

DFS Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Location:	VIA: WebEx - Clark County Department of Family Services 500 South Grand Central Pkwy, 1 st Floor Pueblo Room Las Vegas, Nevada 89155
Date:	August 19, 2021 8:30 am – 10:00 am

Membership		Present	Absent
CAC Members:	Shelia Parks	X	
	Judge Frank Sullivan	X	
	Andre Bailey	X	
	Matthew Cox	X	
	DaShun Jackson	X	
	Donna Smith		X
	Carly Aldis	X	
	Rhiannon Foreman	X	
County/Department Management:	Tim Burch, Administrator		X
	Debbie Croshaw, Assistant Director		X
	Abigail Frierson, Assistant Director	X	
	Margaret LeBlanc, Assistant Director		X
	Jill Marano, Assistant Director	X	
	Judy Tudor, Assistant Director		X
	Mari Parlade, DFS Legal & Strategic Initiatives Manager	X	
Public:	None		
Guest:	Ross Armstrong, Administrator Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Dr. Megan Freeman, Children’s Behavioral Health Authority (DCFS) Tisa Evans, Ombudsman Kim Abbott, Team Chief Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada Gwynneth Smith, Chief Deputy District Attorney		

Agenda Item I:	Call to order and welcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting was called to order at 8:34am by Co-Chair DaShun and roll was called by Mari Parlade.

Agenda Item II:	General Public Comments	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
Agenda Item III:	Approval of July 15, 2021 Minutes	(For Possible Action)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 15, 2021 Minutes – Approved 	
Agenda Item IV:	Department of Family Services Report Out	(Priority Item)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Crisis in Foster Care¹ <p>Jill provided background on why DCFS received an invite to the CAC Meeting. Reasons include the current options available to children with mental health problems, the consequences of not having enough options and the status of Child Haven.</p> <p>Ross Armstrong acknowledged the reasons for the states invitation and shared the following information. The finalized Medicaid and Federal CMS of the 1915i State plan amendment for children with mental health in foster care has been approved. Crisis Intervention, Care Coordination, Intensive In-Home and Residential Care do not have sufficient resources and are all under-funded. Currently, the State of Nevada is under investigation by the Department of Justice due to the Juvenile Justice Department and Child Welfare Agencies over relying of residential care for children with behavioral health needs. The investigation is in the beginning stages and on-going. The Director of NV Department of Health & Human Services Richard Whitley has appointed and designated Dr. Megan Freeman as Children’s Mental Health Authority.</p> <p>Dr. Freeman proceeded to explain her role and vision for the State’s Mental Health Services for children, particularly in Child Welfare. The Authority sets the standards and requirements for all providers who are requesting to be reimbursed by Medicaid for services provided. In addition to the standards set, the Authority provides oversight on the quality of the services, like the 1915i. This includes Mental and Behavioral Health. DCFS will provide an infrastructure for training and technical assistance, including support. DCFS is currently focused on providing direct care, but the Authority’s vision is to use more of the resources and focus on quality-of-care standards. The State is currently gathering resources, information and working on creating a plan to focus on building the technical and training assistance and infrastructure.</p>	

¹ At the [JULY 15, 2021] CAC Meeting, it was unanimously agreed by members of the CAC that Mental Health Crisis in Foster Care shall be identified as a Priority Topic of the CAC that DFS and DCFS must report out on at every CAC meeting so that the CAC members may take action in the form of asking questions, holding agencies accountable and making recommendations as a member of the Statewide Citizen’s Review Panel.

Abigail Frierson acknowledged the Authority's vision and plan for Mental Health Services and inquired if the state received federal funding and is required to provide direct care.

Dr. Freeman stated, "we do" and they don't envision that they will ever stop direct services. The state would need to do a capacity assessment of the community but cannot stop services until they have a mechanism for those who are receiving services from them to get those services elsewhere. DCFS receives funding for uninsured individuals to get services from them like Mental Health Block Grants. The state will need to ensure that funding goes to other agencies.

Abigail Frierson inquired about the capacity assessment process, specifically the replacement of direct services.

Dr. Freeman acknowledged her concern and shared that the State has data from Medicaid in terms of the number of providers providing services and youth receiving them. They also have their own data which includes funding.

Abigail Frierson asked for clarification on the state's goal for direct services.

Dr. Freeman shared that she doesn't think it is the states' goal to completely stop providing direct services. The state is moving towards using the community providers who provide services to school aged youth to provide the direct care services.

Kim Abbot with Legal Aid acknowledged the state's plan for direct services but stated that the state's plan for direct services does not coincide with the current closure of Oasis. There is no replacement or plan to take over and continue those services provided to the community.

Dr. Freeman shared that about a year ago Oasis was accredited as a psychiatric residential treatment facility and became available for a higher level of care. Based off the state's requirements and to meet the (CARF) Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and Medicaid. Oasis needed to become a more acute, higher level of care placement. In addition to this, to resolve staffing shortages and with available space at Desert Willow, they decided to close Oasis and move them to Desert Willow. She acknowledges that it did create a gap at the QRTP level of care for the community. They are hoping to potentially open beds for kids in child welfare with behavior needs and specialty populations. Dr. Freeman inquired about the plans for Clark County potentially looking into building their own QRTP level of care for their youth as they are the experts and know what the needs are.

Jill Marano shared that the Department of Family Services is looking to build a QRTP level facility but, we are not experts. It is preferred for a Mental Health Agency to provide and run a Mental Health program however, in the absence of a program, Clark County has recognized the need and is looking into providing the community

with a QRTP level facility. Jill expressed some of the frustration with the state's lack of collaboration and communication with County, especially when it comes to making decisions.

Ross Armstrong shared it is helpful to understand the context of where the Charleston campus is heading. He shared that the state has not heard much from the county and where they are headed. Dr. Freeman's team is available to help.

Judge Frank Sullivan inquired about the state's timeframe. When can the county utilize the Charleston campus as they are in a crisis?

Ross Armstrong stated the state's plan is hoping for October, but it is difficult to determine the exact timing. State is working on finalizing the lease.

Kim Abbot reiterated her initial statement of the state's failure to have a plan in place with the closure of Oasis, especially for the current youths who are receiving services and were slated to move from Desert Willow to Oasis. She shared her concern and asked for the state's plan on continuing services during the time they are waiting for the lease to be finalized. She also expressed concern over the Federal Families First Act becoming effective in less than 45 days which requires QRTP placements.

Ross Armstrong shared that when Oasis shifted to PRTF, they were required to serve a higher need client, and that is evident in the behaviors they are seeing. The state cannot keep the youth safe at the current Oasis campus but can be properly served at the Desert Willow residential treatment center. Ross shared that they should think about investing in the Intensive In-Home placement.

Judge Sullivan acknowledged and agrees kids should be in a more home environment and not in a hospital, which and should be the last option. He raised concern about the current youth of Oasis being moved to Desert Willow, a locked facility, yet the youth may not qualify to be in a locked facility pursuant to NRS 432B. Judge told the state that they cannot transfer kids from Oasis to Desert Willow as there is a legal process. He expressed that the kids are entitled to a least restrictive, alternative care. He expressed that Mental Health needs to focus on Intensive In-Home care services. He expressed the need for the state and county to work together.

Dr. Freeman acknowledged Judge Sullivan's concerns. She stated that one of the criteria for Specialized Foster Care eligibility is stepping down from a residential treatment care. They should invest into the Specialized Foster Care system as an alternative to using a facility and promote Intensive In-home care.

Ross shared that the mental health service does not receive enough funding to meet the current needs.

Abigail inquired about pushing the October timeline out further.

Ross Armstrong stated no. The sooner they move, the more kids they can serve at Desert Willow in a safe environment. The state had no intention in stopping the closure.

Kim Abbot expressed concern over the safety portion expressed by the state as a reason for the Oasis closure. She shared currently is no mechanism to determine safety. The State should not use a locked facility and force treatment to kids who are not a danger to themselves or others. The focus on wanting to use a locked facility for a child running away is not grounds to admit a child into a locked facility. We should find effective alternative treatment/ less restrictive residential options for kids. She shared that the DOJ is specifically investigating the state for this reason.

Gwynneth Smith – (Chief DDA) inquired if there has been discussion about fixing the physical infrastructure at Oasis including staffing. She asked if less restrictive options have been considered in terms of the facility, if they have been ruled out, Why?

Ross shared the state's request for a fence to be built around Oasis for years but has never been funded.

Gwynneth inquired if the State had collaborated or asked the County for help with the fence.

Ross shared that the fence would be included in the lease with the county.

Judge Sullivan shared that in the interim, recruiting for the specialized foster care could be effective.

Jill agreed with Judge Sullivan's interim plan for specialized foster care. She shared the county's goal is always to use foster care. The county is not properly funded through the state block grant to provide the level of service but is working on implementing the 1915i. She stated that the Crisis intervention and basic coaching and developing of the foster parents are covered under the 1915i, not the treatment intervention in the home. She shared her concern with the state not seeing the need for a residential program for kids who have higher needs that a single or two parent home cannot fill. She expressed that there is an increase in the number of mental health in kids throughout the country, not just the community. Jill also reminded everyone about the Juvenile Justice reform and shared how kids are now being referred to child welfare for mental health services.

Dr. Freeman acknowledged Jill's concerns and shared the need to fill in the gaps of the services they provide like the respite services.

DaShun Jackson – Co Chair CAC raised concern about recruitment and retention. He inquired if they are reaching out to homes to identify what support is needed from both the county and state.

Jill acknowledged DaShun's concern. She expressed there is additional support offered under the 1915i to foster homes. The county also received additional funding through TANF for relative foster care. They are working on recruitment and retention on the county level. She expressed that the county tries to utilize relative foster care however, relative foster care does disrupt at a surprising rate. She expressed that there are not enough services being offered to those families. She stated expanding the use of advanced foster care could be an alternative.

Kim shared that there is a need to offer immediate services to kids who are placed with relatives and have it readily available. She agrees with Jill's ideas for expanding advanced foster care.

Ross shared the same bill that created the child welfare hybrid system in Nevada also created the local Children's Mental Health Consortium. Collaboration with the Consortium could help both the state and county.

Mari Parlade asked if the state would be willing to invite the Mental Health Consortium to attend the next CAC Meeting, along with Ross Armstrong and Dr. Freeman.

Dr. Freeman and Ross Armstrong agreed.

Judge Sullivan asked the state if the Family First Act funding will help with Intensive In-Home services.

Ross shared that the Families First Act targets those entering the foster care system, not those who are currently in it.

• **Ombudsman's Report**

- Tisa Evans – (Ombudsman) reports the ombudsman office has not been affected and has been accessible during COVID. The prevalent issue is with those who have open cases wanting immediate assistance. For example, not being able to reach the worker, or contact anyone in the office at the time of their phone call. The Ombudsman office has had plenty of interaction with Karla Delgado with complaints that were escalated to the state. In addition to the Ombudsman office, complaints were also sent to the Governor's office, Clark County Commissioners, and the Clark County Manager. All complaints related to Clark County have been addressed.

• **Prevention:**

- Jill reported out on behalf of the Department. DFS is hosting two Webinars on 08/23 at 11am and 9/2 at 11am to provide information about what FFPSA will look like in Clark County and to invite community providers who are providing evidence-based services to partner with DFS as we implement FFPSA in the fall. There were numerous layers of communication between staff and management.

• **Intervention & Accountability:**

- The Department came up with Belief Statements, had site visits meetings and will continue to have meetings with staff in September and October to provide tools for how to create experiences that live out our Belief Statements.

DFS Belief Statements:

Communication Culture

I offer and accept transparent feedback by interacting with positive intention.

Optimally Equipped

I provide shared knowledge, support, and tools to maximize resources.

I Count

I own the impact that my influence and actions have on children, families, my organizations, and my community.

Empowerment Unified

I cultivate an environment of value, respect and support through communication and collaboration.

Keep Growing

I pursue learning experiences to promote growth and advance practice.

Achieving Together

I belong to one team working with synergy producing results.

• **Transitional Aged Youth Supports & Independent Living:**

- Jill shared LifeSet is serving 70 youth and is in the process of filling two positions which will open more slots for youth to participate in LifeSet. We have added another Supervisor to Independent Living, Isabel Iraheta. She will supervise and work with youth and our staff that work with the 14-17 age group that are not part of LifeSet.
- The Department is continuing to provide resources to the 18-27 population. We have done some media spots and social media to continue to get the word out about funding that is available. We have served over 200 young adults thus far totaling approximately \$218,000,00.

• **Education**

- Mari Parlade provided updates on education. She thanked the CAC members for participating in the Clark County School District community information session. Leslie Murdock compiled a report with the feedback of a total of 50 participants. CCSD also hosted additional informational sessions with other stake holders. The reoccurring themes are education should be individualized to meet each of our kid's needs, provide quality real-world education and flexibility in the type of education offered to our students. There was also a lot of discussion around mental health and the students struggling with mental, academic, social, and emotional skills that need to be identified early, and how we can utilize the school and the teams to support them with wraparound services and individualized level of care.
- The Education Stakeholders meeting includes CCSD administration and administrators like principals who are all collaborating to fill in the gaps.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School is back in session; protocol is being followed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies and Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jill shared the following policies were updated and distributed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hybrid Work Environment ➤ Relinquishment or Voluntary Placement of a Child due to MH needs ➤ Supervision of Children at Child Haven ➤ Covid Vaccination for Caregivers ➤ Changes to Child and Caregiver Contacts ➤ COVID Vaccinations for children ➤ Finding Families Practice Guide ➤ Diligent Search ➤ Alternative NIA 	
Agenda Item V:	CAC Discussion and / or Recommendations on the Top 7 Priorities (delineated in Section IV)	For Possible Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAC Members voted to keep Mental Health Crisis in Foster Care as an Action item for next meeting 	
Agenda Item VII:	Informational Items/Announcements	(Information Only)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAC Membership has 3 vacancies, no names in the pool. Mari is assisting recruitment with CCSD to replace Brian Adams. Replace Crystal Bomar - general public. Replace Ronald Harris resigned – parent advocate. Shared with CAC members the Draft Bylaws for action, for review to make any changes in the next meeting. To be able to make any changes, will need the majority 2/3 vote, as they need to be signed. 	
Agenda Item VIII:	Comments by General Public	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	
Agenda Item IX:	Adjournment	
	<p>Next meeting will be Thursday, September 16, 2021 @ 8:30 am via WebEx or in person 500 South Grand Central Pkwy, Pueblo Room Las Vegas, Nevada 89155.</p>	