



Board of Social Services

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February 8, 2016

**Commissioners' Conference Room
Second Floor – County Administration Building
10:00 am – 12:00 am**

In Attendance: Commissioner Lew Gaiter, Commissioner Steve Johnson, Commissioner Tom Donnelly, Linda Hoffmann, Lorenda Volker, Laura Walker, Heather O'Hayre, Marsha Ellis, Ed Rutherford, Angela Mead, Matt Bohanan, Andrea Fotsch, and Ann Marie Grobarek

A recording of this worksession is available at: http://larimer.org/bcc/list_worksessions.cfm.

Introductions & Announcements

Commissioner Gaiter welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Director Laura Walker asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Commissioner Johnson asked for an update on Hunger Free Colorado's State and county fact sheets.

Update on Staff Resiliency Center

Angela Mead, Deputy Division Manager of Child Youth and Family Services, Andrea Fotsch, Trauma Care Coordinator, and Matt Bohanan, Options for Long Term Care Manager, reviewed efforts to provide resources to help increase resilience in employees. The Department has created a central location for resiliency resources, called "The Well", on our internal only Google Site. This Google Site has tools and information anyone in the Department can use to educate themselves on self-care in response to systemic stress and traumatic stress from working with a population at risk or in need. Presenters reviewed the Google Site which includes resources like the Child Youth and Family Services Resilience Alliance program. The caseworkers who participated in this curriculum of structured support groups had turnover of 5% in comparison to turnover of 28.9% for caseworkers who did not participate.

Andrea Fotsch provided an overview of a family success story. She told the story of a child who is beginning to "unpack" long term effects from prolonged trauma through trauma-informed techniques. The Mother in the family had been in the practice of hanging up on the caseworker but changed over time to saying this is the best help they have received and have ever heard about from Child Youth and Family Services. The Commissioners requested access to the DHS Google Site and The Well for themselves and the County Managers.

Update on Human Services Internal Strategic Plan

Laura Walker and David Koons, Senior Process Analyst, presented on the development of the Department strategic planning efforts that have been in progress for over 3 years. In order to focus and provide structure to strategic planning, the Department has developed 13 objectives. Six Organizational Assessments of various Human Services teams by County Process Improvement Services showed common issues which helped David Koons and Laura identify objectives. These objectives will be our performance goals for 2016 and the next few years. For example, documenting all processes will take longer than one year, depending upon the amount of detail required.

Commissioner Gaiter asked how new employees currently learn how to do their work. Laura replied there is structured training through the State and provided locally in each division. There is extensive individual coaching from supervisors, practice coaches and lead workers. There are also documented processes in things like desk guides and policy memos. Commissioner Gaiter emphasized the importance of consistency in training. Commissioner Donnelly recommended beginning to document processes in our new hire training classes. Laura Walker said that multiple perspectives would provide the ability to discover more efficient ways to do things. David Koons indicated that capturing knowledge and documenting historical decisions that have been made is important in establishing precedents.



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Legislative/JBC Updates

Laura Walker reviewed upcoming legislation that is of interest to Human Services.

- SB1613 – A draft is proposed to do a cleanup of the advisory board for the Child Protection Ombudsman’s Office now that it has moved from the legislative branch of the State government to the judicial branch. The advisory board was just seated six months ago, and Ginny Riley, previous Larimer County Director of Human Services, is on the board. CHSDA has a recommendation to oppose the bill in its current form as taking away the policy oversight function of the board prevents them from being able to be a check and balance in the system as it stands.
- There is a proposal that would exempt teen parents from Child Support enforcement cooperation because there is an idea that teen parents would finish school instead of quitting school to get a job to pay Child Support. There is one school in Denver that has such a waiver for teen parents for this reason. However, there is a 24% reduction in likelihood of establishing a Child Support order for every year there is no order established. There is an ability to establish a Child Support order based on the minimum wage, but this would accumulate a balance due over time. Larimer County recommends instead that teen parents establish an order for zero dollars of Child Support and then modify the order later.
- The Relative Guardianship Assistance Program provides a subsidy similar to an adoption subsidy for youth who are going into kinship care. There is a concern that the financial component is being glossed over.
 - The financial impact to Larimer County is estimated to be about 5.7 million over ten years. This amount was determined by estimating that 75% of the 140 children who would have been eligible for these funds over the last four years would seek an RGAP subsidy. The average age of the children in this group was 7 years old, so the estimate is that they would need the subsidy for 10 years. These funds would come out of the child welfare block funds instead of TANF funds, which is a much higher cost to counties with different matching requirements. Larimer County would like the State to run this program and fund it, or that there be a fiscal note with it. Also, special needs children might be eligible to re-negotiate a higher subsidy.
- A pending bill from Senator Primavera would require much more structure during sexual abuse investigations in how we would take pictures or interview a child. There are implications for medical staff, it would put a burden on law enforcement, and it would take away the ability to individually make decisions or customize the interview. The Child Advocacy Center does the majority of our interviewing for allegations of sexual abuse. It may limit how we obtain evidence when making an assessment. Laura Walker suggests that this is something that would be better to structure using rule determined by the State Board of Human Services and not in statute.
- We have a handout regarding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act from a recent meeting that is reassuring. It appears we will not have to make much in the way of changes on a local basis to be compliant with federal rules, which had been a previous concern.
- Reports from the Joint Budget Committee hearings for CDHS indicate the following:
 - Weld County had proposed an increase in County Administration funding (for Medicaid, Food Assistance and Adult Financial administration), but Reggie Bicha will not support a workload study and does not believe that counties are underfunded. HCPF testimony had supported a workload study due to changes in PEAK and CBMS, and CCI was willing to advocate for it. But Reggie Bicha said that 93% of the overspending of County Administration funds is due to the 10 largest counties, but we also have 90% of the caseload. Commissioner Johnson recommended that CHSDA draft a letter to the Joint Budget Committee regarding their objection to Mr. Bicha’s position. Laura knows that people have reached out individually to JBC members, but there has been no concerted effort to communicate.
 - The Child Welfare Staffing workload study said we were 700 caseworkers short on a statewide basis. The JBC funded 100 new caseworkers last year. There was confusion



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during the hearings because there was discussion about hiring people who are not caseworkers with that funding, like a nurse who could go out to homes. This caused confusion because JBC members were questioning whether or not there is a real need for 600 more caseworkers or if we need other kinds of workers. The Governor's recommendation is for 100 new caseworkers and the County is very grateful for what was approved, but the confusion resulted in the JBC having a perception that counties are not clear on what is needed.

- o Reggie Bicha said that caseworker turnover is 0-24%, but our turnover is much higher. There is a possibility that he was looking at County turnover as a whole, not caseworker turnover. Larimer County has 32% turnover in caseworkers. Commissioner Johnson recommended that the association do a letter to the JBC to clarify turnover numbers.

BOD Capacity/Phone Queue Data

Laura Walker provided this report in response to a request from Commissioner Johnson. She referenced a handout for the Benefits Planning Phone Queue Data, which shows the phone tree routing to the listed functions in our Department. On average, people will abandon their phone call after they have been on hold for eleven minutes. We can't tell why someone abandons a call, whether they have a low tolerance for being on hold or if they have received information from the recorded message that gives them what they need. The maximum hold time is discouraging, but the average hold time is reassuring at only 13 minutes. It shows that the time of day can really determine how quickly someone gets through. At this time, there are very few calls in the beginning of the day, which also mirrors the traffic in the lobby.

Laura indicated that she made a decision a long time ago to treat every access point the same and do everything that has to be done at the initial point of contact. This resulted our decision to not make voicemail available to clients, but we address people or paperwork coming in through the front door, through the mail, via phone or electronically in the same way because each one is equally important.

Every person is important. Every document is important. No one area is given priority over the next.

Commissioner Johnson asked if having the call center made call handling more or less effective. Laura indicated that the numbers were always the same, but call center employees would not always be able to handle complex issues so they would refer work to someone else instead of resolving the issue for clients. This would create more of a backlog. This was why the call center was discontinued.

The County Administration Funding and Eligibility Work Capacity handout will be helpful when discussing with State staff about declines in timeliness. The handout shows the last few fiscal years of incoming funds, expenses, total eligibility technicians and total number of cases per technician. The County Administration History shows the incoming funding, the expenses and how overspending was covered. Ed Rutherford, Business Division Manager, helped explain this spreadsheet. Now we are at a point where we can no longer overspend our allocation because we no longer have the money to pay for the workers necessary to meet our timelines. Commissioner Donnelly asked what our solution would be, and Laura replied that Larimer County has been through rigorous analysis and business process re-engineering through the Change Innovation Association (CIA) that has determined we have exhausted all other solutions are just short-staffed. Commissioner Johnson recommended that we provide this information to Reggie Bicha. He also asked about the abandoned calls. Laura and Marsha discussed that there is no way to find out more information on why people abandon their calls, but we can tell that a number of people found other ways to get the information they need because of the difference in numbers of total phone calls versus number of cases.

Commissioner Donnelly asked for information on why we spend more than we are allocated to spend. Laura and Ed discussed that the allocation formula is based on child count, poverty levels, and other



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factors. The biggest factor is that we don't have the same rate of poverty increase as other higher population counties and it means that we get a smaller share of funds available across the State. Some counties that have very little caseload have to pay for supervision, training and case checking but underspend because they do not have as much of a demand as Larimer County. Laura indicated she would get allocation factors to Commissioner Donnelly to provide a more detailed answer to his question.

Laura referred to the C-Stat Dashboard Review for Larimer County as quantitative evidence regarding the best balancing point between the amount of work we need to get done and the funding we have available. The numbers show that our business process re-engineering has made us much more efficient because our workers could only process 535 cases per worker in 2010, but in November of 2014 they could process 907 cases per worker. At that time we were meeting 6 out of 7 C-Stat goals. However, the current workload of 981 cases per worker shows her workers are overloaded. We would need 5.5 more workers to get back to 907 cases per worker, and we have no funds to do so.

C-Stat Dashboard Review

Laura Walker provided the C-Stat Dashboard Review for Larimer County and a Dashboard for the Big 10 counties. Larimer County met 18 of the goals in contrast with the Big 10 average of 11 goals.

We have requested to get the report in Excel as requested by Commissioner Gaiter, but the report is pulled from a software system that does not allow for an easy translation into Excel. If there is a particular set of data any of the Commissioners would like to see, we can request it from the State. Commissioner Gaiter asked Laura to request it again and explain that a Commissioner has requested it.

Client Activity Report

Ann Marie Grobarek, Business Operations Coordinator, presented an overview of the department's client activity. Ann Marie reviewed: monthly average caseloads, program activity, complaint totals, and results from the client follow-up survey regarding complaints from October 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

During the 4th Quarter of 2015:

- The Food, Medical & Financial Assistance Program caseload has 63,537 cases, up 1.22%.
- Child Support collected over \$4,411,114 dollars.
- Children, Youth and Family received 1,758 referrals, and 98% of children with a case plan to remain home did.
- We received a total of 4 complaints during the 4th Quarter.

Fraud cases have seen an increase because there is a new report that allows us to see who is accessing benefits in other states; therefore, they should not be accessing benefits in Colorado. In addition, referrals from technicians have tripled due to training and improved quality assurance efforts. Laura provided clarification that these cases are not all fraud and may be incidents where the CBMS system provided an incorrect amount to a client and it has to be recovered. If there is a technician error, then that is corrected through individual coaching or training if it is an error that occurs with multiple technicians.

Hunger Free Colorado Update

Commissioner Johnson had asked for an update on the Hunger Free Colorado. This non-profit, statewide agency just published fact sheets for the State and for the largest 10 counties, ranking county performance in the areas of timeliness of processing (Larimer 3rd – close cluster at the top), accuracy of benefit assignment (Larimer 1st), 9th out of 10 in "access" to benefits. Laura pointed out that the State Department of Human Services has the responsibility of doing outreach per statute, we have no budget or staff to do any outreach.



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Medicaid does not require an interview, but food assistance does. No opportunity to offer other benefits. The Coloradoan will be doing an interview regarding this issue next week. Linda Hoffmann hoped that the Coloradoan interview will help shine the light on what Human Services does and will get the word out about Food Assistance and other benefits.

Meeting adjourned.