

MINNESOTA CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS ANNUAL REPORT – 2007

**The safety, permanency and well-being of all children
will be achieved when everyday citizens invest themselves
in community services and child protection.**



The River Rushes On
Seventh Annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference
Keeping Children Safe from Abuse and Neglect
May 21, 22, 23, 2008 – St. Paul, Minnesota

Log bridge at the Headwaters of the Mississippi River, Itasca State Park, Minnesota
photo courtesy of John A. Weeks III.



Drop in the Bucket

Lyrics and music by Mitch Barrett and Carla Gover

It's a crazy world we live in, bad news all around.
Brothers and sisters if we're gonna make a difference,
We're gonna have to stand our ground.

Chorus:

It's a drop in the bucket, and a bucket in a pond,
And the pond fills the river, and **the river rushes on.**
Every river swells a river, until the power can't be stopped.
And what becomes a mighty ocean, started as a drop.

Down in Alabama, a lady boarded a bus.
The driver said, "You're black, you gotta sit in the back."
Rosa said, "I've had enough."

Chorus

Great Britain ruled over India, made them slaves to the goods they bought.
Until Gandhi took his people to the ocean, he said, "Look, free salt."

Chorus

In the alleys of Calcutta, Mother Teresa lived her life.
She did much more than feed the poor. She taught us how to shine our light.

Chorus

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Credits and Acknowledgements

Credits

Thank you to the following contributors to the 2007 county and state Citizen Review Panels' annual reports:

2007 Minnesota Citizen Review Panels Annual Report and Introduction:
Cheryl Glassel, Citizen Facilitator, Minnesota Citizen Review Panels Steering Committee.
Minnesota panel members reviewed and approved the final report.

2007 Chisago County Citizen Review Panel Annual Report (Appendix Two):
Ted Alliegro and Jessica Hendrickson. All Chisago County panel members reviewed, revised and approved the final report.

2007 Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel Annual Report (Appendix Two):
Jeanne Martin and Mark Proctor. Committee reports: Lyn Birawer, Ginny Pieper, Heather Kilgore, Cindy Toppin and Mark Proctor. Dawn Autenreith, Coordinator, Ramsey County Human Services Citizen Advisory Councils, provided data and information. All Ramsey County panel members reviewed, revised and approved the final report.

2007 Washington County Citizen Review Panel Annual Report (Appendix Two):
Dani Horan. Committee reports: Mary Nelson and Dani Horan. All Washington County panel members reviewed, revised and approved the final report.

2007 Winona County Citizen Review Panel Annual Report (Appendix Two):
Jen Whetstone and Matt Vetter. All Winona County panel members reviewed, revised and approved the final report.

Minnesota's Compliance with the State Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan; the 2007 Report of the Citizen Review Panels (Appendix One):
Anita Keyes, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Minnesota panel members reviewed, revised and approved the final report.

Acknowledgements

Citizen Review Panels are only effective with the help and support of the counties' child protection agencies key personnel. The panels would like to specifically acknowledge and thank the representatives from their county human services staff for their dedication to the work of the Citizen Review Panels. For specifics, see the individual county panel annual reports in Appendix B of this report.

All of the panels again wish to acknowledge Anita Keyes and the Minnesota Department of Human Services for their continuing work with the Citizen Review Panels.



Introduction

The River Rushes On. This is the name of the Seventh Annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference which will be held on May 21, 22, 23, 2008, in St. Paul. As the river rushes on, so do the lives of children in Minnesota. Again this year, vulnerable children have been helped by the volunteers who serve on the Minnesota Citizen Review Panels. Since 1999, these panels have devoted themselves to working with state and county agencies to help achieve safety, permanency and well-being for the children in Minnesota.

In 2005 and 2006, the panels focused on evaluating their county's Independent Living Skills (ILS) services for youth aging out of the foster care system. This year they continued to monitor how the counties and the Minnesota Department of Human Services are implementing the findings and recommendations of the panels. The enclosed reports from each of the counties explain their current findings and continuing recommendations for the ILS services.

The major focus of the panels in 2007 was the future financing of child welfare programs in Minnesota. The panels reviewed various reports and proposals including the Legislative Auditor's Report and recommendations. The issue of financing child safety will continue to be a topic for the panels' discussions in the upcoming year as the state is facing additional financial shortfalls and child welfare could be targeted for budget cuts.

As child welfare budgets are cut and programs are streamlined, the work of the volunteers on the Citizen Review Panels will be needed more than ever to promote legislation and funding, review and monitor current practices, recommend ways to deliver services more effectively, provide education to the general public about child welfare, and advocate for appropriate services for children. The panels are hoping that the presence of the Seventh Annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference here in Minnesota will help to educate the public and child welfare professionals about how citizens can devote their time to children in need and how their work can really make a difference.

The devotion by each, individual volunteer Citizen Review Panel member to children and their communities and their continuing efforts toward child safety, permanency and well-being are remarkable.

It's a drop in the bucket, and a bucket in a pond,
And the pond fills the river, and the river rushes on.
Every river swells a river, until the power can't be stopped.
And what becomes a mighty ocean, started as a drop.

Drop in the Bucket, lyrics reprinted with permission, mitchbarrett.com



1 – Membership

The following people volunteered their time and talents to improve children’s safety, permanency and well-being in the state of Minnesota

Chisago County Citizen Review Panel

Ted Allegro
Carl Andor
Bob Gustafson, Commissioner
Jessica Hendrickson
Brenda Iliff
Shellene Johnson
Katy Maier
Theresa Burgoon (resigned)
Doylene Voligny (resigned)

Washington County Citizen Review Panel

Jolene Abelson
Ann Bebeau
Robert Benson
Melissa Charley
Danielle Horan
Sue Lewis
Mary Nelson
Gail Peavey
Heidi Nakatani (leave of absence)

Ramsey County Children’s Services Review Panel

Lyn Birawer
Georgia Boehlke
JoAnn Cardenas Enos
Jan Gibson Talbot
Yumi Kayama
Heather Kilgore
Jeanne Martin
Virginia Pieper
Mark Proctor
Cindy Toppin
Mary Sembrowich (resigned)
Antonia Wilcoxon (resigned)
Sean Fessler (resigned)
Marcie Jefferys (resigned)
Jennifer Bertram (resigned)

Winona County Citizen Review Panel

Mary Feathergill
Mary Hewitt
Shari Jarvis
Molli Kook
Jean Stockwell
Tonya Van Tol
Matt Vetter
Jen Whetstone
Mary Jo Bell (resigned)
Julie Erickson (resigned)
Debra Fihn (resigned)
Lindsey Hanson (resigned)
Jacqueline Kelly (resigned)
Kathie Peterson (resigned)

Steering Committee:

Cheryl Glassel, Facilitator
Ted Alliegro and Jessica Hendrickson, Chisago County
Jeanne Martin and Mark Proctor, Ramsey County
Dani Horan and Heidi Nakatani, Washington County
Matt Vetter and Jen Whetstone, Winona County



2 – Citizen Review Panel Activities

Examples of Progress Made in Meeting Objectives of the Citizen Review Panels, 2007

In consultation with county and state child protection staff, examine policies and procedures to ensure the protection of children.

- Washington County Citizen Review Panel chair, Dani Horan, served on the statewide assessment advisory team with a broad range of state, county, tribal and community partners. This team assisted with the Child and Family Services Review's pre-assessment by reviewing the department's approach to analyzing data and their answers to the narrative items on the pre-assessment.

Examine the practices of the county and state child protection agencies to evaluate if children are protected from abuse and neglect.

- Panel members in Chisago, Washington and Winona Counties continue to advise the county child protection agencies by reviewing requests for reconsideration of findings of maltreatment. Panel members in Washington County participated in 17 of these reviews in 2007. In Ramsey County the panel members continue to assist with the Administrative Reviews of youth in long-term foster care.

Review the consistency of social work practice and compliance with stated policies.

- Ramsey County panel members continued to monitor the implementation of recommendations of the Independent Living Skills (ILS) services from the Children's Services Review Panel's 2005 and 2006 annual reports.

Advocate for resources and make recommendations to resolve the disparity of the number of children of color involved in the child protection system.

- The Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel received ongoing updates regarding Ramsey County Human Services Department's progress in their efforts to end the disparity of the numbers of children and families of color involved in their child protection system.

Actively participate in the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) process and in the preparation, review and monitoring of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

- Panel members in Washington County participated in the stakeholders' interviews during the federal Child and Family Service Review, held in Minnesota in September 2007. Washington County was one of four counties in which cases were reviewed during the CFSR.
- Washington County's Panel members continue to review the quarterly county CFSR progress and statistics.
- Chisago County panel members continue to monitor their county's Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
- The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Committee of the Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel continues to monitor the work and implementation of Ramsey County Human Services Department's PIP.

Progress Made in Meeting Objectives of the Citizen Review Panels (continued)

- All four panels were updated about the federal CFSR process and will continue to be updated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services regarding the results of the CFSR conducted in Minnesota in 2007 and its Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Analyze trends, provide valuable insights that those working within the system may miss, and provide feedback on what is or is not working.

- Winona County panel members continue to serve on a county-wide task force to address truancy and tardiness. The Winona County Education Neglect and Truancy Task Force also includes representatives from the Winona Area Public Schools, the Hiawatha Valley Education District, the Winona County judicial system, Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center and the Winona County Department of Human Services.
- Chisago County panel members participated in child mortality reviews.

Make recommendations for policy changes.

- The Ramsey County and Washington County panels continue to pursue the recommendations to improve the availability and accessibility of Independent Living Skills (ILS) resources in their communities and throughout Minnesota. (Recommendations regarding ILS resources are included in the 2005 and 2006 annual reports of Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels.)

Provide outside validation of the successes of the system and the efforts of the staff.

- The Chisago County Citizen Review Panel continues to monitor the impact of lost staff and contract positions that occurred in December 2006. They gathered case number and case load size data and discussed its impact on providing services to the children and families. Long-term effects are still unknown.

Increase community understanding, ownership and investment in child protection.

- All four panels studied how child welfare is financed in Minnesota. Among other things they reviewed the following reports: 1) The Task Force for Financing the Future of Child Welfare in Minnesota's report, *Child Safety in Minnesota, Outcome-Driven and Performance-Based System*, September 2006, 2) Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota evaluation report summary, *Human Services Administration*, January 2007, 3) Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administration (MACSA), 4) Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and 5) Minnesota Inter-county Association's fact sheets regarding financing child safety in Minnesota.
- At the 2007 Citizen Review Panels Recognition and Training Event, a panel of experts which included a county commissioner, representatives from Minnesota's Legislative Auditor's Office and the Minnesota Department of Human Services addressed the panel members about child welfare financing from their perspectives.

Promote cooperation among community resources and child protection services.

- Washington County panel members participated in and raised money for the Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota Walk to End Child Abuse for the second year in a row. This year the panel raised \$400.00.
- Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel members are working with the Ramsey County Low Income Committee and the Children's Mental Health Advisory Council to develop programming for children in homeless shelters; participated in Project Homeless Connect; and formally supported Care in Action Minnesota, an agency that matches church congregations and child protection workers to provide needed items for children and families.

Progress Made in Meeting Objectives of the Citizen Review Panels (continued)

Provide for public outreach and comment to assess the impact of procedures and policies upon children and families in the community.

- Members of the Washington County Citizen Review Panel researched the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) bill and sent a letter of support to the Washington County Commissioners and local legislators.

Advocate for needed resources to achieve the protection of children from abuse and neglect and ensure permanent homes for children in a timely manner.

- Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel's Child Welfare Finance Committee members, in conjunction with Court Appointed Special Advocates Minnesota (guardians *ad litem*) and the Child Well-Being working group of Minnesota Without Poverty, held a briefing to educate state legislators about funding child welfare in Minnesota. Twenty-one legislators from both sides of the aisle and over 80 citizens attended the briefing. All four of Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels formally supported the efforts of this legislative briefing and panel members from Washington, Ramsey and Chisago Counties attended

Prepare and make public an annual report containing a summary of the activities of the panel.

- Each of the four counties annual reports are attached in Appendix B of this report. All of the reports can be seen on the Minnesota Department of Human Services Web site at: http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_000155 .

Monitor the extent to which the Minnesota Department of Human Services is fulfilling child protection responsibilities in accordance with its Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Five-Year Plan.

- Please see the Minnesota's Compliance with the State Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan, 2007, A Report of the Citizen Review Panels, attached in Appendix A of this report.



From the Archives

Final Report of the 1999 – 2001 Citizen Review Panels Pilot Project

Have the Citizen Review Panels in Minnesota made a difference in the lives of children and families involved with the child protection system? Citizens interviewing for panel positions in 1999 identified the need to make a difference as a reason they were interested in these volunteer positions, and the question of whether this was accomplished remains today.

Pilot projects often end being just that, without a momentum having been built to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot or a momentum to carry on the work. This report will provide a summary of the work of the panels as noted in their annual reports, to assist the reader in answering the above question.

The technical requirements of Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels for Child Protection have been met, and the information supporting this is contained in the *Minnesota Citizen Review Panels' 1999, 2000 Annual Reports*. The key elements of legislation that gave the panels their charge and that they have met are as follows: **Minnesota Statute 256.01 Subd. 15**. Citizen Panel Members completed their charge at the end of the two years, namely to "examine the policies and

procedures of the state and local welfare agencies to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.”

Federal Operational Requirements for Citizen Review Systems:

- A minimum of three panels
- Be composed of volunteer members meeting certain requirements
- Meet every three months
- Evaluate the extent to which the State is fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with its State CAPTA plan
- Maintain confidentiality
- Prepare an annual report

How far along the continuum are the panels in making a difference in the lives of children and families involved in the child protection system? This is the first time in Minnesota history that a group of citizens were given such a broad charge and complete access in evaluation of the child protection system. Action steps the individual panels took included:

All three panels individually became advocates in their community based on what they had learned. Forty –three individuals developed a better understanding about the abilities and limits of child protection services in their community and the complex, difficult work of supporting families, yet protecting children. This included:

- Attending training provided by each county’s social services child protection system and the MN Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Shadowing child protection workers to better understand their jobs
- Attending court hearings involving children in need of protection and services to better understand the roles of the court, child protection and guardians ad litem
- Provided feedback to County Boards in their communities via the Annual Panel Reports and meetings with County Boards in Chisago and Washington Counties
- Ramsey County CRP published and distributed a brochure, *Seven Tips to Make a Difference in a Child’s Life*”
- Washington County CRP established a campaign, “It’s Not Safe for Kids Under Eight” to educate caregivers about the dangers of children being left unattended in vehicles
- Provided education at local community events about the role of Citizens in protecting children

Citizen feedback was provided for integration into the local child protection service system and development of services statewide. This took place as follows:

- Citizens consulted with the County Agencies in Washington and Chisago Counties whenever a request for reconsideration of a maltreatment finding was received from a child’s caregiver
- Citizen input was sought in the development of Chisago County’s Child Protection Intake criteria
- Citizen input was requested by Washington and Chisago Counties as they developed their Combined Community Social Services Act plan for delivery of child protection services
- Citizen input was given to Assistant Commissioner Erin Sullivan Sutton for use in planning for the 2001 Legislative Session
- Citizens reviewed the local utilization of support provided by Crisis Nurseries in each Community
- Citizens reviewed the local utilization of specialized training on child protection supported by state grants

Citizens are addressing the needs of the children and families served in their communities. This is illustrated by:

- Independent living skills services for children in Chisago were evaluated for effectiveness in helping children as they establish independence after aging out of foster care
- Foster care providers were contacted to get feedback about services for children in the child protection system
- Ramsey conducted an evaluation of child protection services from the perspective of service providers working with children and families in the community, and from the perspective of families receiving help. Strengths were noted and there are plans to address areas needing improvement
- Washington is in the initial stages of reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the mandated reporting system
- Chisago has recommended changes in the mandated reporting training of required reporters
- All three panels are gathering input from youth involved in the substitute care system through a focus group with youth attending Tomorrow’s Leaders Today conference in Duluth on August 9, 2001

With the completion of the pilot project, the renewed commitment of panel members to additional terms, the three pilot counties renewal of their commitment to citizen review panels and pending addition of new panel members the momentum has been built to sustain the Citizen Review Panels. This momentum lends itself to the development of a *renewed focus for the Minnesota Citizen Review Panels.*



3 – Citizen Review Panel Recommendations

Recommendations to the Minnesota Department of Human Services from Minnesota’s Citizen Review Panels

- Update panel members about financing child safety in Minnesota.
- Follow the progress of the A Minnesota Without Poverty Initiative (an initiative we support) and inform panel members of its affect on child welfare financing statewide.
- Inform panel members of the policies, procedures and legislative changes to help youth aging out of foster care receive the Independent Living Skills (ILS) services they need.

Recommendations to the Ramsey County Department of Human Services from the Ramsey County Children’s Services Review Panel

- Ramsey County Human Services Department’s Child Protection and Guardianship/Adoption unit managers prepare quarterly, written updates of progress toward goals set forth in the Program Improvements Plans (PIP) for the Program Improvement Plan Committee.
- Ramsey County actively lobby state government to increase federal and/or state funding for child welfare in Minnesota.
- Ramsey County mandate that case plans include education planning and referral for all three to five year olds.
- Ramsey County mandate that all children aging out of the child protection system have at least one caring, positive adult identified in their case plan by the age of 18.
- Ramsey County Human Services Department assign a consistent child protection staff person as a continuing liaison to the Children’s Services Review Panel.

Recommendations to Chisago County Health and Human Services from the Chisago County Citizen Review Panel

- Chisago County Health and Human Services continue to update us on how they are responding to the staff and program cuts. Specifically, what programs, services and resources are being provided differently or not at all, and how are caseload sizes, children and families being impacted?
- Chisago County Health and Human Services continue to provide quarterly progress reports on their Program Improvement Plan (PIP).



From the Archives

Why Write Annual Reports?

Recognition of the efforts of the child protection staff, needed changes in the system on a local and state level, or improvements in services to children and their families can all be accomplished through documentation of your work on the Citizen Review Panel.

Information Regarding the Annual Reports

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children, Youth and Families bulletin dated 6-2-99 states:

Reports Section 106(d) of CAPTA requires that the citizen review panels develop annual reports and make them available to the public. These reports should be completed no later than 90 days after the end of the Federal fiscal year (December 31 of each year – the federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30 each year.) and should, at a minimum, contain a summary of the panel's activities, as well as the recommendations of the panel based upon its activities and findings. States are encouraged to include these reports with their Annual Progress and Services Reports that are due to the Federal Regional Office by June 30th of each year and include information on the progress States are making in implementing the recommendations of the panels.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services includes a copy of the Citizen Review Panels' annual report with their Annual Progress and Services Reports that are sent to the federal Health and Human Services by June 30th every year. They also include the department's response to the Panels' recommendations and the progress being made to implement them.

Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 (Formerly CAPTA)

Changes in the law affecting the citizen review panels' annual reports; the amendments revised the citizen review panel requirements by:

Requiring each panel to make recommendations to the State and public on improving the child protection services system at the State and local levels. The appropriate State agency is to respond to the panel and State and local child protective agencies in writing no later than six months after the panel recommendations are submitted. The State agency's response must include a description of whether or how the State will incorporate the recommendations of the panel (where appropriate) to make measurable progress in improving the State and local CPS systems (section 106(c)(6)).

The Minnesota Department of Human Services does respond to the recommendations in the annual report of the Citizen Review Panels as required and described above.



4 – Appendices

- Appendix A** Minnesota’s Compliance with the State Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan; the 2007 Report of the Citizen Review Panels
- Appendix B** The four county panels 2007 annual reports: Chisago, Ramsey, Washington and Winona
- Appendix C** Estimated volunteer hours and dollars contributed by panel members in 2007
- Appendix D** Minnesota Statute 256.01



From the Archives

Washington County Citizen Review Panel Meeting Agenda

Date: October 12, 1999

To: Jack Atchison, Stephanie Lenartz, Cliff Schroeder, Joanne Boyer, Myra Peterson
Michelle Swanson, Laurie Drolson, Heidi Presslein, Leah Trumper, Dennis Hegberg
Julie Roisen, Susan Wardell, Diane Kaphing, Barbara Ronningen, Molly Wilson
Rita Ziegelbauer-Heidbrink

Cc: Washington County Community Services
Rick Backman, Debbie Kenney, Tammy Kincaid, Sally Borich

From: Anita Keyes (Phone: 296-4589) and Noreen Rossa (Phone: 282-5306)

RE: Washington County Citizen Review Panel Meeting and Agenda

Date: Wednesday, October 20, 1999
Time: 3:00 – 7:00 PM
Location: Washington County Government Center
County Board Room (Enter at Main Entrance, turn right.)

AGENDA:

3:00 PM	Welcome and Introductions
3:15 PM	A Child Protection Case in Washington County-From Start to Finish (Tammy Kincaid and Sally Borich)
4:00 PM	Break
	Why Do We Provide Child Protection Services This Way?
4:10 PM	Intake/Assessment Screening Criteria and Protocol, Risk Assessment (Debbie Kenney)
4:45 PM	Case Plans, Placement, Permanency and Court (Tammy Kincaid and Sally Borich)
5:30 PM	Dinner Break
6:00 PM	Case Presentation Tammy Kincaid and Sally Borich)
6:30 PM.	Panel Meeting: Election of Chair, Co-Chair
6:45 PM	Department of Human Services Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expense Reimbursement• Confidentiality, Agreement
7:00 PM	Adjournment

Appendix A

Minnesota's Compliance with the State Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan; 2007 Report of the Citizen Review Panels

Introduction

According to the 1996 reauthorization of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), one of the responsibilities of Citizen Review Panels is to review compliance of state and local child protection agencies with respect to the state's CAPTA Plan. In 2003 CAPTA was renamed Keeping Children and Families Safe Act.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services' (DHS) Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, (Keeping Children and Families Safe Act), Five Year Plan for 2004 – 2009, was developed after consulting with stakeholders, including members of the Citizen Review Panels. It was submitted to the federal Department of Health and Human Services on June 30, 2004.

The eight areas addressed in the five year plan are:

- Child Safety
- Risk of Harm Assessment
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Services or Treatment
- Community Involvement
- Training
- Developmental Screening Referrals for Children
- Quality Assurance.

The department has developed strategies and timelines for tasks under each of the areas listed above.

Compliance with the Five Year CAPTA Plan, December 31, 2007

All eight strategies in the 2004 – 2009 CAPTA Plan have either been completed or are in the process of being implemented. Projects that progressed in 2007 in accordance with strategies in the plan included:

- Completing the updated screening guidelines and mandated reporter training curricula
- Implementing a computer-based, interactive, readily available mandated reporter Web training
- Developing a mandated reporter training video and DVD which are in the final stages
- Incorporating new protocols and updated Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools into the Social Services Information System (SSIS) and the Child Welfare Training System
- Continuing the Parent Support Outreach Program pilot.

Compliance with Five Year CAPTA Plan Report, 2007 (continued)

Update on Implementation of Strategies in 2007

Strategy: Convene an advisory committee of stakeholders to evaluate screening criteria and create culturally informed child maltreatment screening criteria that are effectively, appropriately and consistently used by all county child protection agencies statewide.

Status:

The advisory committee consisted of county, state and community stakeholders, including a Citizen Review Panel member, and began meeting in March 2006. Clear, consistent statewide screening standards and guidelines were developed. The culturally informed screening criteria for response to reports of child abuse and neglect were added to the department's Web page for child welfare supervisors in County Link in 2007. The link is:
<http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Legacy/DHS-5144-ENG>.

The Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines provide direction to county social service agencies, promote statewide consistency in definition and practice, and inform the public about types of child safety concerns that may constitute child maltreatment. These guidelines were developed by a broad-based team of state, county, tribal, court and community partners and are based on Minnesota Statute 626.556, Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act.

Strategy: Develop and deliver training for mandated and voluntary reporters, including a continuum of responses to reports of maltreatment. Information provided to mandated and voluntary reporters should now be consistent throughout the state.

Status:

An updated resource guide for mandated reporters (August 2006) developed by the department's Child Safety and Permanency Division, *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect*, is on the DHS Web site. Copies are available by calling (651) 431-3502 or fax, (651) 431-7476. Ask for publication #2917.

An updated mandated reporter training curriculum was added to the department's County Link Web site in 2007. The PowerPoint presentation, Reporting Maltreatment, has six modules:

- History, Law, Minnesota System, Demographics
- Poverty, Neglect and Racial Disparities
- Mandated Reporting, Who, What, Where, When, Why
- Physical Abuse
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Neglect.

The link to the Web page is:

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&Rendition=Primary&allowInterrupt=1&dDocName=dhs16_139112

The Mandated Reporter Training Curriculum was recently updated by DHS. This resource assists county and tribal social service professionals in educating stakeholders about child abuse and neglect, the roles and responsibilities of mandated reporters, and the process for making child maltreatment reports.

Compliance with Five Year CAPTA Plan Report, 2007 (continued)

The creation of a user-friendly, interactive, readily available mandated reporter training is well underway. This Web-based interactive tutorial will be available in early 2008. Completion of a training video and DVD, in the final stages, will be available in January 2008.

For more information about the screening guidelines and the mandated reporter training curriculum, or to request assistance in providing mandated reporter training at either a county or regional level, contact Terry Besaw, (651) 431-4698, or terry.besaw@state.mn.us.

Strategy: Obtain grant funding to pilot a program to connect families at risk of child maltreatment, who have been reported but not accepted by the child protection response system, with community-based social service providers for assessment services.

Status:

The Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP) began in fall 2005 and is being piloted in 38 counties. As of September 30, 2007, 5,932 families had been referred and 2,704 accepted services. The criteria for involvement includes families with children 10 years old and under; families who ask for help and refer themselves; families referred by community agencies; and those referred by Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) workers. The pilot has been extended through December 2008. The program will be evaluated by the Institute of Applied Research.

A related but separate three-year pilot project was launched in October 2007 for low-income families who may be at risk of child maltreatment. MFIP Family Connections targets families who are receiving MFIP, have at least one child age 10 and younger, and live in Beltrami, Cass, Crow Wing, Dakota, Olmsted, Polk, Ramsey or Sherburne Counties. Families will voluntarily participate and services will include parenting education and family and crisis counseling.

For more information on the PSOP and MFIP Family Connections Programs, contact Brenda Lockwood, (651) 4361-4699 or, brenda.lockwood@state.mn.us .

Strategies: Conduct a validation study of the Structured Decision Making Family Risk Assessment tool as it applies to various racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Modify or change the SDM assessment tool and/or protocol if changes are indicated by the study findings, and develop an implementation plan.

Status:

The SDM tool was recalibrated based on the results of the validation study, and more accurately identifies risk and those who need services across cultural and ethnic groups. Although there was not full agreement, the majority of the members of a SDM Improvements Committee recommended the implementation of the revised SDM Family Risk Assessment and the revised Family Risk Re-assessment tool proposed by the Children's Research Center. It was incorporated into the Social Services Information System in July 2007. It was included in the Child Welfare Training System and put into practice in September 2007. As recommended by the SDM Improvement Committee, re-evaluation of the validity and reliability of the SDM tool will be considered again after the revised tool has been in use for several years.

Compliance with Five Year CAPTA Plan Report, 2007 (continued)

Strategy: Develop three additional county-based Citizen Review Panels that examine state and local child protection policies, procedures and practices.

Status:

The third recommendation in the June 2007 *Hennepin County Child Protection Task Force Final Report* is: “Create a Citizens’ Review Panel to have an ongoing role in assessing Hennepin County’s child protection system, including addressing the disproportionate representation of people of color.”

In response to that recommendation, child protection management staff members from Hennepin County contacted DHS. Meetings were held and plans made to continue to work together in developing a Citizen Review Panel and have it operational in the coming months.

The Department of Human Services, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and White Earth Band of Ojibwe’s American Indian Child Welfare Initiative began in April 2006. Child abuse, neglect, and family preservation services are in the process of being fully implemented. Establishing Citizen Review Panels will be considered as child protection policies, procedures and systems are established. Plans to explore whether Citizen Review Panels would be beneficial to help protect children on the reservations from abuse and neglect, and how to best structure and implement them, will begin in 2008. Tribal representatives will be invited to attend the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in St. Paul next May.

The department will continue to pursue the expansion of Citizen Review Panels throughout Minnesota. It anticipates having at least three new panels, in addition to the current four panels, up and running by the end of 2009.

Looking Ahead

In 2008, with the department’s help, the Citizen Review Panels will continue to monitor the implementation of the mandated reporter tutorial, the mandated reporter videos and DVD, progress of the PSOP, and the expansion of the Citizen Review Panels.

For further information or a copy of the Minnesota Department of Human Services’ Five Year Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan and the status, contact Anita Keyes, Citizen Review Panels, at 651 431-4704 or anita.keyes@state.mn.us .

Appendix B – The County Panels’ 2007 Annual Reports

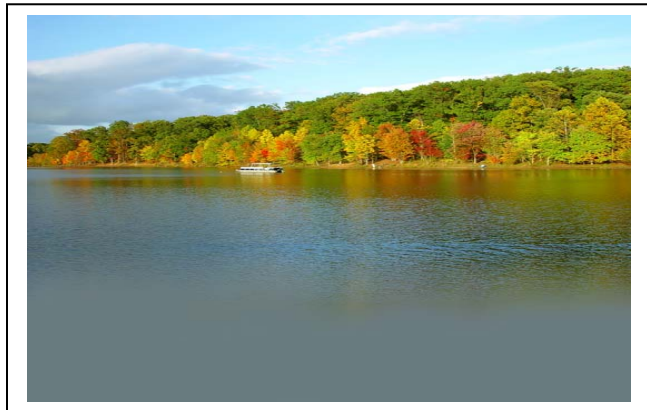
Chisago County Citizen Review Panel 2007 Annual Report

Mission Statement

To provide an opportunity for citizens to play a role in insuring children are protected from abuse and neglect, and to encourage and help build nurturing homes for children of our communities.

Panel Members

Alliegro, Ted, Lindstrom
Andor, Carl, North Branch
Gustafson, Bob, Commissioner
Hendrickson, Jessica, North Branch
Iloff, Brenda, Center City
Johnson, Shellene, Center City
Maier, Katy, Lindstrom



Resigned in 2007:

Burgoon, Theresa, North Branch
Voligny, Doylene, North Branch

St. Croix River, Taylors Falls, Chisago County
The River Rushes On
National Citizen Review Panel Conference
May 21, 22, 23, 2008 – St. Paul, Minnesota

Meetings

The Chisago County Citizen Review Panel met monthly on the first Tuesday of the month from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Monthly meetings were held at the North Branch Library and at the Chisago County Human Services building in North Branch. The Panel decided to make the Chisago County Human Services building in North Branch the regular meeting place. There were no meetings in May or July.

Members of the Chisago County Citizen Review Panel attended an all-panel event in St. Paul in April 2007, and the Co-Chairs attended the Fall Steering Committee Meeting in Red Wing, MN in October (Spring meeting had been cancelled due to weather).

Chisago County Citizen Review Panel Activities (continued)

Chisago County Citizen Review Panel, in conjunction with the other Minnesota Citizen Review Panels, studied the following documents which related to Child Welfare Financing in Minnesota.

- The Task Force for Financing the Future of Child Welfare in Minnesota's report, *Child Safety in Minnesota, Outcome-Driven and Performance-Based System*, September 25, 2006
- Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota evaluation report summary, *Human Services Administration*, January 2007
- Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSA), Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), Minnesota Inter-county Association, proposal fact sheet and summary regarding Child Safety Financing
- Financing the Future Child Safety Proposal Fact Sheet.

The examination of Child Welfare Financing also included a panel discussion at the Seventh Annual Celebration of Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels (this includes all Minnesota Citizen Review Panels). Child Welfare Financing Panel members included state and county officials. Chisago County Citizen Review Panel reviewed and agreed with the recommendations of the task force and Legislative Auditor's Report, which include:

Task Force Proposal:

- Child Safety System to support outcome driven and performance based accountability for safety, permanence and well-being for all Minnesota Children.
- Child Safety Fund to establish a balanced funding structure in which the state shares more equally in financial participation with counties in ensuring the safety of children.
- Opportunities for tribes to participate in the Child Safety System and Child Safety Fund.

Legislative Auditor's Report Recommendations:

- The Legislature should establish working groups to (1) streamline human services program requirements, and (2) consider changes in human services funding policy.
- The Legislature should grant the Department of Human Services (DHS) additional authority to act when counties do not meet performance benchmarks.
- The Legislature should clarify the statutes that define local human services governance duties.
- Through statutes or financial incentives, the Legislature should more strongly encourage smaller counties to jointly administer their human services agencies.
- The Legislature should authorize pilot projects in which DHS assumes responsibility for some county duties.
- DHS should develop better performance information and share it regularly with county officials.
- DHS should focus more oversight and assistance on counties struggling to deliver the full range of human services.
- County boards should improve their oversight of local human services agencies.

Chisago County Citizen Review Panel Activities (continued)

At our November meeting the Chisago Citizen Review Panel unanimously joined with the other three Minnesota Citizen Review Panels in adopting a resolution supporting the efforts of the A Minnesota Without Poverty Initiative. This initiative encourages Minnesota citizens and legislators to leverage knowledge and more resources to better care for and protect children.

The Chisago County Citizen Review Panel (CRP) continued to monitor the impact of lost staff and contract positions that occurred in December 2006. The CRP gathered information and data pertaining to numbers of cases, caseload size, and impact this has on providing services to children and families in the community. Long term effects are still unknown as the county continues to re-assign and reclassify positions to accommodate for fewer staff.

The Chisago County Citizen Review Panel continued to participate in Chisago County's redetermination process by reviewing requests for reconsideration of maltreatment findings. The panel members were again asked to participate in infant and child mortality reviews.

During discussions about child welfare financing in Minnesota and the impact on local services, our panel began to wonder if the general public understands the extent of services provided through this financing. We decided that one of the roles of our panel might be to assist in educating the public on the value of the services and necessity to adequately finance them. Thus, we've begun to plan a forum to address these issues.

Chisago County Citizen Review Panel established a budget and welcomed two new members, bringing the membership total to eight.

Carl Andor and Katie Maier are serving on the planning committee for the Seventh Annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference, which will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota in May 2008.

Committees

Given the nature of the panel's activities this year, there has not been a need for separate committees.

Recommendations

In order to continue to monitor the impact of lost positions on child and family services in Chisago County, we would ask that Chisago County Health and Human Services continue to update us on how they are responding to these cuts. Specifically, what programs, services and resources are being provided differently or not at all, and how are caseload sizes, children and families being impacted.

It is requested that Chisago County Health and Human Services continue to provide quarterly progress reports on their Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

In addition, we would like to be advised what effect A Minnesota Without Poverty Initiative (an initiative we support) has on child welfare financing statewide.

Chisago County Citizen Review Panel 2007 Annual Report (continued)

Looking Ahead

One main focus of Chisago County CRP in the upcoming year will be public education. We plan to host a public forum for citizens of Chisago County on a variety of topics pertaining to Child Welfare and its impact on the community. This will be presented in April to coincide with Child Abuse Prevention month.

We plan to continue monitoring Chisago County's Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

We intend on taking an active role in the Seventh Annual National Citizen's Review Panel Conference to be held May 21-23, 2008 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Acknowledgments

The Chisago County Citizen Review Panel would like to thank staff and administration of Chisago County Health and Human Services for their ongoing support of the panel and specifically this year for providing administrative support.

We would also like to thank Anita Keyes, Minnesota Department of Human Services, for her efforts and guidance in assisting us to carry out our duties.

Finally, we would like to recognize the dedication of former long time panel member Doyleene Voligny and panel member Theresa Burgoon, who have retired from the panel this last year.



Wild River State Park, St. Croix River, Chisago County, Minnesota



Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel Annual Report

2007

Downtown St. Paul from a River Boat on the Mississippi River
The River Rushes On, National Citizen Review Panel Conference
May 21, 22, 23, 2008 – St. Paul, Minnesota

Mission Statement

Provide opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring the child protection system is protecting children from abuse and neglect and ensuring a nurturing home environment.

Panel Members

Current Members

Lyn Birawer, St. Paul
Georgia Boehlke, St. Paul
JoAnn Cardenas Enos, St. Paul
Jan Gibson Talbot, Falcon Heights
Yumi Kayama, St. Paul
Heather Kilgore, Roseville
Jeanne Martin, St. Paul
Virginia Pieper, St. Paul
Mark Proctor, St. Paul
Cindy Toppin, St. Paul

Resigned in 2007

Mary Sembrowich, North Oaks
Antonia Wilcoxon, St. Paul
Sean Fessler, St. Paul
Marcie Jefferys, St. Paul
Jennifer Bertram, St. Paul

Panel Meetings

The Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel met on the first Wednesday of the month from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Lifetrack Resources in St. Paul, with the exception of May and July. Members of the Ramsey County Panel attended an all-panel event in St. Paul in May 2007. Committee members also met between the monthly meetings as needed.

Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel 2007 Annual Report (continued)

Panel Activities

- Budget and legislative issues were discussed at every meeting.
- A resolution was voted on and unanimously passed to support the efforts of the A Minnesota Without Poverty Initiative to encourage Minnesota citizens and legislators to leverage knowledge and more resources to better care for and protect children.
- Panel members attended the volunteer training, recognition and celebration of Minnesota Citizen Review Panels in May. Experts on child welfare financing addressed the panel members and included Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter, Minnesota Department of Human Services Assistant Commissioner for Children and Family Services Chuck Johnson and Joel Alter of the Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor.
- The Ramsey County Panel hosted Pete Singer at a monthly meeting regarding the program Care In Action Minnesota and provided support to the project. The project, sometimes referred to as "Adopt a Social Worker," allows congregations to provide assistance to families in need through a county social worker.
- The Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel 2006 Annual Report was sent to the Ramsey County Commissioners and presented to them at their February 2007 board meeting. Commissioner Carter requested quarterly reports to follow up on the recommendations of the panel. Written quarterly reports from Ramsey County Human Services have been inconsistent to date.
- Panel members Mark Proctor and JoAnn Cardenas Enos attended the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in Kentucky in the spring of 2007 and are currently participating on the planning committee for the National Citizen Review Panel Conference to be held in Minnesota in the spring 2008.
- Panel members Cindy Toppin and Georgia Boehlke are working on a project in collaboration with the Low Income Committee and the Children's Mental Health Advisory Council to develop appropriate programming for young children in homeless shelters.
- Panel members Ginny Pieper and Mary Sembrowich participated in Project Homeless Connect.
- Based on previous work done by the Panel, members continued to follow the progress of services and case planning provided for children ages birth to five years old.
- Subcommittee work included:
 - The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) subcommittee reviewed data and continued to monitor the work and recommendations of the plan.
 - A panel subcommittee explored child welfare financing, focusing on educating the panel and providing information to the legislature on funding aspects of child welfare.
 - Panel members Lyn Birawer and Ginny Pieper continued to monitor the implementation of recommendations of the Independent Living Skills (ILS) services in the 2005 and 2006 Children's Services Review Panel's Annual Reports.

Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel Activities (continued)

- Ongoing activities of panel members include:
 - Providing citizen input into Administrative Reviews one to two times per month.
 - Participation of the chair and vice chair in quarterly meetings of the Minnesota CRP Steering Committee and monthly meetings of the Ramsey County Citizens Advisory Council.
 - Receiving updates from Ramsey County Human Services staff on the Program Improvement Plans.
 - Monitoring Ramsey County's work to address the disparity of the numbers of families and children of color involved in the child protection system. Panel members watched and discussed the PBS series, *Race: the Power of an Illusion*.

The panel found it most helpful when there was participation of one member of the RCHSD child protection staff who could stay as a continuing liaison to our group rather than the intermittent and changing participation we have seen throughout the last few years. It's much harder to get a system changed if the players who can make these decisions keep changing. We are hoping to have a consistent child protection staff liaison assigned to the Children's Services Review Panel.

Recommendations of the Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel

- Both Child Protection and Guardianship/Adoption unit managers prepare quarterly written updates of progress toward goals set forth in the Program Improvements Plans (PIP) and e-mail the reports to the Program Improvement Plan Committee. (Quarterly updates due by: March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31.) The committee will report to the Panel.
- Ramsey County should actively lobby state government to increase federal and/or state funding for child welfare in Minnesota.
- Case plans in Ramsey County should mandate education planning and referral for all three to five year olds.
- No child shall leave the child welfare system of care without a permanent connection with a caring adult and that Ramsey County should mandate that all children aging out of the system have at least one caring, positive adult identified in their case plan by the age of 18.
- Ramsey County should assign a consistent child protection staff person who will stay as a continuing liaison to the Children's Services Review Panel.

Looking Ahead

The panel will continue to focus on service delivery for youth in transition and plans that reflect the needs of this population.

The panel will monitor the Program Improvement Plan for Ramsey County Human Services.

The panel will work in cooperation with community partners to advocate at the legislative level to address the needs of children in need of human services.

Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel 2007 Annual Report (continued)

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank former Ramsey County Human Services Department (RCHSD) staff members Susan Ault, director, Marvin Davis, program manager and Jenny Gordon, program manager, Children's and Family Services, for their past service and wish them the best in their new endeavors.

Current RCHSD staff members to be acknowledged are Dawn Autenreith, coordinator of the RCHSD Citizens Advisory Council, Richard Coleman, program manager and Clyde Turner, program manager, Children's and Family Services.

We would also like to acknowledge Lifetrack Resources for the generous donation of space for the monthly meetings.

Committee reports follow.

Independent Living Skills Committee 2007 Report

Submitted by the Following Panel Members:

Ginny Pieper and Lyn Birawer

Committee Activities:

Please reference previously identified recommendations, needs and resources presented to the Ramsey County Human Services Department (RCHSD) in our 2005 and 2006 Children's Services Review Panel Annual Reports. These reports address services specifically related to the Independent Living Skills of children in, and aging out of foster care. The panel made several requests for feedback related to the recommendations included in the reports. Unfortunately the Panel did not receive a response until Clyde Turner, RCHSD, attended our meeting in September 2007. At that time Mr. Turner was unable to address any of the recommendations specifically, citing he was new in his position and just learning more about his responsibilities. He did indicate he was aware of our report and took our recommendations seriously. He invited Lyn Birawer and Ginny Pieper to attend the next Youth in Transition Task Force meeting.

Lyn and Ginny did attend the Task Force meeting on September 27, 2007. It was learned that the recommendations the Children's Services Review Panel made in 2006 had not yet been acted on. Staff members still were not clear about each person's responsibilities regarding the ILS plans. Alternative ways to document ILS plans and a format for the plans were discussed. At this point, Lyn and Ginny felt little had progressed since recommendations had been identified in the Children's Services Review Panel's reports over the past two years. Youth leaving foster care in Ramsey County continue to fall through the cracks and are not learning the skills they need. As staff members transition into new positions, it is our great hope the recommendations will be addressed and implemented within the coming year.

Independent Living Skills Committee 2007 Report (continued)

At the October RCCSRP meeting, Clyde Turner did address the RCHSD response to the Panel's 11 recommendations including: training for Ramsey County ILS staff, foster parents and youth regarding ILS programs and the roles they have, putting systems in place to support monitoring the progress of ILS plans and addressing accountability to the service needs of youth ineligible for transition planning.

Program Improvement Plan Committee 2007 Report

Submitted by the Following Panel Members:

Heather Kilgore, Yumi Kayama and Georgia Boehlke

Introduction:

The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Committee reviewed the Minnesota Department of Human Services report "Evaluating Minnesota's Child Welfare System: A Review of Safety, Permanency and Well-Being Outcomes for Children and Families in Ramsey County," dated August 2005. To more fully understand this report, the committee also spent time reviewing the federal and State process of Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) which forms the basis for the report. The report identified outcome areas needing improvement as well as areas in which Ramsey County is demonstrating success. In response to the findings in the report, Ramsey County prepared a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address those areas needing improvement, to which the committee then turned.

The written PIPs to which the committee had access were helpful in identifying the overall strategies Ramsey County identified as addressing the reported areas needing improvement. The committee determined that an opportunity to hear from the managers in charge of implementing the plan would provide a fuller picture of the County's progress in implementation of the plan.

Committee Activities

The committee met twice to orient to the CFSR/PIP process; then made a written request for updates from the County. The committee requested an in-person progress report from the County, to be held at the Panel's monthly meeting. At the Panel's meeting on October 3, the Panel welcomed Richard Coleman for a PIP update for Child Protection, and on November 7, the Panel welcomed Carolyn Reynolds for a similar update for the Guardianship/Adoption unit.

Committee Recommendations

Based upon the information in this report, we make the following recommendations:

1. Both Child Protection and Guardianship/Adoption unit managers prepare quarterly written updates of progress toward goals set forth in the PIP, to be emailed to the committee. The committee will report to the Panel.

Program Improvement Plan Committee 2007 Report (continued)

Through the implementation of this recommendation, we believe that the committee will be able to better track future progress toward the goals set forth in the PIP. We also hope to begin to compare the issues identified in the PIP with larger funding needs to determine which issues require more resources to overcome.

Current Status of the Committee

The committee intends to continue its work, and will meet soon to discuss next steps.

Looking Ahead

The committee looks forward to receiving written reports from County unit managers on a quarterly basis.

Child Welfare Finance Committee 2007 Report

Submitted by the Following Panel Members:

Mark Proctor, Cindy Toppin, Jan Gibson Talbot and JoAnn Cardenas Enos

Introduction

Panel members indicated an overall concern for a perceived lack of adequate funding for child welfare in Ramsey County. The Child Welfare Finance Committee was established to educate our panel about and make recommendations regarding child welfare financing in Ramsey County.

Committee Activities

The Child Welfare Finance Committee began 2007 by conducting a literature review of relevant documents related to child welfare finance in Minnesota. Documents reviewed included: The Changing Landscape of Federal Child Welfare Financing by the National Conference of State Legislatures dated December 2006, Evaluation Report – Human Services Administration by the Office of the Legislative Auditor State of Minnesota dated January 2007 and Child Safety in Minnesota – A recommendation from the Task Force for Financing the Future of Child Welfare in Minnesota dated September 25, 2006.

Based on the findings of the literature review our committee decided that the best course of action would be to educate state legislators on child welfare financing issues. Our committee began working in conjunction with Court Appointed Special Advocates Minnesota and the Child Well-Being working group of Minnesota Without Poverty to hold a legislative briefing on child welfare funding issues in Minnesota. This combined workgroup began meeting in July and convened the legislative briefing on November 16, 2007.

Child Welfare Finance Committee 2007 Report (continued)

The 21 legislators who attended the legislative briefing represented Republicans and Democrats, members from the Twin Cities area and greater Minnesota, and legislators from a wide variety of committee areas. Over 80 citizens from various walks of life were in the audience to demonstrate support and interest in improving our child welfare system.

At the November briefing Senate Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller offered opening remarks followed by St Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Bishop Peter Rogness providing an opening statement and introduction for Tottiana Adams who read her poem entitled: "If home is where the heart is, then I'm heartless." Staff from the Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Safety and Permanency Division followed with a brief presentation about child welfare in Minnesota. Steve Christian, child welfare expert for the National Conference of State Legislatures, then gave his presentation regarding child welfare funding in Minnesota. Joel Alter from the Minnesota Office of Legislative Auditor (OLA) was the final presenter and covered child welfare issues addressed in the report Human Services Administration from the OLA dated January 2007. The legislators in attendance asked questions of the gathered experts and expressed their interest in improving the child welfare system in Minnesota.

Committee Recommendations

Based upon the information in this report, we make the following recommendations:

1. That Ramsey County should actively lobby state government to increase federal and/or state funding for child welfare in Minnesota.

Current Status of the Committee

The committee intends to continue its work, and will meet soon to discuss next steps.

Looking Ahead

The Child Welfare Finance Committee intends to continue to work with legislators and county officials to ensure that the child welfare system in Minnesota has adequate financial resources to meet the needs of children and families in the system.



From the Archives

Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel Administrative Review Information and Check List

* Purpose of the Administrative Review is to determine:

- Safety of the child
- Continued necessity of placement
- Appropriateness of placement
- Extent of compliance with the placement plan
- Extent of progress made toward alleviating the need for placement
- For children placed out of state or a substantial distance from home, why the placement continues to be in the child's best interest
- Likely date the family will be reunified or other permanent placement finalized
- For children 16 and older – discuss services for child to assist with transition from foster care to living on his/her own (Independent Living Skills Plan).

* Source: The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)

Information to Review

Administrative Review date:

Participants: (circle) social worker...guardian ad litem...foster parent...youth...birth parent...Children's Services Review Panel member...others:

Child's or youth's name: Age: Gender: (circle) M or F

Placement: Date of placement: How long in this placement?
Is this placement still appropriate? Why or why not?

Likely date family will be reunified? OR, Likely date other permanent placement will be finalized?

School: Name: Grade:
How is the school involved? (circle) IEP...Special education...After school activities...Other:

Is the school still appropriate?

Other Activities: (circle) Community activities...Therapeutic recreational activities...Church... Other:

Relationships: How are relationships with peers?

How are relationships with birth-siblings and birth-parents? How are relationships with others in foster home?

Medical and Dental Information: Date of last doctor's appointment: Reason:

Current physical health situation:

Date of last dental appointment:

Current dental health situation:

Agency Contact: When was the last time you saw child in person? Are you allowed to meet with child alone?
Is contact with the child's biological parent(s) permitted? (circle) Yes No If yes, when was the last time you saw them?

Independent Living Skills: (16 and older) Is there an Independent Living Skills Plan? (circle) Yes No
If yes, is it still appropriate? Is the Plan meeting the needs of the youth?

Who has signed the plan? (circle) Child...Birth-parent...Worker...Foster parent...Other:

Do the foster parents have a copy of the Independent Living Skills Plan? (circle) Yes No

Washington County Citizen Review Panel 2007 Annual Report

Mission Statement

As volunteer citizens, we will assist the child protection system with ongoing evaluation to strive for the protection of children.

Panel Members

Abelson, Jolene, Cottage Grove
Bebeau, Ann, Stillwater
Benson, Robert, Hugo
Charley, Melissa, Woodbury
Horan, Danielle, Oakdale
Heidi Nakatani, Hastings
Sue Lewis, Stillwater
Mary Nelson, Stillwater
Peavey, Gail, Oak Park Heights



Meetings

The Panel met the third Tuesday evening of the month from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. except in July and May. Panel members attended the all-panel event in St. Paul in May. They met as needed between the monthly meetings for projects and committee work. The majority of the Panel meetings were held at Washington County's Service Center in Woodbury. The panel members also met in and toured the two newest Washington County facilities, one in Cottage Grove and the other in Forest Lake.

Activities

- Panel members studied child welfare financing at the May Minnesota Citizen Review Panel annual event with several expert speakers.
- The Panel, as a whole, adopted a resolution supporting the Minnesota Without Poverty effort to educate the public and legislators about child welfare financing in Minnesota. Ann Bebeau attended the presentation held at the State Office Building in December 2007.
- On behalf of the entire panel, Melissa Charley researched and drafted a letter in support of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) bill before Congress and forwarded this letter to Washington County Commissioners and local Representatives.
- Heidi Nakatani, Melissa Charley and Dani Horan raised funds for and participated in the Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota Walk to End Child Abuse in September, raising over \$ 400.00.
- Past and present Panel members were invited and did participate in a Stakeholders' Interview conducted by the federal reviewers during the Health and Human Services Child and Families Services Review (CFSR) in September 2007.

Photo: Lift-bridge over the St. Croix River from Stillwater, Washington County, Minnesota to Wisconsin
The River Rushes On, National Citizen Review Panel Conference, May 21, 22, 23, 2008 – St. Paul, MN
Photo submitted by Mary Nelson, Washington County Citizen Review Panel

Washington County Citizen Review Panel Activities (continued)

- Dani Horan represented Washington County and Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels (CRP) while serving on the self-assessment team of the child protection system in Minnesota, in preparation for the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Chisago County CRP member, Carl Andor, also served on the team.
- Mary Nelson served as a liaison to the County Board of Commissioners and the Panel with regards to some child protection budget items. She advocated for more positions within Washington County Community Services (WCCS).
- Sue Lewis and Mary Nelson are currently serving on the planning committee for the Seventh Annual National CRP Conference.
- To engage local politicians, Mary Nelson attended a Town Hall meeting in Bayport with local Representative Julie Bunn and Senator Kathy Saltzman. During the session she brought to their attention the results from the Independent Living Skills (ILS) Study conducted by the Citizen Review Panel last year. Both seemed interested in the issue and Mary hopes to follow-up with and invite to speak with the Panel in the near future.
- Cheryl Anderson presented the 2006 Washington County Citizen Review Panel (CRP) Annual Report to the County Commissioners.
- In March, Heidi Nakatani presented the 2006 Washington County CRP Annual report to the Child Safety and Permanency Unit at the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS).
- The Panel was involved in 17 reconsiderations of findings of maltreatment during 2007.
- Gail Peavey participated in the How Our Potential Explodes (HOPE) training at the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Committees

In 2007 the Washington County Citizen Review Panel members formed two new committees. They are the Advocacy for Independent Living Skills Resources Committee and the All-Family Foster Care Committee. The 2007 annual committee reports begin on the next page.

Acknowledgment

The panel would like to the opportunity to recognize an individual whose involvement had a tremendous impact on the Panel and its work, Tamara Kincaid. Tammy has served as the County representative to our Panel for the last five years. Tammy has proven through her absolute willingness to assist the Panel, the County's commitment to fostering a positive relationship. She has been an invaluable source of information and guidance while working on projects.

While we will miss her immensely, we wish her only the best in her future endeavors.

**Washington County Citizen Review Panel
Advocacy for Independent Living Skills Resources Committee
2007 Annual Report**

Submitted by the Following Panel Members:

Jolene Abelson, Ann Bebeau, Melissa Charley, Heidi Nakatani, Mary Nelson

Introduction:

This subcommittee was formulated in the fall of 2007 as an outgrowth of the Independent Life Skills (ILS) Case Review and Focus Groups Study conducted in 2006. The ILS Study found that youth aging out of foster care have several important hurdles to overcome that are impeded by the "system". The hurdles include the ability to obtain adequate housing; employment; and medical, dental, and mental health care. The Committee's objectives are to develop and implement a strategy to educate county and state legislators and policymakers; to secure needed resources and funding; and to develop policy and procedural changes. The ultimate goal is to reduce the number of homeless teens who age out of the foster care system in Washington County.

Activities:

The Committee has begun its work to research what needs to be done legislatively and informally to effectively assist youth aging out of foster care to be able to live independently. The research has included conducting internet searches for effective, low cost programming; meeting with professional personnel who can assist in reducing the barriers youth face; and supporting and attending child advocacy conferences including "Bridges Out of Poverty" which opens up dialogue between the Panels and Legislators and gives input into the redesign of child welfare financing in Minnesota. At an early step, Rep. Julie Bunn and Sen. Kathy Saltzman were apprised of the recommendations of the ILS Study at a June 2007 Legislative Town Meeting.

Looking Ahead:

The 2006 ILS Study found that in addition to the system hurdles, the funding cuts to existing effective programs has eroded the effectiveness of educating youth in transitioning skills. Next steps include working with the Minnesota and Washington County Departments of Human Services to develop a strategy to work with the appropriate legislative and governmental bodies to advocate for changes outlined in the Independent Living Skills (ILS) Study Report recommendations.

The Committee is researching the issue of Juvenile Criminal History Records, especially pertaining to arrests. Currently landlords are able to receive erroneous and damaging information from private businesses by circumventing the criminal justice system. Many times this prevents young people from obtaining housing. The Committee is exploring ways to prevent this from occurring.

Because the Panel represents a broad spectrum of the Washington County communities, not only geographically but also employment-wise, panel members are better able to think creatively and utilize networks to assist these young citizens to achieve a successful transition to adulthood.

**Washington County Citizen Review Panel
All-Family Foster Care Committee
2007 Annual Report**

Submitted by the Following Panel Members:

Bob Benson, Dani Horan, Sue Lewis, Gail Peavey.

Committee's Goals:

To determine the feasibility of providing All-Family Foster Care as an option through Washington County Community Services (WCCS).

Activities and Conclusions:

Hoping to positively contribute to the ever changing landscape of Social Services provided here in Minnesota, our committee is interested in the concept of All-Family Foster care.

Current Status of the Committee:

This committee is currently in the fact finding stage and information has proven to be quite limited. Having queried the National Citizen's Review Panel Listserv, many of the responses stated that while they have not encountered this situation in their area they were quite interested in hearing more.

Recommendations:

As we are still looking for data, this committee has no recommendations at this time. We hope to have more solid findings and to form a recommendation in 2008.



Photo: Sunset on the St. Croix River near Stillwater, Washington County, Minnesota
The River Rushes On, National Citizen Review Panel Conference, May 21, 22, 23, 2008 – St. Paul, MN
Photo submitted by Mary Nelson, Washington County Citizen Review Panel



**Winona County
Citizen Review Panel
2007 Annual Report**

Bluffs Overlooking the Mississippi River – Winona, Minnesota
The River Rushes On, National Citizen Review Panel Conference
May 21, 22, 23, 2008 – St. Paul, Minnesota

Mission Statement

The mission of the Winona County Citizen Review Panel is to improve the child protection system through the involvement of citizens who represent the community.

Panel Members

Current Panel Members

- Mary Feathergill
- Matt Vetter
- Jen Whetstone
- Jean Stockwell
- Molli Kook
- Mary Hewett
- Tonya Van Tol
- Shari Jarvis

Resigned in 2007

- Mari Jo Bell
- Julie Erickson
- Debra Fihn
- Lindsey Hanson
- Jacquelyn Kelly
- Kathie Peterson

Meetings

In 2007, the Winona County Citizen Review Panel met on January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, August 8, September 12 (Orientation of New Members), October 10, November 14 and December 12, at Winona County Department of Human Services from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Activities

Winona County Panel members have continued to address truancy and tardiness by serving on a county-wide task force and monitoring the work of the task force.

Panel members supported a resolution to support A Minnesota Without Poverty Initiative to educate the public and legislators about child welfare financing in Minnesota.

Mary Feathergill is collaborating with other county panel members to coordinate the National Citizen Review Panel Conference scheduled for May 21-23, 2008 in St. Paul. The entire panel will be working on materials related to our work to be displayed at the conference. Jean Stockwell has invited a university student with graphic design experience to aid in this work.

Winona County Citizen Review Panel Activities (continued)

Due to the resignation of several panel members, the panel continues to recruit and screen new members: five members joined the panel in August.

Winona County Citizen Review Panel Vision and Action Priorities:

With the addition of the new members, the panel spent two months working on the vision of the panel and prioritizing action items for individual members and possible committees to address over the coming year. Below are the priorities of the Winona County Citizen Review Panel for 2007-2008.

Citizen Review Panel members will focus on the following topics:

Committee: Collaborate with the National Child Protection Training Center at Winona State University

Purposes for addressing this topic:

- Learn what this organization does.
- Determine if and how the child protection system in Winona County collaborates with the National Child Protection Training Center.
- See how the Citizen Review Panel might support the work of the National Child Protection Training Center.
- Educate others in the child protection system and our community about the resources and work of the National Child Protection Training Center.

Desired outcome: Help protect children in Winona County from abuse and neglect by collaborating and cooperating with the National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC).

Plan:

- Invite a NCPTC representative to come and make a presentation to the panel about the training center and Matty's Place.
- Pursue getting a panel member on the planning board of Matty's Place to be a liaison between the Panel and Matty's Place.

Committee: Support for relative child-care-givers.

Purposes for addressing this topic:

- Learn what services and supports are available in Winona County to relatives who are involved with the Winona County child protection system and are caring for children who are not able to live with their parents.
- Advocate for needed services for relative care-givers.
- Monitor the implementation of recommendations that may result and be made to the Winona County Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Human Services to help meet the needs of relative care-givers.
- Educate others in our community about the needs of relative care-givers and the children in their care.

Winona County Citizen Review Panel Activities (continued)

Committee: Support for relative child-care-givers (continued)

Desired outcomes:

- Children cared for by relatives are safe from abuse and neglect and have their needs met.
- Relative care-givers have the resources and support they need to raise the children.
- Birth-parents, guardians or relative caregivers are offered the resources they need to support a safe family environment.

Plan:

- To begin: research the topic and find out what resources are currently in place.
 - Interview people who work in child protection.
 - Invite someone from child protection to address the topic at a panel meeting.
 - Identify laws and resources available.
 - Identify current social work practice.

Committee: How are reports of child abuse or neglect for children with disabilities or special needs (especially those ages zero to five) responded to in Winona County?

Purposes for addressing this topic:

- There is frustration because it seems as if some young, vulnerable children with special needs are not getting the services they need. Identified services are not always followed up on by their parents and extended families.
- We would like to look into:
 - When and how can child protection intervene for these children ages 0 to 5?
 - What is the best way to intervene and make sure these children and families get the services needed?
 - How can we keep these children from “falling through the cracks?”
 - When does the lack of follow through become child abuse or neglect?
- Educate others in our community about children ages zero to five with special needs.

Desired Outcome: Children, ages zero to five and with special needs, get the services and care they need.

Plan:

- To begin: research the topic and find out what resources are currently in place.
 - Interview people who work in child protection.
 - Invite someone from child protection to address the topic at a panel meeting.
 - Identify laws and resources available.
 - Identify current social work practice.

Training:

New panel members received orientation training during the September meeting date.

Winona County Citizen Review Panel Activities (continued)

Collaboration with County Human Services:

Jen Whetstone, Tonya Van Tol, Mary Hewett and Matt Vetter participated in a review of a request for redetermination of substantiated findings of maltreatment; the team reviewing the case agreed with the substantiation of maltreatment.

Craig Brooks, Director of Winona County Human Services, has been attending Citizen Review Panel meetings at which he provides updates on the work his agency is involved in. He also alerts our group to upcoming training opportunities at the meetings or via email.

Mary Feathergill continues to serve on the Human Services Advisory Board.

Partnership with other agencies:

Members collaborate with other agencies in many arenas. Members serving on the Winona County Educational Neglect and Truancy Task Force are working with individuals representing the Winona Area Public Schools, the Hiawatha Valley Education District (HVED), the judicial system, Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center, Winona County Human Services, and other area school districts.

Cooperation with the state DHS:

Anita Keyes, of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, continues to advise the panel, providing monthly updates and gathering input from members on various state initiatives. Anita also provides information on training opportunities at meetings or through email.

Matt Vetter, chair, attended the Steering Committee meeting held October 12 in Red Wing, MN.

Committees:

*See above - Winona County Citizen Review Panel Vision and Action Priorities

Acknowledgments

The Winona County Citizen Review Panel deeply appreciates the guidance and support provided by Anita Keyes, Minnesota Department of Human Services. The Panel also recognizes the dedication of Craig Brooks, Director of Winona County Human Services and his staff in keeping panel members updated. The Panel would like to express thanks to Julie Thompson for the opportunity to offer citizen input in reviewing requests for redetermination of substantiated cases of maltreatment. We would also like to thank Margaret Schild and her staff at Community Education for their support in promoting the Panel's work and recruiting efforts. Finally, our gratitude goes to Winona County Human Services for the use of space for our meetings.

Appendix C

Estimated Volunteer Hours Contributed Report

Estimated volunteer hours contributed by Minnesota citizen review panel members in 2007 are **1,305 hours**.

This estimate is based on the number of panel members, the hours of meetings attended and an estimate of time each panel member spent on work outside of the monthly meetings. This is a low estimate of hours contributed because many more unreported hours were spent in outside committee work, writing reports, recruiting panel members and other panel related activities.

The latest available estimated dollar value of volunteer time for 2006 by the Independent Sector is **\$18.77 per hour**.

According to the Independent Sector's Web site, "It is very difficult to put a dollar value on volunteer time. Volunteers provide many intangibles that can not be easily quantified. For example, volunteers demonstrate the amount of support an organization has within a community, provide work for short periods of time, and provide support on a wide range of projects."

The above value of volunteer time is based on the average hourly earnings of all production and non-supervisory workers on private non-farm payrolls (as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics). Independent Sector takes this figure and increases it by 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits.

Hours and the value of the hours contributed in 2007:

1,305 hours X \$18.77 per hour = \$24,494.85.

Thank you, volunteers with Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels!

Appendix D

Minnesota Statutes

256.01 Commissioner of human services; powers, duties.

Subd. 15. Citizen review panels. (a) The commissioner shall establish a minimum of three citizen review panels to examine the policies and procedures of state and local welfare agencies to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. Local social service agencies shall cooperate and work with the citizen review panels. Where appropriate, the panels may examine specific cases to evaluate the effectiveness of child protection activities. The panels must examine the extent to which the state and local agencies are meeting the requirements of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act. The commissioner may authorize mortality review panels or child protection teams to carry out the duties of a citizen review panel if membership meets or is expanded to meet the requirements of this section.

(b) The panel membership must include volunteers who broadly represent the community in which the panel is established, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, child protection advocates, and representatives of the councils of color and ombudsperson for families.

(c) A citizen review panel has access to the following data for specific case review under this paragraph: police investigative data; autopsy records and coroner or medical examiner investigative data; hospital, public health, or other medical records of the child; hospital and other medical records of the child's parent that relate to prenatal care; records created by social service agencies that provided services to the child or family; and personnel data related to an employee's performance in discharging child protection responsibilities. A state agency, statewide system, or political subdivision shall provide the data upon request of the commissioner. Not public data may be shared with members of the state or local citizen review panel in connection with an individual case.

(d) Notwithstanding the data's classification in the possession of any other agency, data acquired by a local or state citizen review panel in the exercise of its duties are protected nonpublic or confidential data as defined in section 13.02, but may be disclosed as necessary to carry out the purposes of the review panel. The data are not subject to subpoena or discovery. The commissioner may disclose conclusions of the review panel, but may not disclose data on individuals that were classified as confidential or private data on individuals in the possession of the state agency, statewide system, or political subdivision from which the data were received, except that the commissioner may disclose local social service agency data as provided in section 626.556, subdivision 11d, on individual cases involving a fatality or near fatality of a person served by the local social service agency prior to the date of death.

Please join us.

The River Rushes On
Seventh Annual National Citizen Review Panel Conference
Keeping Children Safe from Abuse and Neglect

May 21, 22, 23, 2008
Saint Paul, Minnesota



Photo courtesy of John A. Weeks III