by the SCAN Committee and funded from DCFS tax check-off funds are a positive step towards increasing cooperation of DCFS and domestic violence agencies on the co-occurrence of child abuse and domestic violence. Grants of \$50,000 each were awarded to twelve community-based agencies throughout the state as a result of competitive Request for Proposals issued in August, 2001. The projects will begin in January, 2002.

CDRT Executive Council recommends: DCFS needs to reconsider whether allegation #85, *Medical Neglect of Disabled Infants*, should be reported to law enforcement and state's attorney.

- Allegation #85 has been significantly altered to meet new Best Practice standards. It is mandatory for DCFS to notify law enforcement in cases where the child is taken into protective custody or the alleged perpetrator is a paramour. Law enforcement and the state's attorney must be notified if there is a second indicated report of medical neglect involving a specific child.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Citizen Review Panels have been very active during the past year. Members of the panels were honored for their first year efforts on October 10, 2000 at a reception held in conjunction with the Statewide Child Abuse Conference sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse-Illinois. Further recognition events have been conducted in 2001 by each individual panel.

The DCFS Coordinator is planning for distribution of this report according to the following plan:

- DCFS Executive Staff;
- Citizen Review Panels Steering Committee and All CRP Panels;
- DCFS staff in charge of the Best Practice Implementation Project;
- DCFS Office of Child and Family Policy, specifically those staff who work on investigative rule and procedure and those staff who prepare planning documents for federal requirements and grants;
- Members of the Illinois Child Advocacy Commission;
- DCFS administrators in charge of the State Central Register;
- DCFS Child Protection Regional Managers; and
- Officers and Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois

In addition, this *Citizen Review Panel Final Report for FY 2001* will be posted to the DCFS website and circulated to all other interested parties upon request.

Best Practice Implementation Project

The DCFS Best Practice Project is a multi-year, intensive effort to develop a practice model which emphasizes child safety, permanency, and well-being from intake to case closure. It incorporates all of the requirements of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Illinois Permanency Initiative, the Office of Inspector General recommendations, business standards, laws and regulations, consent decrees, accreditation requirements, and principles of sound child welfare practice. Best Practice involves analysis and reform of all Department protocols and systems to ensure that services to families are of the highest quality and consistent statewide. It guides organizational change, including all policy development, training, and the implementation of the new Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

The core principle of Best Practice in Illinois is ensuring child safety. Child safety is the foundation of the model and it emphasizes consistency statewide in all intake and investigative procedures. Pathways derived from the allegations-based approach will provide clear guidance for each step of the DCFS screening and investigative process. Interventions and services will be clearly tied to a family's safety and risk issues. Because of this approach, the Best Practices Project will provide an appropriate resource for addressing several of the recommendations made by the CFS Council, SCAN, CJTF, and CDRT in response to the case file reviews.

Plans for FY 2002

The various Citizen Review Panels will continue the process of Case File Review as this relates to investigative files. Each panel will devote at least one quarterly meeting to the review of randomly selected case files gathered from DCFS offices throughout the state. Some panels may decide to spend more than one meeting on case file reviews. Each panel will have the option to specify certain types of cases (by allegation, by age of child, by geographic location, by status of perpetrator, by presenting circumstance) that are of particular interest to the group.

Following each Case File Review meeting, the panel will prepare a summary of comments, observations, and recommendations related to their file review. This activity may include additional input from the panel upon subsequent discussion and review. The summary will be shared with Cheryl Peterson, the DCP Administrator for Citizen Review, and with the CRP Steering Committee.

The case file review process may further stimulate the Citizen Review Panels to examine particular aspects of DCFS policy and procedure with regard to child protection. With the assistance of the panel coordinator and such guest presenters as may be warranted, these selected topics relating to child protection policy and procedure will be discussed at the other meetings of the panels throughout the year. At various times, the panel coordinators will meet together to discuss the plans for their upcoming meetings and to review recommendations made by the panels. These meetings will be designed to address common issues of CRP motivation, training, guidance, follow-up, and recognition.

By October 1, 2002 all of the Citizen Review panels will be asked to submit a complete compilation of new and/or revised recommendations that reflect their work for the fiscal year. These recommendations will be reviewed and clarified by the CRP Steering Committee and will form the basis for the FY 2002 Citizen Review Panel Report to be completed in December 2002.

Assessing Panel interests and activities

As part of the Citizen Review Panel objectives for FY 2002, the CRP Steering Committee will continue to develop a general approach for the panels to follow in carrying out their responsibilities. The Steering Committee will formally assess the case file review process followed by the panels and make recommendations to improve it based on feedback from the panel members. Individual panels will be asked to review their priority interests and further refine or change these. The CRP Steering Committee will review and focus the recommendations of the various CRP panels, assist the Administrator in preparing required reports, and promote the appropriate follow-up to the reports and recommendations. Members of the Steering Committee also provide communication linkage to divisions within the Department of Children and Family Services that may be contacted for information or technical assistance with regard to operation of the Citizen Review Panels.

APPENDICES

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS STEERING COMMITTEE

September 2001

Barbara Cempura, Director
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Belleville
Co-Chair, CFS Advisory Council

Micki Chulick, Executive Director
Community Coordinated Child Care
Co-Chair, CFS Advisory Council

Roy Harley, Executive Director
Prevent Child Abuse - Illinois
Member: SCAN & Child Death Review
Team

Neil Hochstadt, Vice President
LaRabida Children's Hospital
Chair, CDRT Executive Council

Mary Loken, Administrator
Capitol Area Career Center
Vice-Chair, CDRT Executive Council

Bette Ann MacIntosh, M.D.
Mental Health Ctrs. of Central Illinois
Chair, Children's Justice Task Force

Jerry Lowell, Clinical Director
Aunt Martha's Youth Services
Vice-Chair, Children's Justice Task
Force

Sue Walton, Retired Teacher
Chair, SCAN Committee

Gwendolyn E. Mastin, Director
New Phoenix Assistance Center
Vice-Chair, SCAN Committee

Ed Cotton, Deputy Director
DCFS, Division of Child Protection

Sherry Barr, Public Service Admin.
DCFS, Division of Child Protection
Child Death Review Team Coordinator

Gail Jackson, Administrator
DCFS, Division of Child Protection
SCAN Coordinator

Mary Sue Morsch, Executive Deputy
Director, DCFS

Cheryl Peterson, Children's Justice
Administrator
DCFS, Division of Child Protection
CRP Committee Coordinator

Jerry Slomka, Deputy Director
DCFS, Division of Program Operations

Carol St. Amant, Downstate Associate
Deputy Director
DCFS, Division of Child Protection

LaPrica Mims, Administrative Assistant
DCFS, Office of Chief of Staff
Liaison to CFS Advisory Council

Marcia J. Williams, Deputy Director
DCFS, Division of Administrative Case
Review

