

## **Notes from DCF/WCHSA Leadership Meeting November 12, 2014 in Stevens Point**

### **Meeting Purpose**

The second annual meeting brought the leadership of DCF and WCHSA to together for discussion of children and family issues. This meeting was devoted to two child welfare program topics, including 1) future direction for child protective services (CPS) and 2) CPS workforce development and retention.

### **Opening Remarks**

Eloise Anderson for DCF: Eloise indicated she remains supportive of a county-run system for child welfare and the importance of DCF and counties working together. She recognized that counties have limited resources for child welfare and wants to find more resources for child welfare services. She wants to try new things and is willing to take risks to improve child welfare services.

Todd Romenesko for WCHSA: Todd indicated that counties want to work jointly with DCF and acknowledged the positive working relationship between DCF and the WCHSA. The projects currently underway from the 2013 leadership meeting are examples of DCF taking action on recommendations from counties.

### **Future Direction for Child Protective Services**

John Elliott and Michelle Rawlings from the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) discussed information about child welfare funding, caseloads and staffing that was provided in the meeting folders. Funding information included the 2014 Children and Family Allocations to counties and CY 2012 expenses reported in the Human Services Revenue Report (HSRR)/942 Report. Caseload information included counts of out-of-home care (OHC) cases, in-home service cases, and a summary of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) caseload ratio standards for workers. The staffing information included FTE counts from the Title IV-E Random Moment Time Study (RMTS).

During the future direction discussion with the large group, it was noted that:

- The HSRS/942 data is not verified with counties and is missing or incomplete for some counties.
- The OHC case counts from eWisACWIS and employee counts from the RMTS are reliable data.
- The in-home service case counts are not reliable data as it is unclear if counties are closing in-home cases appropriately. The ratio of in-home to OHC cases varies significantly across counties. Michelle Rawlings indicated the next phase of DSP data warehouse/ business intelligence efforts will focus on in-home cases. Meeting participants indicated it is good child welfare practice to have more in-home cases than OHC cases.
- During the discussion of the CWLA caseload ratio standards, meeting participants noted the importance of in-home versus OHC cases as OHC cases require more staff time.

John Elliott reviewed a list of current DSP child welfare priorities, indicating that many projects are underway that will improve child welfare services.

## **Child Protective Services Workforce Development and Retention**

Yonah Dazen, a graduate student at the UW-Madison School of Social Work, gave a presentation to the large groups on national research regarding CPS worker turnover and retention.

- Turnover is high and estimated to be 20-40% annually nationwide. Some studies show turnover is upward of 80% if cohorts are followed for two years.
- High turnover imposes additional costs on child welfare agencies, increases the caseload for the remaining staff, and has negative impact on the families being served.
- Characteristics associated with lower turnover include agency satisfaction, autonomy, job satisfaction, commitment, coping ability and life satisfaction. The commitment to social work is affected by agency satisfaction.
- Characteristics associated with higher turnover include having an MSW, role conflict, and staff stress and burnout. The MSW finding may be related to upward mobility of those workers.
- Organizational culture and supervisor support are key strategies to improve retention.
- Interventions that have reduced turnover include a realistic job preview for applicants, organizational structures with teams of workers, and supporting supervisors.
- Next steps for turnover research include understanding stress and burnout, how supervisors can better support staff, and why MSW turnover appears to be higher.

## **Identification of Topics for Small Group Discussion**

The facilitators worked with the large group to generate key issues for each of the two topics (long term direction for CPS and CPS workforce development and retention). The ideas were then rated with dots to determine priority areas to discuss in the afternoon small group breakout sessions. The following ideas were identified by the large group for discussion, with counts showing how the ideas ranked.

### **Future Direction for CPS Services:**

- How to determine reasonable case loads. (15)
- Interagency collaboration (DCF, DHS including Public Health, DPI, DOC and State Courts) for services to be competent across CPS, juvenile justice and behavioral health. (10)
- Eliminate pieces of our practice that don't add value; things that we could let go of. (7)
- Identify CPS activities not required by federal policy where we have options to change state policy. (3)
- Move to more clinical social work approach for CPS practice. (9)
- How do we infuse trauma-informed approaches into case practice more quickly? (3)
- How to increase the percentage of in-home cases vs. OHC cases? (2)
- What prevention and early intervention services are most effective? How to fund these services? (19)
- How do develop/grow leadership at county and state level? (9)
- How to ensure consistency in practice across workers, supervisors and counties; balancing statewide consistency with local autonomy. (19)
- How do we match worker personality with family needs; how to assign the most appropriate worker to a family based on their needs? (0)

- What methods are most effective for conducting visits with families? How to build those skills in workers? (8)
- How do we engage media and elected officials to avoid knee jerk reactions to CPS cases? (1)
- How to make case documentation and eWiSACWIS process more LEAN? (21)
- What trends will we see in CW/JJ services over the next several years; parent vs. child issues; formal vs. informal actions; role of schools and other community partners for prevention; what predictors can be used, what interventions to take? (4)
- Are we a child protection service system or a broader child welfare service system? If broader CW system, what do we need to succeed? (14)
- How do we change demonization of public service workers and change the public's perception of what we do? (1)

#### **Workforce Development and Retention:**

- What is within our control to change within the county and state level? (7)
- Would a centralized application portal enhance county recruitment efforts? (4)
- Does the new generation of employees have different values and expectations? (1)
- Should we do things differently with the new generation? Change work hours, etc. (21)
- How can we use technology to recruit, retain, and keep employees? (15)
- How to educate current workers to be more tech savvy? (1)
- Offering staff training and education to move to more clinical social work approach. (7)
- Increase number of males in the CPS workforce. (7)
- Are there less people entering social worker field or are we just losing them? (2)
- County poaching of staff from other counties – is it an issue? (2)
- Develop supervisors to be supportive to workers as well as be part of the larger county human service organization. (21)
- How do ensure supervisors have skills they need to lead? (15)
- How to be most effective in visits with a child? Train staff by role playing, skill building? (9)
- Should we encourage team approach to case management vs. individual worker? (4)
- Could there be team approval where individual supervisor approval is now required? (0)
- Worker desire to help families vs. being service broker and court/probation agent. (0)
- What are the work rules around the use of technology? (5)

#### **Small Group Discussion - Future Direction of CPS Services**

The facilitator worked with the small group to cluster the multiple discussion topics into themes or categories for discussion by the small groups. The individual topics were grouped under the following themes, in order of importance based on the ratings, to facilitate the small group discussion.

- Scope of CPS services/balance of services/effectiveness of CPS intervention
- LEAN review of CPS requirements and procedures
- Consistency of CPS practice
- Clinical approach to practice/trauma informed care
- Cross-system collaboration
- Improve public perception of CPS services

## **Theme 1 - Scope/Balance/Effectiveness**

### **Discussion Issues:**

- Define the population to be served by the CPS program.
- Define what types of services or practices are included within the scope.
- Identify whether the service system is limited to CPS or a broader child welfare service system.
- If the scope is broader, what else is included beyond CPS? This is a core question affecting the population served and case practice.
- What issues should be assessed and worked on with families?
- Impact of inconsistency. How to ensure consistency in practice (quality assurance) across workers, supervisors, and counties versus statewide achievement of performance measures.
- Lack of clarity at different stages of CPS case process. There is clarity for Initial Assessment and Out-of-Home Care, but less so for Ongoing Services.
- Prevention services, early intervention services, CPS ongoing services, and aftercare follow-up services - all should be part of child welfare service system.
- Community expectations regarding child welfare services - broader prevention vs. narrow CPS role. Communities vary in expectations for prevention and willingness to pay for services.
- When things go wrong, communities wonder why families were not served earlier.
- Scope of CPS services is both a breadth and depth issue. Serving many families with less support versus more intensive support to fewer families.
- Could use LEAN approach to identify the most important CPS activities.
- Federal, state and county governments all have a role in providing money and establishing expectations to determine how services are provided.
- CPS practice principles should be reviewed on a regular basis.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Support more prevention and early intervention services.
2. Child welfare prevention services should be aligned with other services like public health and use similar tools and performance measures.
3. Serve more families through in-home CPS services and less in OHC.
4. Clarify the types of actions necessary for different types of cases, different phases of the case.
5. Develop a state and county vision for future of CPS services.
6. Use the child welfare practice model to guide how services are delivered.
7. Establish a workgroup on CPS case practice; could build on where the CPS practice model workgroup left off a few years ago.

## **Theme 2 - LEAN Review of CPS Requirements**

### **Discussion Issues:**

- DCF and WCHSA are currently involved in a LEAN project focused on permanency planning requirements. DCF will share a summary of the current project with counties.
- Could do more LEAN projects, although don't have to use the formal LEAN method such as value stream mapping. The LEAN method is best suited for reducing steps in a process.
- Analyze how state program standards compare with federal requirements. Federally required activities have higher level of importance.

**Recommendations:**

1. Institutionalize the current LEAN workgroup so there is an ongoing group to consider projects designed to reduce CPS process steps and make CPS practice activities more efficient for workers. The ongoing group could have rotating membership and pick projects on an annual basis. Projects would not have to use the formal LEAN method.
2. Review CPS requirements for direct impact on safety and permanence. What requirements actually improve outcomes for families vs. have no impact on outcomes?
3. Develop method to measure the workload impact of new CPS program requirements.

**Theme 3 – Consistency of CPS Practice****Discussion Issues:**

- State and counties should collaborate on documenting best practices.
- Web sites are available with national best practice information that can be shared with counties.
- Staff training is critical to ensuring consistency of case practice across workers.
- Supervisor training needs to be strengthened so supervisors reinforce good practice.
- The results of the redesigned Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) quality assurance program can be used to identify where practice improvements are needed.
- The CPS case practice model should be used to promote consistent practice.

**Recommendations:**

1. Follow up with Child Welfare Professional Development System (PDS) to implement stronger supervisor training. PDS is already working on this project.
2. Have PDS be responsible for documenting and sharing best practice information.

**Small Group Discussion - CPS Workforce Development and Retention****Discussion Issues:**

The small group discussed the most important topics identified in the large group meeting to develop a set of recommendations relating to the CPS workforce. Key points from the small group discussion are listed below:

- It is no longer the reality of the workforce to just be “OK” with going to work, having a strong work ethic, and staying as long as you need to in order to finish the job. The paycheck is not the driving reward as it was in the past. Workers today know they need to get things done, but they want flexibility for how and when (i.e. work at home).
- BMCW gives their interview candidates the questions prior to the interview and requires candidates to view a video on what the CPS job is like. BMCW would like to do role play of scenarios as part of the hiring process, but are running into challenges with this.
- Many staff that leave CPS jobs are leaving due to interpersonal skills issues.
- Younger staff understand what CPS work involves and what benefits the job has to them, but not about what they bring to the job.
- The group discussed how county agencies guess about staff needs and noted how other companies have changed to having different hours, relaxation rooms, no offices, etc.
- Decision makers need to buy in to the new reality for the CPS workforce.

- The group discussed the need to survey what staff want and need so we can better plan for recruitment and retention issues.
- Rural communities, even if the salary is high, struggle to recruit due to people not wanting to live in the rural environment.
- New employees don't stay in CPS jobs long term, so how do we plan for the shorter length of time they will stay? We need to start thinking about this differently knowing staff won't work in the same job for long term.
- The volume of work social workers are expected to complete affects their retention.
- Some counties are hiring based on overall agency principles, so the values of the agency remain in spite of individual staff coming and going.

**Recommendations:**

The top issues were identified along with recommendations:

**1) Issue #1 - How to attract, hire and retain people who bring different values to the job?**

**Recommendations:**

- a) Develop understanding of values – survey agency culture and worker demographics. Determine what is important such as local amenities, life styles, and work rules.  
*Note: John Elliott discussed a survey portion of the redesigned CQI process for 2015 where DCF would like to understand organizational culture by interviewing staff and supervisors throughout the state. The specific questions in the DCF survey are yet to be determined, but the DCF survey could be used to support this recommendation.*
- b) Use the information from the workforce survey and other sources to change employment requirements to reflect the new generation.
- c) Make a video that can be used statewide to present CPS jobs in a realistic manner.
- d) It is good to recruit staff that with different values than the current managers.
- e) Allow flexibility in staff work schedules while emphasize getting work done.
- f) Give staff active role in reviewing recommendations from the workforce survey.
- g) Have decompression room/ get away space for staff to use.
- h) Learn from private sector (i.e. have 5 year staffing plan).
- i) Create a workgroup for statewide recruitment and retention initiatives.

**Discussion:** The small group discussed several issues related to the recommendations.

- Possibility of hiring workers from related helping fields vs. social workers, as BMCW has done. There are pros and cons to this.
- New workers want family-friendly agencies where schedules can be adjusted, training is funded, and workers are not frequently on call.
- Burnout, secondary trauma and compassion fatigue impacts retention of new workers.
- Whole system needs to buy in to different workforce approach, including county boards.
- Have to treat everyone equally.
- Financial issues limit what can be done to improve the workplace.
- Concern with implementing “soft issues” vs. “hard issues” like salary, more workers.

**2) Issue #2 – Develop supportive supervisors who also know how to lead.**

**Recommendations:**

- a) Need “soft skills” training for supervisors – Leadership.
- b) Define what skills are important for leadership and develop those skills.
- c) Provide opportunities for supervisors to demonstrate their leadership capabilities.  
*Example: Waukesha County Management U. – provides leadership opportunities over 2 years for lead workers to develop their skills.*
- d) Mentorship program.
- e) Involve staff on committees.
- f) Enlist higher level managers to develop CPS supervisors – do throughout the organization.
- g) Leadership team should develop its own charter.
- h) Understanding the organization core values – must understand values at all levels.
- i) Establish a workgroup or committee on supervisor development.

**3) Issue #3 – Train social workers in clinical techniques or should we change our CW practice model?**

**Recommendations:**

- a) Evidence Based Practice – do the social workers have the skill set to implement EBP?
- b) Build clinical approach and EBP into the CPS practice model.
- c) Develop social workers as providers of services in a clinical way versus just service brokers.  
*Note: Define “Clinical” as not just asking questions, but doing psychosocial analysis and determine how to reach case plan goals – purposeful visits based on outcomes.*
- d) Train social workers in engagement and interviewing techniques.

**Large Group Discussion**

The large group reconvened as hear report outs from both small groups with their recommendations for action steps. The large group discussed and prioritized the recommendations.

Jeremy Kral reported for the small group on future direction for CPS services. That small group concentrated on and made recommendations for three areas – scope of CPS services, LEAN review of CPS requirements, and consistency of CPS practice. For the scope of CPS services, a key issue is whether to focus on a broader range of child welfare services including prevention and early intervention. In the subsequent discussion, the large group expressed support for recommendations regarding a workgroup to review CPS practice, a workgroup to make decisions on annual LEAN-type projects, and improving supervisor training.

Mary Pat Bohn reported for the small group on CPS workforce recruitment and retention. That small group made recommendations for three areas – recruitment and retention of CPS workers, supporting supervisors, and training social workers in clinical practice skills. The starting premise for the small group is that agencies should expect CPS staff to stay for only three years and plan for a high turnover rate. In the subsequent discussion, the large group expressed support for recommendations regarding a workgroup for CPS worker recruitment and retention and improving supervisor training.

The facilitators identified overlap in recommendations between the two groups relating to supervisor training and activities currently underway with the PDS and combined those recommendations. The large group discussed the current and possible training activities for PDS. The training issues can be pursued through the existing PDS Executive Committee.

- Supervisory training and mentoring leaders are current PDS projects.
- More county involvement in defining what good supervisory skills are is needed.
- How human service directors can champion what supervisors do.
- Connect training to the human service organization (re-invest).
- Need not only subject matter training, but mentoring component.
- Need to recognize trauma component in training CPS staff.
- Counties have experience with best practices, but need a mechanism to share.
- Support CPS staff and supervisors to deal with compassion fatigue and secondary trauma. Some of the regional partnerships are already doing this.

### **Recommendations for Action Steps**

The facilitators led a conversation on next steps, including that several new workgroups were identified as recommendations. The facilitators asked the large group to identify if the recommended workgroup already exists, and if a workgroup would be newly established, who should be involved in getting the new workgroup going.

The large group endorsed the following final recommendations:

- 1) **CPS Practice Workgroup.** Establish a new DCF/county workgroup to review the scope and effectiveness of CPS practice. The group would pick up where previous work on the Child Welfare Practice Model left off, so the practice model is the basis for discussion of service strategies and caseload standards.  
Workgroup Leaders – John Elliott from DSP and Jeremy Kral from WCHSA.
- 2) **LEAN Committee.** Establish a standing committee that would meet annually to initiate new projects to improve the efficiency of child welfare activities, as LEAN projects or other types of projects. The committee members would include Fredi Bove, Mary Pat Bohn, and Laura Knott from DSP and Vicki Tylka from WCHSA.
- 3) **Best Practices & Leadership Development.** Three recommendations pertain to the Child Welfare Professional Development System (PDS) and will be followed up through the PDS Executive Committee.

**Supervisor Training** - PDS should complete revision of the supervisor foundation training series to build the CPS practice skills of supervisors.

**Sharing Best Practices** – Develop a process to identify and document best practices among county agencies so that best practice information can be shared statewide. PDS could be responsible for this function.

**Leadership Development** – Develop a process to provide general leadership development to county agencies. The leadership development program could build on the existing leadership mentorship sessions offered by PDS.



- 4) **Recruitment and Retention.** Establish a new workgroup to review and recommend statewide strategies to more effectively recruit and retain CPS workers.  
Workgroup leaders - Laura Kleber and Jeremy Kral from WCHSA

#### **Wrap Up and Adjourn**

Eloise Anderson gave final remarks regarding another successful day. There is a lot on everyone's plates but these are important topics to work on together.

John Tuohy explained that DCF will distribute meeting notes. WCHSA should discuss the recommendations at regional director meetings. DCF will discuss the recommendations at the next quarterly meeting between the DCF Secretary and WCHSA leadership, tentatively in February 2015.

November 2014 WCHSA/DCF Leadership Meeting Participants:

WCHSA :

Todd Romenesko, President, Calumet  
Jeremy Kral, Brown  
Vicki Tylka, Marathon  
Ray Przybelski, Portage  
Mandy Staley, Marquette  
Bill Topel, Winnebago  
Rosemary Davis, Outagamie  
Dawn Buchholtz, Waushara  
Mary Rideout, Oneida  
Fred Johnson, St. Croix  
Jim LeDuc, Washburn  
Mike Lappen, Ozaukee  
Laura Kleber, Waukesha  
Kathi Cauley, Jefferson  
Diane Cable, Adams

DCF:

Eloise Anderson, Secretary  
Ron Hunt, Deputy Secretary  
Fred Bove, DSP Administrator  
John Elliott, DSP  
Michelle Rawlings, DSP  
Mary Pat Bohn, DSP-BMCW  
John Tuohy, Regional Operations  
Teresa Steinmetz, Regional Operations as note taker  
Lori Thuli, Regional Operations as note taker

Presenters:

Yonah Drazen, UW-Madison School of Social Work

Facilitators:

Raj Kamal  
Bruce Harville