



## Board of Social Services

### MINUTES

August 14, 2017

**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; Jim Drendel; Laura Sartor; Thad Paul; Catherine Weaver; Judy Rodriguez and Ann Marie Grobarek.

A recording of this worksession is available at: [http://larimer.org/bcc/list\\_worksessions.cfm](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. There were none. Laura Walker introduced Thad Paul as the new Children Youth and Family Services Division Manager.

#### **Child Welfare; Maximizing Medical Services**

Outgoing Child Youth and Family Services Division Manager, Jim Drendel, provided a presentation of the shifting of costs for mental health care services from State Medicaid to individual counties. Key points included:

- 23% of Larimer County's high risk children, who often do not do well in one-on-one counseling, screened into specialized mental health care through our Trauma Assessment program, mostly paid for with IV-E Waiver funds. A study from Colorado State University (CSU) says that as many as 41% of the children screened would have benefited from specialized mental health care.
- The IV-E Waiver funding comes from a pilot program which ends next year.
- The State Medicaid program encourages evaluators to be more stringent in their interpretation of what is medically necessary, which often translates into denial of these services. The State has publicized that they have saved over half a billion dollars in gross Medicaid spending due to this philosophy.
- Children who enter the foster care system are more likely to be homeless, be involved in criminal activity, and not graduate from high school. The case study of Robbie shows how specialized mental health care can be the determining factor in a child's success or failure in our system. Medicaid paid nothing for Robbie's trauma focused behavioral health services.
- Representative Joann Ginal will be working with others to recommend something like the Allegheny County Model (from Pennsylvania) for some control of Medicaid dollars to county child welfare.

Commissioner Johnson clarified with Jim that the recommendation is for local decision making over existing Medicaid funding for child behavioral health needs, not for requesting more money for these services. Jim agreed that this is not a request to increase Medicaid spending, just to have more local control over the services that Medicaid will cover for children. David Ayraud asked for a copy of the study mentioned in the presentation.

#### **CCAP Program & Waitlist Update**

Laura Sartor, Benefits and Community Services Division Manager, provided an update on the Child Care Assistance Program. Key points included:

- As of July 31, 2017, there are 359 children on the waiting list. The program will be overspent by 1.7 million dollars for fiscal year 2016-2017, despite the waitlist.



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- Laura Walker covered some of the cost through paying the county match for Pueblo County in order to obtain their unspent CCAP allocation dollars.
- Our allocation of 4.2 million dollars increased by only 3.3% for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
- Counties are required by law to deem families at 165% of the poverty rate eligible for CCAP. Attrition for the program was not as high as expected as most people are completing redetermination paperwork as required.
- Laura may need to reduce overspending by finding a way to reduce the number of families on the program by requesting a waiver of the 165% rate from the State as there is no obvious way to remove a category of people from the program.

Commissioner Johnson indicated that the Colorado County Commissioners group (CCI) has CCAP funding listed as one of the top three issues for Human Services, so they are putting a priority on this concern for this year.

#### **HUB Statistics Compared to Statewide Hotline**

Thad Paul provided a handout showing a report of Larimer County statistics for taking incoming referrals compared to the Statewide Hotline. The State Administrative Review Division (ARD), a group that reviews cases for Child Welfare workers on a regular basis, has been tracking compliance statistics for the State and individual counties.

- Larimer County had 72.2% of calls completely recorded in comparison to the State's 84.9%. The recording is part of the State hotline system and there is no local control over sound quality or technical problems.
- ARD measures whether or not all clients in the family are entered into the system as clients, but it is duplicate work to do this in the Hotline system as it is a requirement in Trails. Still, Larimer County was at 63.6% compared to the State's 13% compliance.
- ARD requires the user to enter information in every single field for a record to be considered "complete". On a referral, some things like the caller's phone number or email address, do not have to be entered and sometimes can be refused by the caller. Both the State and Larimer County are at 0% for this statistic.
- Larimer County answers every call within an average of 13 seconds.
- Larimer County has 1.02% of their calls abandoned by the caller. This is frustrating as it counts phone calls where a caller hangs up even before the phone rings.

Larimer County receives over 9,000 phone calls a year for the past two years. Over 2,000 of those phone calls do not result in a referral. Commissioner Donnelly found it remarkable that there are over 20 phone calls a day reporting concerns about the health and safety of a child. Thad pointed out that there has been no increase in funding for taking referral phone calls, but the implementation of a State 1-800 number has definitely increased the number of phone calls. For example, we received a phone call from a grandmother who had not seen her grandchildren in over five years but who was sure they were being abused.

#### **Child Protection Ombudsman Report 2016-2017**

Laura Walker provided the Child Protection Ombudsman Report from 2016-2017 and compared it to the report from the end of the Fiscal Year for 2015-2016. This report is from the Ombudsman's office that is now part of the Judiciary Department. The number of complaints to the Ombudsman's office is similar from year to year, and Laura is reassured that 21 out of 31 show the Ombudsman's office affirmed the actions taken by Larimer County Human Services. Two categories for resolution that were on the report last year are not on it this year, so Laura will follow up on why they were removed.



### **Memo on Child Welfare Funding Methodology**

Thad Paul reported that the Child Welfare Allocation Committee (CWAC) met on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup>. There had been a belief that the committee would vote on eight possible options for changing the allocation formula, but the vote was postponed. It appears that counties seemed to be stalling in order to allow things to remain the same. Five out of eight counties on the committee received an increase in their allocation, but 40 other counties have lost funding. Commissioner Sharp was a great advocate for Larimer County's position and Thad recommended that we recognize her for speaking out on our behalf.

The end result is that the allocation formula as it stands rewards counties for having more children in congregate care, which is an outcome that is not good for the children. It feels like some counties would rather have worse outcomes in order to get more revenue.

Laura Walker asked the Commissioners if they would be willing to work on a memo with our Child Welfare leaders to send to the CWAC members to persuade them to consider making changes to the formula. They agreed and Laura will forward a draft to them for their consideration.

### **C-Stat Dashboard Review**

Laura explained that she finds the dashboard motivating to improve in comparison to the other Big Ten counties. Larimer met 16 out of 21 outcomes while the Big Ten met 15. The factors where Larimer County did not meet the requirements were reviewed and possible reasons for not meeting the measures were discussed. They included difficulty of the sample size or possible behavior patterns for the clients involved; for example, Adult Protection clients have more choice about continuing or cooperating with our services and some do not want to be found.

### **Client Activity Report**

Ann Marie Grobark, 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 April 1, 2017 to June 30, 2017.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2017:

- The Food, Medical & Financial Assistance Program caseload has increased by 1.4% to 69,635.
- Child Support collected over \$5,046,088 dollars.
- Children, Youth and Family received 1,715 referrals, and 94% of children with a case plan to remain home did.
- We received two formal complaints during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter.

### **Other business:**

Laura Walker displayed a thank you letter we received from a grandparent raising several children involved in a Child Welfare case and explained the Fiscal Year-end payment she was able to make to the people receiving TANF payments through this program.

Laura Walker said she was able to add to the TANF Reserve Fund by purchasing \$420,000 of other counties' allocations by paying their county match to the State. The money obtained from this could cover the remaining portion of the CCAP overspending.

Commissioner Johnson asked if there was a plan in place if the CHP+ program is eliminated. Laura Walker and Laura Sartor discussed that families who come off this program will probably go into the



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Exchange or may decide to pay for a waiver. Everyone who is in CHP+ pays some premium, so it should not be too much of a shock to change from one system to another.

Meeting adjourned.