



# Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

## Meeting Minutes

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana  
Wednesday, October 19, 2022  
Indiana State Library, History Reference Room

- 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, joined via Zoom (non-voting member for this meeting)
- Bernice Corley, Executive Director, Public Defender Council
- Representative Dale DeVon
- Senator Stacey Donato
- Justin Forkner, Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana Office of Judicial Administration
- Kory George, Chief Probation Officer, Wayne County Probation Department
- John Hammond IV, Office of the Governor
- Zac Jackson, Director, State Budget Agency
- Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education
- Chris Naylor, Executive Director, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council
- Todd Rokita, Indiana Attorney General (non-voting member)
- Hon. Loretta Rush, Chief Justice of Indiana
- Dr. Dan Rusyniak, M.D., Secretary, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
- Terry Stigdon, Director, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Representative Vanessa Summers
- Stephaney Knight, Youth Commission Member
- Dejuana Rodriguez, Youth Commission Member

### 1. Welcome

Senator Donato called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and welcomed all Commission members and guests.

### 2. Consent Agenda

**Action:** The consent agenda, which included the [minutes from the August meeting](#), was approved unanimously 12-0.

### 3. Strategic Priority: Juvenile Justice and Cross System Youth

**Justice Steve David**

**Presentation: Youth Justice Oversight Committee Update**

Justice David introduced himself and his role as the chair of the Youth Justice Oversight Committee. He shared that there are seven workgroups and a youth/family advisory board, with over 20 people on the Committee and over 100 people in total involved. Justice David shared that the report aims to outline what Indiana is doing well and identify areas for improvement. He shared that information about the workgroups can be accessed and full committee meetings can be viewed on the [website](#). Justice David complimented the work of those involved.

**Discussion:** Bernice Corley asked Justice David which workgroup topic or goal seems to be the most challenging. Justice David shared that all the topics are challenging, but the most demanding goal is asking for the grants process product in such a short timeline. He also shared struggles with engaging counties that may be reluctant to collaborate, general data collection and interpretation concerns, and the size of the overall task. Justin Forkner echoed that all the information is accessible on the [website](#).

### **Yvonne Moore, DCS**

#### **Presentation: Update on DCS work in the area of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children**

The presentation can be found on slides 4-15 of the [meeting PowerPoint](#). Yvonne introduced herself and explained her role as the Focus Needs Director for DCS. She explained that the presentation would include information about the DCS Human Trafficking Response System, data from the last few years, and an update on policy, screening tools, and training. Yvonne shared a statewide map of the response system and the corresponding individuals from each region. Next, Yvonne shared the number of substantiated and unsubstantiated assessments from 2020, 2021, and through September 2022. Yvonne shared that over 1,000 DCS staff have been trained in partnership with Indiana Trafficking Victims Assistance Program and that four people with lived experience presented during a two-day seminar. DCS and community partners received training from the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center across the state. Next, Yvonne outlined some of DCS' accomplishments besides trainings, including establishing partnerships with Child Advocacy Centers, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, U.S. Marshals and the FBI, and the Indiana Clearinghouse for Missing Children and Endangered Adults. Additional partners include Allies Incorporated, three residential facilities, and Ascent 121. Next, Yvonne shared a flow chart outlining the responsibilities of DCS when a child is reported missing. Lastly, she shared her contact information and opened for questions.

**Discussion:** Representative DeVon asked Yvonne to repeat the yearly numbers. He also asked if the Indiana State Police was the only law enforcement agency that DCS works with, but Yvonne shared that they work with local departments as well. Representative DeVon also asked how the children are being marketed, to which Yvonne shared the problem is huge, online, and can be individuals and/or groups of people. Senator Donato asked if teachers are trained to look for trafficking or if they are trained to educate the children about trafficking, to which Yvonne shared that both teachers are trained in recognizing trafficking and students are trained in prevention. Bernice Corley asked if the state police decides if a case is substantiated or unsubstantiated, and Yvonne shared it is sometimes police and other times DCS staff. Bernice also asked if the case percentages compare to other states and/or nationally, but Yvonne did not have other states' data. Senator Breaux thanked Yvonne for her work and asked why there are so many unsubstantiated cases. Yvonne shared that those cases were likely categorized as something else, such as abuse or neglect, instead of trafficking. Senator Breaux also asked for definition distinctions between child sex trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. Yvonne shared that these are used interchangeably besides the label of missing children. Senator Breaux then asked if commercial exploitation happens at times other than large events, to which Yvonne shared that this is one of the big misconceptions, as child exploitation can and does occur anytime and anywhere.

#### **4. Strategic Priority: Child Health and Safety**

##### **Mark Fairchild, Covering Kids and Families**

The presentation can be found on slides 16-29 of the [meeting PowerPoint](#). Mark Fairchild introduced himself and shared some background about lawful immigrant uninsured rates, showing immigrant adults at 26 percent

and their children at 17 percent, compared to the national rate for children at 5 percent. Mark shared those who are uninsured experience reduced access to ongoing, preventative, and educational medical care. Mark shared his subcommittee has also addressed extending postpartum Medicaid coverage, program continuous eligibility, eliminating the CHIP 90-day waiting period, and today's topic, eliminating the Medicaid/CHIP 5-year waiting period for lawful residing immigrant children and pregnant women. Next, Mark shared that the only medical insurance package available for lawful immigrant children and pregnant women is an emergency service. For refugees, they are covered for only 8 months. Mark then shared that as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, only 15 states do not cover immigrant children. Mark referenced the Children's Health Insurance Act of 2009 which allows states to cover lawfully residing immigrant children and pregnant women. Next, Mark outlined some of the barriers that immigrants face, such as language, income, and healthcare costs. Mark shared estimated numbers of children, adults, and pregnant women that would qualify, along with the estimated cost of coverage per person. Mark shared that the expected increase in total cost will be between 3.8 and 5 million dollars annually. Mark showed the two sections of Indiana Code that would receive additions if passed. Mark closed the presentation by sharing the involvement of the Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning and FSSA on this issue but requested the support of the Commission in getting the waiting period removed.

**Discussion:** Senator Breaux asked Mark about the 5-year waiting period, and he shared that he expects a federal elimination of this rule to come soon. DeJuna asked what locations people would be covered at, to which Mark answered that anywhere that is Medicaid eligible. Representative DeVon asked Mark if he had the chance to meet with the appropriations chair or the ways and means chair to discuss this topic. Mark said that they had been notified but would like to have a discussion soon. Senator Breaux asked if this change had to be done legislatively, or if the Office of Medicaid Policy could change the rule. Mark answered by explaining that the Office of Medicaid Policy could make the change administratively, but it would be stronger if codified. Senator Breaux then asked if Mark expects to see pushback for political reasons, to which he shared that he hopes not because the target population is a small group of legal immigrants. Senator Breaux asked if Mark had worked with the hospitals to see how much this change would save them. Mark shared that immigrants are either receiving the emergency Medicaid or nothing at all, leaving them and their hospitals with large bills. Senator Breaux commented that the argument for eliminating the waiting period could be bolstered if it showed how much hospitals would save. Mark agreed and reiterated the importance of prevention. Dr. Box commented on the cost of pre-term births and infants born with complications, emphasizing that savings will occur.

**Action:** Bernice Corley moved to approve the [recommendation](#) for the elimination of the 5-year waiting period for lawfully residing immigrant children and pregnant women. The motion was seconded by Chris Naylor and approved unanimously 13-0.

## 5. Evaluating Our Impact

**Sarah Mihich, Transform Consulting**

**Presentation: Commission Evaluation Report**

The presentation can be found on slides 30-61 of the [meeting PowerPoint](#). Sarah introduced herself and shared that she would be presenting on the evaluation process, its findings, recommendations, and next steps. She outlined the steps of the evaluation process, including defining questions/metrics, developing data tools, summarizing the data, and then sharing findings. The first question asked if the Commission is having an impact on how the government works for vulnerable children. Results showed that there is an impact, and those surveyed shared themes of collaboration and data sharing. Sarah showed a table that included five legislative bills that were passed with the support of the Commission. She then showed a graph of former members, current members, and taskforce/committee members and their views on impact. Sarah shared that the second part of the research question, asking how the Commission is impacting outcomes for vulnerable children, is hard to measure. However, she shared two examples of measurable impact. The first was the increase in participation in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the second was the decrease in the number of children without medical coverage after the elimination of the CHIP 90-day waiting period. Sarah shared the second research question, asking about awareness of the Commission, to which Transform found 44 percent of stakeholders are aware. The third research question asks if the tools and resources available from the

Commission are being used and are effective. Sarah shared that less than 7 percent of stakeholders shared that they use the tools and resources, while 48 percent said they did not. These stakeholders shared that areas for improvement on this topic include data, calendars, legislative updates, and process documents. Next, Sarah shared research question four, addressing how the Commission can maximize effectiveness of its resources. Commission members and stakeholders ranked areas of success and feasibility, showing that closing data gaps and aligning state efforts are both feasible and successful. Sarah then showed that Commission members were asked about obstacles to success, to which they shared the broad vision statement as the biggest. Sarah shared that Transform came up with four main categories for recommendations to improve impact. These include awareness, operational procedures, follow-through, and equity. Sarah shared that the next steps include working with Julie on the quality improvement process.

**Discussion:** Julie commented on the increased participation rate in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, complimenting the efforts of Dr. Box and her staff at the Department of Health. Senator Breau asked Sarah if Transform would look at staffing for the Commission, to which Sarah said she would talk about this with Julie. Representative DeVon asked Julie if the results met her expectations, to which Julie shared that there were no big surprises.

## 6. Executive Director Updates

**Julie Whitman**

### **Strategic Planning and Implementation Updates**

The presentation can be found on slides 62-66 of the [meeting PowerPoint](#). Julie shared that the current strategic plan is expiring and that she would use the information from Transform in developing the next one. Julie shared that she asked each committee and task force co-chair to review their objectives and that she was scheduling a retreat to help prioritize topics for the new strategic plan, which is hoped to be ready for the February meeting. Next, Julie shared some implementation updates. She referenced the Commission's previous work on developmental screening and guardianship forms. Julie shared updates on the IPQIC Infant Wellbeing Task Force and [Learn the Signs, Act Early](#). Julie referenced that the guardianship forms uploaded to [indianalegalhelp.org](http://indianalegalhelp.org) was the 9<sup>th</sup> most visited page out of over 100 pages on that website. Julie also referenced the [Trauma Screening & Assessment Guide](#) and [Information Sharing Guide](#), emphasizing the importance of bringing these tools back up to increase awareness and use. Julie asked if anybody knew of a group or audience that could benefit from these tools to connect them with her. Lastly, Julie shared the 2023 Commission meeting dates.

**Discussion:** Senator Breau and Julie talked about what days and times would be best for the strategic plan retreat. Christine commented that her question about how the evaluation was going to impact the Commission was answered. Julie shared that she looked forward to making some operational changes. Senator Breau commented on the broad mandate of the Commission's goal, which Julie responded by saying that she was hopeful that this will be clarified at the retreat. Christine asked how the Youth Justice Oversight Committee would impact the Commission's focus, to which Julie shared that this topic should be explored. DeJuna asked if there was a way to survey the youth the Commission works for, to which Julie shared that while the Commission does not serve youth directly, the different agencies that do might already be getting feedback from their respective youth and families. Representative DeVon commented on the importance of prevention. Representative Summers suggested looking into youth who age out of the foster care system as an area of focus. Senator Breau asked if the [Information Sharing Guide](#) was a hard copy, and Julie clarified that it is both online and a smartphone application. Representative Summers asked if December 20<sup>th</sup> could be moved, as it is very close to typical holiday break. Julie said that these are the set dates for now but could change if need be later.

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

**Discussion:** DeJuna asked what she would have to do in order to present at the next meeting, to which Julie replied that she would talk to her and then she would talk to the executive committee. Representative Summers

asked Julie if the meetings could be in a different room because it is hard to hear. Julie shared that she would investigate using the Government Center.

**Next Meeting**

Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Indiana State Library, History Reference Room

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.