

## **Division of Family Services Monthly Update April 2010**

### **Training**

Consultants from the Institute for Human Services (IHS) continue to provide assistance to the Division of Family Services staff, the Area Training Center (ATC) staff and what is now called the Virginia Child Welfare Training Program Steering Committee.

Nan Beeler, a consultant from IHS, has met by phone and in person with DFS staff to discuss integration of Transformation training initiatives into on-going VISSTA training. In addition, she spoke to the Steering Committee on the establishment of universal child welfare competencies and core competencies and the development of core curricula for both front-line and supervisory child welfare staff. At the end of April and the beginning of May, two consultants from IHS will be visiting each of the five ATCs to evaluate capacity regarding competency based training for child welfare, basic operations, and ATC's ability to assess local agency training needs.

In addition, each of the ATCs will be conducting a special event for LDSS in the coming months. Two of the ATCs have scheduled their special events – the Western ATC will host their special event regarding substance abuse on April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and the Piedmont ATC will host their special event regarding court etiquette on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

April is historically a busy month of assessment and negotiation of the six training contracts. DFS will be working closely with other Divisions to incorporate changes to the training contracts that reflect efforts to further develop the competency based system. In order to help inform the training work plan for FY2011, the Hayley Brooks will be meeting with all DFS Program Managers and building block leads to discuss ongoing training needs within DFS and how the Steering Committee can work towards supporting those needs.

The Steering Committee meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup> will be devoted to the task of FY 2011 contract work plan input through face to face collaboration by all of the Committee members. Work on the overall development of the system will be happening at the same time.

### **Managing by Data**

In March, the Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis Unit (OBRA) and Mickey Groomes conducted the Applied SafeMeasures training in the Northern Region. OBRA released OASIS version 3.6 which featured numerous bug fixes, removed SSN as the work identification number, and migrated the SDM tables to a new server. SafeMeasures was updated to include month contact data for CPS ongoing cases. A report highlighting timeliness to adoption is currently in production. In addition, OBRA conducted multiple in house SafeMeasures trainings for local departments of social services.

Please be aware that OBRA staff consolidated all reporting to one link:

<http://spark.dss.virginia.gov/divisions/dfs/obra/index.cgi> . Over the coming weeks, Applied SafeMeasures trainings will be conducted in the Central and Piedmont regions. In addition, OBRA will

be conducting an analysis of children that have left congregate care since the beginning of Transformation.

### **Family Engagement**

The Requests for Funding Assistance Review Committee reviewed and selected the participants for the pilot project between VDSS and the Court Improvement Program (CIP). The participants to date include, Chesterfield-Colonial Heights DSS, Chesapeake DSS, Hampton DSS, and Henrico DSS. Since the CIP had additional funds available, a second RFA was submitted targeting smaller agencies. The deadline for completing the second Request for Funding Assistance is April 2, 2010.

Dan Cowan and Fred Harris of the Annie E. Casey Foundation facilitated a refresher training for the CPS, Foster Care and Adoption Regional Consultants and a Train the Trainer session for VISSTA family engagement trainers. In addition, Tamara Temoney observed the final day of CWS 4030, the facilitator training session for family engagement. Minor revisions will be made and the course will go live for LDSS at the beginning of May.

In an effort to communicate regularly about family engagement, Tamara Temoney has been busy presenting to various stakeholder groups. She presented at the Best Practices Court Community Forum in Roanoke and attended the Family Engagement Roundtable of the Central region. In addition, Tamara and Paul McWhinney facilitated a telephone conference with the local directors of Phase One for family engagement. In April, a plenary session about family engagement will be held at the Conference for the Judges and Clerks of the Court Improvement Program, with an expected attendance of 94 juvenile court judges.

### **Resource Families**

In March, Regional Peer Cooperatives (RPCs) have continued, featuring the third round of Regional Peer Cooperatives offerings (Supporting Resource Families: First Placement, Working with Birth Families, Grief and Loss) in Piedmont, Eastern and Northern. Sessions of RPC 4 (Supporting Resource Families: Customer Service, Surveying Families, Strengthening Connections across Agency Programs) were held in the Central and Western regions. After each RPC 3, the Resource Family Consultant for that region is working with each participating agency to document what they have accomplished thus far, taking inventory of "old business" that needs more support and preparing to meet those needs. If you are interested in reviewing these interim progress reports, please contact Susan Taylor.

Work on the Community Resource Adoptive and Foster Family Training (CRAFFT) project has continued in an effort to align next year's contract with the work of the resource family unit and to include training for families, offered at a regional level so as to include all parents. This both assists LDSS in meeting the in-service requirement (effective last year) for resource families, and provides another avenue for supporting family engagement in general through preparing resource families.

Also in March, the Resource Family Unit joined the Child Welfare Training Steering Committee. This will insert family voice into the reengineering of training, as well as help establish a parallel process of examining competencies for families as this is being done for child welfare staff.

RPCs will continue throughout the coming months. In April, RPC 4 will be held in the Eastern, Northern and Piedmont Regions. Guests are welcomed, so if you would like to attend part or all of an RPC, please contact Susan Taylor so that she can coordinate with each Regional Consultant. April also marks the beginning of planning for the second wave of RPCs—there is already a high demand in many regions!

### **Community Based Care**

The State Executive Council (SEC) approved the policy recommendations on pool fund carve out. The only wording the Council wished to be added was one that required a report to them after the first year and then biannually. The policy and 2 application documents are with Secretary Hazel for his review. Once he approves the package of documents, it will be posted for localities to begin applying as soon as June 1, 2010. The SEC also approved family engagement policy recommendations with no changes. This policy will not only require CPMTs to draft policies for the FAPT, but will allow agencies using a structured, facilitated family team meeting to integrate the CSA system with this process. This is not only important to the appropriate involvement of families but also to the discovery of natural supports and non-traditional service providers. The Office of Comprehensive Services is drafting a guidance document. Once completed and reviewed by SLAT, these documents will also be forwarded to Secretary Hazel for his review and release. These two documents are integral to the advancement of child service system transformation and to community-based service development.

### **Child Protective Services**

The RFP for the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grants was due on March 15 and a total of 39 proposals were received. The review committee was selected, involving 21 people who were provided two orientation conference calls on March 9 and March 11, 2010. The 39 proposals were reviewed for completeness and distributed them to the review committee for review on March 19, 2010.

CPS prevention staff conducted an orientation for a Peer Review committee for Rappahannock Community Services Board on March 4, 2010, and the Peer Review was conducted on March 25, 2010. Six Peer Review Team members participated in the review which included discussion of an extensive self-assessment conducted by the agency and interviews with families served, agency board members, community partners and staff. In addition, two CPS prevention staff participated in the Triple P Positive Parenting Program sponsored by the Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Positive Parenting Coalition on March 31, 2010

The CPS Policy Advisory Committee met March 11 to review drafts of CPS policy incorporate guidance around family partnership meetings for agencies choosing to implement at the decision points in the CPS process. In addition, Rita Katzman participated in the State Child Fatality Team meeting on March 12. The Team is finalizing its recommendations in Non-Caretaker Homicides. A presentation was made to the Team by the CPS Program Manager on the overall findings from the federal Child and Family Services Review and the status of the Program Improvement Plan.

CPS Prevention staff participated in a meeting of the Home Visiting Consortium (HVC) at the Virginia Department of Health on April 1, 2010. One focus of the meeting was the funding for home visiting programs included as part of the Health Care Reform Legislation. The grant program is established as a new section of the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) block grant program. This provision provides \$1.5 billion to states over 5 years for maternal, infant and early childhood visitation programs. Grantees are required to use an evidence-based program model with a benchmark component measuring items such as childhood injury prevention. All states must complete a needs assessment within the next six months to identify communities that have few quality home visitation programs and are at risk for poor maternal and child health as a precondition for receiving the home visiting funds. The Virginia Department of Health is taking the lead with the needs assessment. The HVC reviewed a draft timeline and resource list of needs assessments.

CPS Prevention staff attended the Prevent Child Abuse Virginia Child Abuse Prevention Month Kick-off Ceremony at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Children's Garden in Richmond on April 1, 2010. VDSS Interim Commissioner Margaret Schultze presented the Governor's Proclamation recognizing Child Abuse Prevention Month in Virginia. Prevent Child Abuse Virginia planted a pinwheel garden representing 3,500 children receiving services through the Healthy Families program across Virginia. In addition, planning for Structured Decision Making (SDM) implementation in CPS continues with drafting policy updates and revising SDM training curriculum for workers and supervisors. Rita Katzman is planning a presentation to the State Board of Social Services on child fatalities and the use of SDM tools.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. VDSS and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia are sponsoring the child abuse prevention conference "Now is the Time. . . Children Can't Wait" on Thursday, April 22, 2010 at the Holiday Inn Koger Conference Center. The Family and Children's Trust Fund, the Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, and the Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention are co-sponsors. Registration has been brisk.

### **Foster Care**

The Subsidized Custody guidance subcommittee led by Lyndell Lewis is meeting weekly in order to draft guidance by June. An implementation plan that would allow Virginia to begin using Subsidized Custody payments as of January 2011 has been completed and submitted for review. Unresolved issues such as how to expand the ability to use subsidized custody for a larger portion of children in care remain to be addressed, likely through legislative action.

The Educational Advisory Committee co-chaired by Peyton McCoy, developed to improve educational outcomes for youth in foster care by taking advantage of the changes in the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Incentives Act of 2008, has completed its short term goals which included defining critical terms (e.g., what does immediate enrollment of children in school mean) and forming an initial list of variables related to educational attendance and attainment that may be accessible from the Department of Education data system. The group is beginning its work on intermediate goals such as developing a Memorandum of Agreement between DOE and VDSS; defining guidance relate to how LDSS and LEA's can work collaboratively to determine if a child should remain in his school of origin, and how to develop increased foster care placements in children's community to prevent placement outside their school district. Many of these efforts coincide with activities occurring

around the building blocks of the Transformation, and individuals in charge of those initiatives are being consulted as needed.

The Health Plan Advisory Committee led by Kim McGaughey, developed to address and identify improved health care outcomes for youth in foster care consistent with the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Incentives Act of 2008, met for the third time. Health care outcomes and options for data tracking had been brainstormed in a subcommittee and were shared with the entire group. DMAS and VDSS continue to meet to move forward in sharing data between both systems to obtain quantitative data regarding availability, accessibility, timeliness, etc. of health care for children in foster care. Matt Wade is working with Kim to assist in this effort.

The Process Improvement Team (PIT) led by Therese Wolf began the initial work of reviewing data related to youth in care with permanency goals of Permanent Foster Care, Independent Living and Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement. Therese is working with Dorothy Hollahan and Rebecca Hjelm to disaggregate the preliminary data and establish a list of questions that will be used to define problem statement(s). Initial consideration of PIT team members has occurred and members will be identified at the beginning of April.

### Adoption

As a result of the Division reviewing statewide data and working to develop strategies to improve the timeliness to adoption, a new approach for the adoption contractors will be implemented for SFY 2011. The two categories of youth who are included in the new approach are 1) youth who have parental rights for both parents terminated, have a goal of adoption, are not in a pre-adoptive placement and who have the potential to be adopted prior to the 24 month standard set by the federal government in the Child and Family Reviews; and 2) youth who have been identified as being at high-risk for aging out of care. These youth have had parental rights for both parents terminated, have a stated goal of adoption, are not in a pre-adoptive placement, and generally are over the age of 12, male, and/or African American and will, in most cases, have surpassed 24 months in foster care. During the month of March, the following tasks were undertaken:

- Data was compiled and reviewed to determine the number of children with termination of parental rights who were did not have adoptive homes as their placement status. There were 758 children identified statewide.
- Designated Adoption staff met with the Adoption Contractors on March 16, 2010 for the purpose of discussing and reviewing proposed changes for the adoption contract for SFY 2011.
- Letters were sent to local agencies informing them of the new change and requesting them to confirm the numbers of children who were in non-adoptive placements.
- Discussions were held with local agencies with memorandum of understanding to determine the revisions for the upcoming year.
- Local agencies began to submit reports on the status of the children to include confirmation of children who were in non-adoptive placements as well as children who are adoptive placements. Agencies also identified children who are in Appeal Status with the courts for termination of parental rights.
- The Data Unit began to develop a report for key milestones in Safe Measures for the adoption process after termination of parental rights.

- Adoption contracts are working on proposals which are due around April 20, 2010 for the contract year.

In addition, Adoption Disclosure staff provided a presentation to Division Leadership Team on the use of Accurint, a search engine, to search for family members. A discussion on how to conduct searches was also provided to adoption professions who attended the ADOPT meeting on March 4, 2010. This session provide information on how to conduct searches for family members. AREVA staff reviewed the AREVA guidance in the Agency Adoption Policy for changes needed to enhance the overall process. They are also looking at adoption exchange processes in other states to identify applicability of those procedures in Virginia.

The Adoption Unit posted Broadcast 6082 about adoption assistance and Fostering Connection to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008 in February. This broadcast highlights the new federal requirements for adoption assistance and Title IV-E eligibility. By federal fiscal year 2018, adoption assistance will be de-linked from Aid to Family with Dependent Children (AFDC). The Adoption Program Manager and Policy Specialist attended four regional meetings with the Foster Care and Adoption Regional Consultants to review the broadcast and the new form. The final regional meeting is April 9 in Abingdon. In addition, the Adoption Unit began to gather information on issues related to the VEMAT and adoption assistance process. The VEMAT procedures were implemented in October 1, 2010; however, issues have been identified related to the utility of the instrument to adoption assistance over a long term process. Also, families and local agencies have reported challenges with the initiation of adoption assistance agreement when concurrence cannot be established on the initial rate.

Staff processed 199 new adoption petitions in March 2010 and 84 new final orders of adoption. The Putative Father Registry had received a total of 399 registrations, 46 matches of the registrations and 1429 searches of the data base the Registry was implemented on July 1, 2007.

### **Adult Services**

The proposed revisions to the Auxiliary Grant (AG) regulation were posted for a 60-day public comment period on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Of 12 comments so far, 11 are from Southwest Virginia assisted living (ALF) providers opposing the proposed 90-day residency requirement for AG eligibility. They argue that it will put them out of business, putting employees out of work and making indigent residents homeless. They also argue that: most residents are mentally ill and will need hospitalization if they are not in assisted living; the AG reimbursement rate is already too low to cover the cost of care; and Americans have the right to live wherever they choose, including Tennessee residents who want to live in a Virginia ALF.

The online course, ADS 1102 Private Pay Uniform Assessment Instrument, was reviewed and revised to enhance the user experience and to update to the material covered in the course. In addition, work continues to address recommendations of the internal audit of the AG Program. A training program has been developed to help assisted living facility providers who accept the AG to understand program requirements, and a checklist has been drafted for Licensing inspectors to document handling ALF residents' personal funds.

About 10 percent of local Adult Services/Adult Protective Services (AS/APS) programs are reporting that they have suspended, or soon will suspend, their home-based companion services programs because

their state and local funding (BL833/824) have run out. Home-based services funding was cut 10 percent in September. Agencies also are reducing service hours and using attrition to address budget shortfalls and attempt to preserve services for APS clients. They express concern that loss of services will trigger new APS reports. Statewide, APS reports are up almost ten percent over the same period in the last fiscal year.

The new federal Health Care Reform act includes the Elder Justice Act, which will establish the first-ever federal office and funding stream for state Adult Protective Services programs. State child protective and domestic violence programs have received federal funding and support for decades. The Elder Justice Coalition will continue to the effort to ensure that EJA is funded in the new federal budget in October. EJA provisions include:

- **Adult Protective Services (APS)** Provides \$400 million (\$100 million per year) in first-time dedicated funding for adult protective services. Provides \$100 million (\$25 million annually) for state demonstration grants to test a variety of methods to improve APS.
- Establishment of an **Elder Justice Coordinating Council** to make recommendations to the Secretary of HHS on the coordination of activities of federal, state, local and private agencies and entities relating to elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. Recommendations contained in report are due in 2 years.
- **Grants to support the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** totaling 32.5 million (over 4 years) and an additional \$40 million (\$10 million annually) in training programs for national organizations and state long-term care ombudsman programs.
- The **Patient Safety and Abuse Prevention Act**, which creates a national program of **criminal background checks** for persons seeking employment in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

Adult Services/APS regional consultants have completed ASAPS compliance monitoring reviews for 25 percent of LDSS. The review is to determine compliance with the Commissioner's July 2009 mandate of ASAPS as the system of record for local AS/APS programs. In addition, Gail Nardi and Central Region Director Jane Clements interviewed three finalists selected by an interview panel for the vacant AS/APS Central Region program consultant position. Hiring of the selected candidate is awaiting the Secretary's approval to fill the position.

The public comment period for the proposed Auxiliary Grant regulation ends April 15. A dozen comments have been filed thus far, most protesting the AG reimbursement rate as inadequate to cover required services and opposing the proposed 90-day Virginia residency requirement. In addition, Gail Nardi gave a presentation on APS investigations in long-term-care facilities to 120 nursing and assisted living facility administrators at a daylong workshop sponsored by the Virginia Health Care Association.

### **Continuous Quality Improvement**

Planning has begun with the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG) to develop a Quality Service Review (QSR) instrument and process for Virginia. CWPPG is a private non-profit technical assistance organization with a mission to improve front line child welfare practice and improve outcomes for children and families. The Quality Service Review will operationalize Virginia's Practice

Model and move the Virginia review process to the quality of practice versus the quality of compliance. CWPPG will be in VA for a planning meeting on April 29.

In addition, on Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, Paul Vincent, the Director of CWPPG will provide an overview of the Quality Service Review process. Mr. Vincent will provide information about his experience in over 12 states improving outcomes in child welfare practice. This meeting will take place at the Henrico Dumbarton Public Library at 6800 Staples Mill Road, Henrico, Virginia 23228. All are welcome to attend.

### **Casey Reengagement**

A meeting was held March 23 and 24 to engage and orient the Casey team that will be working with Virginia very actively at least through August. The Division of Family Services (DFS) is excited to be re-engaging with the Casey folks and looking forward to a strategy session with them and the whole DFS Leadership Team on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Much of the discussion will be around organizing the Transformation work to emphasize Family Engagement and Kinship Care across the continuum of child welfare.