



Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room C

- Christine Blessinger, Director, Division of Youth Services, Department of Correction
- Dr. Kris Box, Indiana State Health Commissioner, Indiana State Department of Health
- Senator Jean Breaux
- Bernice Corley, Executive Director, Public Defender Council
- Jason Dudich, Director, State Budget Agency
- Justin Forkner, Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana Office of Judicial Administration
- Representative David Frizzell
- John Hammond IV, Office of the Governor
- Curtis T. Hill, Indiana Attorney General (non-voting member)
- Senator Erin Houchin
- Susan Lightfoot, Chief Probation Officer, Henry County Probation Department
- Dr. Jennifer McCormick, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Indiana Department of Education
- Kevin Moore, Director Division of Mental Health and Addiction
- David Powell, Executive Director, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council
- Justice Loretta Rush, Chief Justice of Indiana
- Terry Stigdon, Director, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Representative Vanessa Summers
- Dr. Jennifer Walthall, M.D., Secretary, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chief Justice Rush called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

2. Consent Agenda

Action: Action on the Minutes was deferred until later in the meeting due to lack of quorum at the beginning of the meeting.

3. Strategic Priority: Educational Outcomes

Presentation: Melaina Gant reported that the Educational Outcomes Task Force had developed a new subcommittee to work on objectives 4.3 (recommend methods to incentivize schools to help vulnerable youth complete high school) and 4.5 (support efforts to develop alternative education options and resources for youth not able to survive and thrive in a traditional school setting.) Melaina also reported that the Educational Passport Subcommittee had concluded Phase I of its work examining options for the portability of educational records for highly mobile students. Phase II will include a feasibility review and recommendations. She reported that a bill under consideration at the General Assembly would create a statewide database that might be useful for this purpose. In addition, IDOE is working on a major modernization of its data system under the leadership of Dr. John Keller, who will collaborate with the Task Force moving forward.

4. Strategic Priority: Mental Health & Substance Abuse

Presentation: Dr. Jerry Sheward of DMHA presented (slides 6-29 in the [meeting powerpoint](#)) an overview of the state's new Neurodiagnostic Institute, which will replace the LaRue Carter Hospital. The hospital is on the campus of Community East hospital and is set to open on March 20. Dr. Sheward showed photos of the building and its various amenities and accommodations for children. The hospital will have 159 beds, with 65 of those dedicated to children, and the average length of stay is anticipated to be about six months. The hospital will also include a ten-bed unit for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder, as well as a unit for adolescents with substance use disorders. The hospital will provide education to its juvenile patients in partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools.

Discussion: Chief Justice Rush asked about the ages of children to be accepted and how the facility will work with the children's families. Dr. Sheward explained that the facility will take children ages five to eighteen, and they will be grouped into separate units by age and gender. He also explained that the facility will be equipped with video technology to be able to have virtual family visits and train families on the skills they will need to manage their child's behavior back home. Kevin Moore explained that the hospital is just one part of the continuum of care for mental health and addictions, and DMHA is doing work across the continuum to expand the services available through Community Mental Health Centers, addiction treatment providers, and others. Rep. Frizzell asked about the average length of stay. Kevin explained that currently at LaRue Carter the average stay is about 12 months, but the hope is to do a better job of integrating and communicating with other providers to be able to prepare the patients and providers to transition the kids to a more permanent placement sooner.

Presentation: Dr. Leslie Hulvershorn and Serrilla Blackmon of DMHA gave a brief update on the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Task Force. They detailed how they had reorganized and refocused the subcommittees of their task force and indicated they would have more updates at future meetings.

5. Strategic Priority: Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth

Presentation: Amy Karozos of the Indiana Public Defender Council presented a [recommendation](#) for the Commission to endorse the IPDC's statewide juvenile defense project, which trains defense attorneys to better serve juveniles, and provides assistance and referrals to juveniles in the DOC who have legal questions.

Action: Bernice Corley moved to adopt the recommendation, and Rep. Frizzell seconded the motion, which passed 9-0.

Presentation: Derek Mason of the Indiana Public Defender Commission presented a second [recommendation](#) for the Commission to endorse a pilot project to provide specially trained defense attorneys and system

navigators to families involved with DCS, to see if such assistance could help families reach better outcomes and have cases closed more quickly.

Action: Bernice Corley moved to adopt the recommendation, and Rep. Summers seconded the motion, which passed 9-0.

Presentation: Don Travis of DCS gave a brief update on the Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force. He reported that the task force was in the process of forming a subcommittee to look at increasing access to shelter care across the state, and that another subcommittee is looking at youth violence and its root causes. Don also gave a brief update on the ongoing conversations with the Pew Charitable Trusts about Pew potentially coming to Indiana to provide technical assistance in reviewing our juvenile justice system and working with Indiana stakeholders to make recommendations for improvement. The conversation with Pew is ongoing.

6. Strategic Priority: Child Safety & Services

Presentation: Julie Whitman, the Commission Executive Director, and Cynthia Smith of DCS, presented (slides 34-47 of the [meeting PowerPoint](#)) additional information relevant to the recommendation made previously by the Child Abuse Prevention Subcommittee to develop a statewide framework for the prevention of maltreatment. Cynthia provided the history and context of the prevention efforts DCS funds and/or is involved with, and Julie presented a more detailed project plan with a timeline, roles, and estimated costs. They requested that the Commission approve the [recommendation](#) to move forward with the framework project.

Discussion: Kevin Moore asked what kind of outcomes DCS has seen from its prevention efforts. Cynthia reported that less than 5% of the families who have been served by the Healthy Families program for more than three months come into the child welfare system, and the outcomes for Community Partners for Child Safety are similar.

Dave Powell asked what is the definition of maltreatment for purposes of the framework. He noted that different groups may have different definitions and different agendas, and he specifically referenced maltreatment of children within the judicial system that is not caused by their families. Discussion around this topic ensued.

Action: Dave Powell made a motion for the Executive Committee to convene a group to clarify the definition of maltreatment for purposes of the framework project and report back at the next Commission meeting. Rep. Frizzell seconded the motion and it passed 10-0.

(Consent Agenda revisited)

Action: Minutes from the December 19, 2018 meeting were approved.

Presentation: Julie Johns-Cole of Indiana 211 Partnership made a presentation (slides 49-61 in the [meeting PowerPoint](#)) about the services available through 211 and 211's current collaborations with state government, which include Open Beds, the Moms Helpline and Help Me Grow, and a new partnership with Lyft and DMHA to transport people not covered by Medicaid to addiction treatment. Julie reported that 211 has 100% coverage in Indiana, with trained community navigators, a comprehensive resource database, and 24/7 availability by phone.

7. Committee Updates

Presentation: Tyler Brown of the Management Performance Hub and Tamara Weaver of the Attorney General's Office presented an update on behalf of the Data Sharing and Mapping Committee. Tamara reported that, based on the Commission's previous approval of their recommendation to encourage schools to participate in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the committee worked with the Communications committee to draft a letter, secure signatures from Dr. Box and Dr. McCormick, and send it out to all schools that were selected by the CDC

to participate in this year's YRBS data collection. Tamara also reported that the process of updating the information sharing app is ongoing, and this first year of collecting updates is a learning process.

Tyler reported that the 13 data-sharing "user stories" that had been identified to help with the Commission's strategic plan goals have been divided into three waves, based on the priority scores the Commission members provided. The first wave will include three data requests, and the Committee is working on that project.

Presentation: Kathryn Dolan provided an update from the Communications Committee. She thanked the Commission for creating the committee and gave several examples of collaborative communications efforts that have come out of the cross-agency relationships developed in the committee. She reported that the Committee had helped with the YRBS letter previously referenced by the Data sharing committee, is working on the upcoming annual report, and working on how to increase awareness of the information sharing app continuously as new potential users are hired. She reported that all of the agencies are taking turns taking photos at Commission meetings and hosting Communications Committee meetings.

Presentation: Julie Whitman reported that the Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competence work group had been formed and held an initial meeting in February. She reported that the work group will be working on common definitions of terms, identifying existing training and curricula on their topics, as well as other groups already working on equity issues to ensure collaboration and prevent duplication. The committee will also be looking at frameworks and tools to help the Commission take equity into account for all of its actions. She reported that the work group would like to request a bit of time on each agenda for education on equity-related issues for the next year. The co-chairs of this group are Brenda Graves-Croom of FSSA and Jane Siegel formerly of the Supreme Court.

8. Executive Director Update

Presentation: Julie reported that she has been spending a significant amount of time tracking child-related bills in the legislature. Two bills specifically mention the Commission. HB 1075 asks the Commission to study a potential child trafficking coordinator for DCS, including the roles and duties of that position. HB 1075 would also change the deadline for the Commission's annual report from July 1 to September 1. SB 266 is a large bill with many provisions, but one of them would move the Children's Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Plan from the purview of the State Board of Education to the Children's Commission. Julie also mentioned that the "State of the Child" presentation had taken place the day before, with collaboration from the Indiana Youth Institute and many of the Commission agencies. She also noted that the June 26 Commission meeting had been rescheduled to July 10.

9. Commission Member Legislative Updates

Discussion: Commission members were asked if they had any legislative updates to present, but none did.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.