



# Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

## Meeting Minutes

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Wednesday June 16, 2021

Zoom Meeting

- 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
- Jay Chaudhary, Director, Division of Mental Health and Addiction
- Bernice Corley, Executive Director, Public Defender Council
- Representative Dale DeVon
- Senator Stacey Donato
- Justin Forkner, Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana Office of Judicial Administration
- John Hammond IV, Office of the Governor
- Zac Jackson, Director, State Budget Agency
- Susan Lightfoot, Chief Probation Officer, Henry County Probation Department
- Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education
- Chris Naylor, Executive Director, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council
- Todd Rokita, Indiana Attorney General (non-voting member)
- Justice Loretta Rush, Chief Justice of Indiana
- Terry Stigdon, Director, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Dr. Jennifer Sullivan, M.D., Secretary, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
- Representative Vanessa Summers

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

John Hammond called the meeting to order at 10:00 and welcomed all Commission members and guests.

### 2. Consent Agenda

**Action:** The consent agenda, including the minutes of the April meeting, was moved by Rep. DeVon, seconded by Chief Justice Rush, and approved by a vote of 9-0.

3. Strategic Priority: Child Health and Safety

a. **Presentation by Mark Fairchild, Covering Kids and Families  
Uninsured Children in Indiana and the CHIP program**

Presentation can be found on slides 4-14 of the [meeting PowerPoint](#). Mark presented data on trends in uninsured children and the health consequences of children going uninsured. He then presented a recommendation to eliminate the 90-day waiting period for children to be enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) when they are dropped from private coverage. This rule is not statutory, but is amendable through the administrative rulemaking process.

**Discussion:** John Hammond commended Mark for the well-organized presentation and the detail included. Dr. Sullivan voiced support for Mark and his organization. She gave an example of a child she had recently seen in the emergency room who had had a seizure due to lack of medicine because of a lapse in health coverage.

**Action:** Chief Justice Rush made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Dr. Jenner seconded it. The motion was approved 12-0.

b. **Presentation by Dr. Susana Mariscal and Dr. Bryan Victor, Indiana University School of Social Work  
Strengthening Indiana Families Program**

Presentation can be found on slides 16-43 of the [meeting PowerPoint](#). Drs. Mariscal and Victor presented on a federally-funded project they direct, which is developing Family Resource Centers in four Indiana Counties as a child abuse prevention effort. Dr. Mariscal discussed the rationale and the design and implementation of the project, and Dr. Victor, who serves as the evaluator, discussed the data collection efforts to assess the needs and measure the outcomes of the effort.

**Discussion:** Rep. DeVon asked how the project was received in the local communities. Dr. Mariscal said the reception was mixed, some responded quickly and some were more skeptical. The local coordinators were able to bring together local partners and break through the initial barriers. She noted that some of the local service providers who were initially skeptical of the FRCs are now volunteering at the centers' family fun events.

Dr. Box mentioned the My Healthy Baby program and said that three of the FRC counties have My Healthy Baby, and she would love for that program to partner with the FRCs, so at the end of the MHB program year, families can be connected to the FRCs for additional resources and support. Dr. Mariscal said she had connected initially with the program but needed to follow up. They are working closely with Healthy Families as well.

Dr. Jenner said that she noted that IDOE was not listed as a partner yet, but she would love to connect with the initiative. Susana said they are partnering with school systems at the local level, but would love to connect with DOE at the state level as well.

Bernice Corley talked about the stressors on families mentioned in the annual child fatality report and how stressors on caregivers may contribute to child fatalities. She asked what data the project is collecting to demonstrate that they are relieving those stressors on families and preventing child abuse. Bryan described the protective factor framework of the project and the data that is being collected both on increase in protective factors and decrease in risk factors, as well as rate of child maltreatment reports and rate of entry into foster care. Bernice also offered to partner public defenders with the centers.

John Hammond asked for the timeline of outcome data and said that the Commission would like to have them back to present when they have that data. Bryan said that outcome data would be a year or two out, with process data coming in throughout the project.

Rep. DeVon noted that other states are also implementing this model and they may be further along and have data. Susy said that New York City has some data, as does Alleghany County, PA, and Florida. She said she would share the information from those states.

Rep. Summers asked whether the project was collecting data on race and ethnicity. Bryan confirmed that they are, and shared that the project team had just applied for supplemental funding from the federal government to work specifically on race equity within the project.

4. Strategic Priority: Mental Health and Substance Abuse

a. **Maureen Greer, Indiana Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative and Susan Elsworth, Indiana NOFAS**

Presentation: Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Presentation can be found on slides 49-52 in the [meeting PowerPoint](#). Maureen and Susan described the work that IPQIC has done related to infants with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. IPQIC focuses on the prenatal period through age 1, but the group realized that there are many issues for children with FASD from early childhood and throughout the school years. They are requesting that the Commission adopt an objective to identify and encourage adoption of screening protocol and promising treatment options for children with substance and alcohol exposure.

**Action:** Rep. DeVon moved to adopt the objective as requested, and Dr. Box seconded the motion. The motion passed 11-0.

5. Authentic Youth Participation

Megan Tribble and Justin Hayden of Foster Success presented on effectively integrating youth members into the Children's Commission, based on their experience with the Indiana Youth Advisory Board, a group of older foster youth and foster care alumni who advocate for youth served by DCS.

6. Executive Director and Committee Updates

Julie Whitman gave an update on the application and interview process for the two new youth Commission members. She also noted that a final [legislative summary for the 2021 session](#) is available on the Commission's web site, and she highlighted some legislation of interest to the Commission. Julie gave a brief update on the juvenile justice review project being done with the Council of State Governments Justice Center, and she presented a tool created by the Interagency Collaborative for Children, which is a list of all state programs serving children and families organized by the age of the children served. Finally, Julie introduced Rajen Megha, a summer legal intern who is working on updating the Commission's Information Sharing Guide.

7. Discussion: Future Meeting Topics or other items from Commission Members

Chief Justice Rush recognized Susan Lightfoot, the outgoing probation representative on the Commission, and thanked her for her eight years of service to the Commission. Chief Justice Rush stated that as of July 1, the new probation representative will be Kory George of Wayne County.

8. Next Meeting: August 18, 2021, 10am – 12pm at the Indiana State Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.