



Alaska Citizen Review Panel

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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.

MONTHLY PANEL MEETING WITH OCS MINUTES

Friday, February 13, 2015
Teleconference

Call in number: 888-829-6301 PIN 4130

Participants: Dana Hallett, Donna Aguiniga, Jennifer Burkmire, Christy Lawton, Diwakar Vadapalli joined the first part of the meeting before catching a flight.

Sharon Fleming and Jeannie from Southeast Regional Office joined from 12:30 – 1PM for the discussion of the SRO Site Visit. The agenda was rearranged to fit everyone's schedule.

1) **An update from OCS on the upcoming data summit** This event is postponed until probably April. Travis and Tracy will send out more information within the next week or so.

2) **An update on the Vacancy and Turnover numbers for the quarter ending Dec 31st**

Diwakar will share the system of tracking trends in this data to Christy. Diwakar sends the QA data set to Travis. He will share the data set with Christy. Travis receives it and finds it useful.

Diwakar commented that the methodology is clearly described, however the numbers are not calculated as described in the methodology. Christy explained that the formula is used by the department and may get tweaked a bit for OCS. Maria from budget management could walk people through it.

A question was asked about whether exit interviews are done when people resign from OCS. There is a formal process asking employees to complete an online survey via Survey Monkey when completing departure paperwork but the survey is not mandatory thus departing employees generally do not take the time to fill the survey out. There are also informal exit interviews by managers. This strategy is also spotty because the exiting employee generally does not take the time for the informal interview either. Christy will look at review exit interview information from the past 6 months to see what she can provide the CRP. When people transfer, such as from rural to urban or Wasilla to Anchorage, the agency has not lost their investment but the impact on families is the same.

3) **An update on the IA numbers**

Travis sent out some reinforcing info to management last week because the backlog has grown, however it is in proportion to what is coming in the front door. Travis is continuing to apply the pressure.

Every time people see the data, people go back to their staff and we get closer. Getting more referrals ~~se~~ will be tough to address this without more resources.

Dana asked if Christy sees any value in identifying proportions of priorities. Christy said no. Higher priority cases are more likely to have more intervention and result in closure more quickly. Priority 3 cases may be more ongoing with children in good situations with foster care of relatives. Without more workers, and the increased workload coming in the door, it is hard to see systemic changes.

Although the phased in tablet rollout may make a difference because paperwork comes last. The goal is for every case worker to have a tablet, which will save time, along with increasing the contract for transcription and looking at other ways technology could help save staff time. This is a topic at management team meetings, however few ideas have surfaced of new ways to streamline efforts or identifying steps that are redundant.

Jen asked if there has been any efforts to streamline paperwork; ways to reduce the redundancies. Christy said the workers are always looking at ways to reduce any redundancies.

Donna asked if the tablets are making a difference. Christy said that anecdotally, information is available, and the rollout will continue slowly. She is not sure that the use of tablets are helping get to case closures. Donna said that she feels that it would be best if we knew before we implement a new program that we are more sure that the efforts are useful.

- 4) **Anything Christy wants to share:** Christy gave an overview of the 3rd round of federal evaluation. Data was shared yesterday. There is a new predictive analytic tool to give states a sense of how they would fare. In the past two rounds (2002, 2008) the feds came on site to three different locations that were representative offices and had a team on site for a week to review records, interview stakeholders etc. Some OCS staff were part of these teams. Then a report would be submitted. This round will be different. Region 10 says that Alaska's QA system is one of the best systems they have seen in Region 10. Bernita continues to compare how Alaska is doing compared to 2008 and helps identify strengths, weaknesses and new challenges that were not seen as problems before. This is shared with regions and they create their own plans. In 2017, states can choose criteria to meet QA. If the feds review how the state came to their conclusions and agrees that the state is using tools accurately, the state can decide whether to have the feds come on site or do this in-house. Alaska will decide next summer, and is leaning toward doing it ourselves for many reasons. Bernita's data is used to help regions and the state create focuses to work on. At the statewide level, Jim, Travis,

Christy reads regional plans, go to steering committee and feed info back into system to make adjustments as needed.

5) SRO Visit

Sharon asked for clarification on the comment regarding partnership relationships with smaller tribes. CRP said their impression was that some of the larger and more powerful groups tend to be more formalized and contractual. Partnerships with smaller tribes and agencies may be less formal, so the relationship may not be as strong.

The comments on page 2, 3rd bullet regarding secondary trauma was initially of concern to staff on the call because of efforts made over the past year. Christy and CRP members saw the concerns of front line staff about this topic as being a good thing because it shows staff awareness and concern. Since the site visit, sessions on this topic have become mandatory. IT was suggested that this offers a good opportunity for staff to ask how OCS can better support staff regarding secondary trauma. Staff told CRP members that they have a book on this but no time to read it because of work load. OCS staff are busy, so leadership works to balance providing information without overwhelming staff. Having this as mandatory meetings may help staff make time for this important topic.

CRP members shared their observations and comments heard reflecting community respect and appreciation for local OCS staff. In conclusion, Dana said he thought Southeast appears to be as healthy as any region in terms of OCS. There are always ways to improve, and there is real respect in the community for what the staff does. One staff member said he/she would love more time with the supervisor, but that supervisor is already working very hard, helping to keep up with the workload that is heavy due to staff shortages.

NEXT MEETING WITH OCS: March 13th 2015