



Alaska Citizen Review Panel

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Diwakar K. Vadapalli, Chair
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Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205

CRP Panel and OCS Teleconference Summary Minutes

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Attendance

CRP Panel Members: Diwakar K. Vadapalli, Dana Hallett, Margaret McWilliams, Bettyann Steciw, Jen Burkmire, Donna Aguiniga, Rebecca Vale, Joshua Stein,

OCS staff: Christy Lawton, Travis Erickson

Information Insights: Jessica Holden Braunlich, Brenda Holden

Agenda

1. Staff survey
 - Diwakar's class is finalizing staff survey instrument with minor changes.
 - Received secondary data from last three years.
 - Survey should be online in March, with everything on schedule.
 - OCS will send out the link to staff along with a letter. Two reminders will be given.
 - Christy asked what Diwakar expects will be different from this survey vs. past surveys. Diwakar clarified his past concerns were not on the survey itself, but the analysis level used for decision making. This year the responses can be separated for further analysis. Diwakar can do that with current and past data. Double questions are split on this year's survey. The third component is the qualitative data project and may not make it into the final report, but is a class requirement.
2. Anchorage regional site visit report
 - Report was sent to OCS staff prior to this meeting, will defer further discussions and revisions to next meeting, March 8th. Travis will schedule Anchorage staff to be on that call.
3. Coordinating HSS presentations
 - House will not have meetings besides those related to the budget until a passed budget goes to Senate in about three weeks. Need to schedule when the House is back to regular business.

- Christy presented to House subcommittee and Senate subcommittee already. Christy is invited to respond to CRP presentation at House.
 - CRP will likely focus on recommendations one by one and provide more details with past and current year.
4. Deputy Director of OCS informed CRP and Information Insights that the request for additional funding for CRP has been denied. This may have implications for remaining site visits and attendance at the national conference, which were not part of the support contract RFP.
5. OCS update
- Contract with Information Insights was funded for the amount to conduct the work outlined in the RFP, but the request for additional funds to complete two more site visits and attend the national contract was not funded. They must look at all discretionary dollars and look at where to cut because we know cuts are coming. They do not currently have funds for any additional requests.
 - Diwakar asked if the OCS budget is already set. OCS did not receive increments in 2016 and hoped to save on efficiencies. Christy stated that there are very few funds available that are not tied to formula funded programs.
 - There is no guarantee on contract levels staying the same for three years, depending on cuts in funding level of the future. Contracts and grants and staff are the only areas they can cut. OCS will do what they can to minimize impact overall, but no guarantee.
 - Increment in 2017 budget includes \$4.5 million in general funds matches \$4.5 million in federal funding. OCS will be short 6 million in foster care special needs and foster care basic needs. The budget manager believes OCS may be able to fill the 6 million gap, based on best case predictions. But OCS cannot control variables of foster care population. Expecting additional hearings, where legislators are digging onto formula based programs to determine what they can tinker with legislatively with the least amount of pain and lawsuits.
 - Legislators are meeting twice daily meetings regarding Medicaid expansion. Medicaid expansion may help prevention by getting behavioral health related services to families earlier in the continuum in the places where they live.
 - Community of Hope Opportunity: Commissioner Davidson, Christy and partners in the department are working with Casey Family Foundation to look at how they can provide support to Alaska families, especially Alaska Native families through a \$250,000 grant for a Community of Hope Initiative to be tried in a chosen community. Position will be under Alaska Children's Trust. Diwakar asked about the evaluation plan. Christy stated nothing is mapped out but they will want to gain evidence for wider deployment. Rebecca excited to open to approaching communities. Rebecca suggested using SouthCentral Foundation Family Wellness Warriors as a resource.
 - OCS response to annual report included one omission that was an inadvertent error. OCS is recruiting a centralized intake manager that will deal with a number of impending items including the opt-in. This may take a month or two to have the person on board. Any additional intake work will happen downstream from that.
 - Diwakar asked if OCS will track impact from regional to central intake. Christy's answer: will continue to dialogue with tribal concerns as decisions get made. Once get regional processes and scripts are standardized, OCS will be better positioned to look at how this is working. Diwakar understand goal of improving consistency and efficiency and hopes OCS can report impacts.
 - Diwakar asked if increased out of home care has impacted since changes a year ago. Substantiation was never the marker for coming into care. Thought we would see slowdown administrative hearings for disputing findings. Not seeing that, but OCS simultaneously



changed the letters and telling people how to apply for appeals which may be why there are more appeals. Getting some automatic efficiencies with less staff involved in intake. Will notice differences between the regions, but not the kind of change we can give numerical change. Perhaps a QA review could reveal it but that is not in the works right now.

- Diwakar said that evaluation processes would be useful in helping OCS share information. How can CRP move the importance of evaluation? Christy says OCS embraces the concept but doesn't have the resources to do this. Wish there was plenty of staff to build capacity for this. The charge for QA is not evaluation but is really what the feds require. As feds push for more evaluation, it will grow. Hard to build that in without the resources and federal requirement.
- CSSR review- Christy stated they are preparing as much as they can. Will give decision to feds in spring on how to do this, and leaning toward doing it ourselves. OCS sees growth and expects to continue to have needs in the same areas, which will be painful. Issues, problems and concerns are endless. Consensus seems to be coming that OCS focus on core services. Period of review starts April 1, 2016 and will go 15 months forward. Cases beginning April 1 will be under review. It is hard to decide what is not important when working on child safety, and it is very difficult to take things off the list.
- Margie is interested in OCS future discussions around core values.

Debriefing discussions focused on 1) determining whether the CRP funds come from legislature or OCS which drives who decides the funding level; and 2) frustrations on the lack of attention on evaluation.

