

Pennsylvania Citizen Review Panels' 2017 Annual Report

Collaboration Statement

The Citizen Review Panels' Annual Report was produced in collaboration with individual citizen review panels, the Department of Human Services' Office of Children, Youth, and Families, the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, Inc.

The Mission and Vision of the Citizen Review Panels

Mission: To facilitate citizen participation and provide opportunities for citizens to evaluate state and local child protection systems to ensure that these systems: provide the best possible services; prevent and protect children from abuse and neglect; and meet the permanency needs of children.

Vision: Children will be safe; placed timely in stable, permanent living arrangements; have the opportunity for continuity of relationships; and have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.



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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Dear Citizens:

Thank you for taking a moment to read the Pennsylvania Citizen Review Panels' (CRP) 2017 Annual Report. The panels are represented by a wide array of citizen volunteers who join together to conduct comprehensive reviews of state and local child protection responsibilities and offer collaborative solutions to identified challenges. The panels play an important role in efforts to promote positive child welfare outcomes for children and families. Pennsylvania's CRPs are part of a national network of panels. More information about each state's citizen review panels can be found on the National Child Abuse and Neglect Technical Assistance and Strategic Dissemination Center website at www.cantasd.org/crp.html.

The CRP 2017 Annual Report contains an update on the panels' work over the past year and their recommendations for enhancements in policy, procedure, and practice within the Commonwealth's child protection system. The panels' thought-provoking recommendations and the Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families response to those recommendations are contained within this report. Within their recommendations and rationale, I hope you will see their deep commitment to the protection of Pennsylvania's children.

This year, recruitment planning has begun. Recruitment began January 2nd and continued through March 9th, 2018. We are recruiting for a new Citizen Review Panel representing Southwest Pennsylvania and for additional membership on the Northeast and Southcentral Panels. These recruitment efforts will further expand opportunities for citizen volunteers to promote positive child welfare outcomes.

Protecting Pennsylvania's children from abuse and neglect is a vitally important responsibility. Child protection requires the collective collaboration of lawmakers, community partners, the child protective services system, citizens, and families to provide local safety nets for children and families who are facing challenges within our communities and neighborhoods. All Pennsylvanians have an obligation to protect and keep our children safe.

Thank you to Phyllis Dew and Jason Raines, Chairpersons of the CRP and to the CRP members for their diligent work and dedication to system improvement. We look forward to ongoing collaboration as we tackle the very serious issue of child protection. I hope that this report will become part of the larger conversation about our responsibilities in protecting Pennsylvania's children.

Sincerely,

Cathy A. Utz
Deputy Secretary

Pennsylvania Introduction

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania (PA) consists of 67 counties covering 44,817 square miles and is home to approximately 12.7 million residents. The city of Philadelphia is the largest metropolitan area within the six-county Southeast region which includes Philadelphia, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties and encompasses approximately 35 percent of the total statewide population. Allegheny County is the second largest metropolitan area and includes the city of Pittsburgh and its surrounding suburbs. The diversity across Pennsylvania's urban, suburban and rural areas creates the need for both flexibility and consideration of regional, county, cultural and other differences in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Structure of Child Welfare

Pennsylvania is one of 12 states that operates a state supervised but county-administered child welfare system. The county-administered system means that child welfare and juvenile justice services are organized, managed and delivered by 67 County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYA), with staff in these agencies hired as county employees. Each county elects its county commissioners or executives who act as the governing authority. Pennsylvania has a rich tradition of hundreds of private agencies delivering the direct services and supports needed by at-risk children, youth and their families through contracts with CCYAs. The array of services delivered by private providers includes prevention, in-home, foster family, kinship care, permanency services, and congregate care. A variety of related behavioral health and education programs are also provided.

The Department of Human Services' (DHS) Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) is the state agency that supports the provision of quality services and best practices designed to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of Pennsylvania's children, youth and families. There are some intrinsic differences in operating a state supervised and county-administered system, which impacts statewide outcomes for children and families. Within this structure, Pennsylvania provides the statutory and policy framework for delivery of child welfare services and monitors local implementation. Given the diversity that exists among the 67 counties, this structure allows for the development of county-specific solutions to address the strengths and needs of families and communities. Each county, through planning efforts, must develop strategies to improve outcomes.

This structure also presents challenges in ensuring consistent application of policy, regulations and program initiatives and has impacted Pennsylvania's performance on federal outcome measures. These federal measures require county-specific analysis to determine the factors that influence statewide data. Because of the variance in county practice, it is challenging to identify statewide solutions that would have the most impact on improving county outcomes.

In November of 2016, the department held the first official convening of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council (the Council). The Council was formed to provide shared leadership and guidance to support collaborative, strategic visioning for Pennsylvania's child welfare system. The Council is comprised of multidisciplinary members who are broadly representative of the child welfare system and reflect the Commonwealth in geographic, racial, ethnic and cultural diversity. Efforts of the Council are aligned with OCYF's mission, vision, values, and PA's Child Welfare Practice Model. The Council utilizes quantitative and qualitative data to guide the establishment of priorities related to

Federal, State, and locally driven improvement efforts through the use of a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process/framework. CQI will serve as the vehicle to guide the achievement of PA's child welfare goals. The Council exists to:

- Help build a sustainable structure to support collaborative strategic visioning for PA's child welfare system;
- Foster a unity of effort to achieve common and shared goals by sharing ideas/expertise in guiding priorities for the child welfare system, sharing data to identify priorities/monitor achievement of goals, and considering how best to ensure the system has the capacity/resources to support achievement of common goals;
- Enhance communication based on shared values of respect and honesty by reinforcing clear and transparent communications regarding the strengths/challenges of the system;
- Increase proactive responses to address systemic issues and concerns; and
- Enhance capacity to use data to drive decision-making.

The PA Child Welfare Council identified that purposeful, active and effective implementation work should be done by subcommittees and formed four subcommittees in 2017. Each subcommittee will focus on one of four distinct areas of child welfare practice, which are: Safety, Permanency, Well-Being and Resources. While the subcommittees will be accountable for implementation, the Council is charged with establishing priorities and expectations, providing necessary support, and helping identify and secure resources to support strategies for improvement. The first priority that has been identified for the subcommittees is to aid in the development of Pennsylvania's Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which is a requirement of the federal Child and Families Services Review.

The PA Child Welfare Council will provide the means for key stakeholders to come together, to provide shared leadership, purpose and accountability to enhance our ability to work collaboratively to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. By coming together and gathering feedback from the subcommittees and others, the Council will take steps to be more proactive in response to system needs, be more responsible in the use of resources and enhance and support the system's ability to function more efficiently. This will lead to more strategic and effective efforts to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan focused on improving outcomes for the children, youth and families served by the system.

Pennsylvania and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act: A Brief History

The key federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect is the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), originally enacted in 1974 (Public Law 93-247). This Act was amended several times and was most recently amended on July 22, 2016 when the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-198) (CARA) went into effect. CARA amended CAPTA to require a Plan of Safe Care for infants exposed to substances. CARA requires states to address the needs of infants born with, and identified as, being affected by substance abuse (not just illegal substance abuse as was the requirement prior to this change) and to ensure the safety and well-being of infants following their release from the care of health care providers, by:

- Addressing the health and substance use disorder treatment needs of the infant and affected family or caregiver;
- Monitoring these plans to determine whether and how local entities are making referrals and delivering appropriate services to the infant and affected family or caregiver (in accordance with state requirements); and
- Developing Plans of Safe Care for infants affected by substance abuse, which addresses both the needs of the infant and the affected family or caregiver.

The 2016 changes were made in the context of attention generated by the nation's prescription drug and opioid epidemic, which has focused state agencies on the requirement that a Plan of Safe Care be implemented for infants exposed to substance abuse.

CAPTA provides federal funding to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities. CAPTA also provides grants to public agencies and non-profit agencies for demonstration programs and projects. Additionally, CAPTA identifies the federal role in supporting research, evaluation, technical assistance, and data collection activities; establishes the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; and mandates the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information. CAPTA also sets forth a minimum definition of child abuse and neglect.

Some of the changes Pennsylvania adopted to become compliant required amendments to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) and the Adoption Act. Other changes only required administrative implementation for which no legislation was needed. Pennsylvania became CAPTA compliant in 2006. The following are legislative changes regarding CAPTA compliance:

Legislative Changes

Amendments were made in the following areas:

- Allowing federal agencies access to confidential information;
- Establishing Citizen Review Panels;
- Disclosing to the public fatalities and near fatalities;
- Mandating that hospitals make a general protective services referral to the CCYA regarding infants born exposed to or affected by illegal substances or a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Pennsylvania will require legislative change to enact the recent CARA amendments.
- Adding a ninth ground for involuntary Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) when the parent has been convicted of specific crimes in which the victim was a child of the parent;
- Clarifying that reunification of a surviving sibling is not required when the parent has been found by a court of competent jurisdiction;
 - To have committed sexual abuse against the surviving child or another child of the same parent; or
 - To be required to register with a sexual offender registry or to register with a sexual offender registry in another jurisdiction or foreign country.
- Adding a sixth grounds for aggravated circumstances to include instances when the parent of a child is required to register as a sexual offender or to register with a sexual offender registry in another jurisdiction or foreign country;
- Expanding the definition of perpetrator of child abuse to include an individual 18 years of age or older who engages a child in severe forms of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 1466, 22 U.S.C. § 7102); and

- Amending the definition of child abuse to include intentionally, knowingly or recklessly engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 1466, 22 U.S.C § 7102).

Administrative Changes

Administrative changes were made in the following areas:

- Training for Guardians Ad Litem;
- Referrals under Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - Requires children under age three who are substantiated victims of child abuse/ neglect to receive developmental screening and referral for appropriate services. Pennsylvania chose to use Ages and Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ™) and Ages and Stages Questionnaires®: Social/ Emotional (ASQ:SE™) as the statewide screening tool; and
- Coordination and consultation within healthcare facilities - Required coordination between health care facilities and local children and youth agencies for situations involving the withholding of medically indicated treatment.

Pennsylvania Legislation Relating to CRPs

To support compliance with CAPTA in PA, House Bill 2670, Printer's Number 4849 was signed into law as Act 146 on Nov. 9, 2006 by then Governor Edward G. Rendell. Act 146 amended Pennsylvania's CPSL (Title 23 Pa.C.S., Chapter 63) to address the establishment, function, membership, meetings and reports as they relate to Citizen Review Panels (CRP) in Pennsylvania. Act 146 required that the Department establish a minimum of three CRPs and that each panel examine the following:

1. Policies, procedures and practices of state and local agencies and, where appropriate, specific cases to evaluate the extent to which state and local child protective service system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities under Section 106 (b) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (Public Law 93-247, 42 U.S.C. § 5106a (b)).
2. Other criteria the panel considers important to ensure the protection of children, including:
 - i. A review of the extent to which the state and local child protective service system is coordinated with the foster care and adoption programs established under part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act (49 Stat. 620, 42 U.S.C. § 670 et seq.); and
 - ii. A review of child fatalities and near fatalities.
3. Membership – The panel shall be composed of volunteer members who represent the community, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.
4. Meetings – Each Citizen Review Panel shall meet not less than once every three months.
5. Reports – The Department of Human Services shall issue an annual report summarizing the activities and recommendations of the panels and summarizing the Department's response to the recommendations.

Citizen Review Panel Recruitment

In 2017, DHS began to plan for recruitment of a third panel. During the CRP's Fall All Panel Meeting, DHS heard from panel members their ideas for establishment of a third panel. There was a consensus among members that the best approach would be to build a third regional panel in a new region. DHS considered panel members' input, moved forward with creating a plan for recruitment and in November, held a conference call with panel members in which they laid out the plan for establishing a new panel in the Southwest Region. DHS, in partnership with the Child Welfare Resource Center, moved forward with creating an outreach plan to communicate with various groups and agencies across the state regarding CRP recruitment. CRP members also identified local outreach efforts they would complete and which would be supported by DHS. The timeframe for recruitment was set from January 2nd to March 9th, 2018 with the plan to onboard new members by the summer. DHS looks forward to providing a report of 2018 recruitment efforts in the next CRP Annual Report.

Citizen Review Panel Letter

Dear Citizens,

We, the chairs of Pennsylvania's Citizen Review Panels (CRP), are pleased to submit the 2017 Annual Report. We submit this report on behalf of Pennsylvania's CRP members who have worked diligently over the past year to develop recommendations to improve policy, practice and procedure in the State's child welfare system.

Over the course of 2017, as in previous years, we have had the opportunity to work directly with the DHS and county child welfare agencies to hear the different perspectives that shape and inform the current child welfare system. Over the past year, we have reviewed crucial data collected at the county, state, and national level and we also met with individual counties to hear about how current challenges within the child welfare system affect their work on a micro level. We have been given authority to view data, but we also recognize and value the need to consider the personal accounts that contribute to the larger picture.

This year both panels continued with their focus areas from last year and considered specific aspects of those areas to take a deeper dive into the subject matter. The Northeast Panel continued to look at the subject of older youth within the child welfare system while the South Central Panel placed even greater focus this year on care for caseworkers, which includes worker safety and training. These topics were the product of our communication with child welfare agencies regarding current challenges in the system. Our recommendations this year reflect changes we feel are necessary based on the information we gathered from a variety of sources.

As panels designed to inform positive changes to the child welfare system, we remain committed to advocating for policies and taking action to support those who need it the most. We take seriously our responsibility to help improve outcomes for Pennsylvania's children and we will continue to work diligently to pursue issues that influence children and child welfare agencies throughout the state.

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to read our 2017 annual report and for your interest in our work. In 2018, the Pennsylvania CRPs will continue advocating for all of Pennsylvania's children so that they can flourish in a safe, nurturing, healthy, and permanent family. If you have any interest in serving on a CRP, please contact the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center at 717-795-9048 or by email at pacrp@pitt.edu.

Sincerely,

Jason Raines
Northeast Chair

Phyllis J. Dew
South Central Chair

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Executive Summary

The individual reports of Pennsylvania's Citizen Review Panels, which start on page 12, were written by panel members. The panels are regionally located; however, the recommendations address statewide issues and therefore benefit Pennsylvania's DHS. For more information about the individual panels, please contact the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center at (717) 795-9048 or by email at pacrp@pitt.edu.

The recommendations provided at the end of each panel's report are the result of research, discussions with stakeholders and feedback from those in the field of child welfare. Information presented in the report along with recommendations are therefore well informed and relevant to the panels' work completed over the course of the year. In 2017, the panels continued to collaborate with DHS which include the following examples:

- Participation by CRP members in three DHS-Sponsored All Panel Meetings and presentations. Topics discussed in these meetings included:
 - Updates on Pennsylvania's Child and Family Services Review process in 2017;
 - Updates on the status of the panels' previous recommendations;
 - Review of available data sources;
 - Education about college funding available for youth currently or previously in foster care;
 - Increasing awareness about trainings available for CCYAs including topics related to worker safety and mental health; and
 - Development of a recruitment strategy for the CRPs and review of proposed recruitment strategies by CRP members.
- Participation by CRP members in statewide and national events related to their focus areas and/or training opportunities to support them in fulfilling their roles as CRP members. Events that panel members attended included:
 - The National Citizen Review Panel Conference; and
 - The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network/Independent Living 2017 Statewide Meeting; and
 - 2017 Permanency Conference.

Additionally, towards the end of 2017, panel members were invited to participate in the PA Child Welfare Council's subcommittee meetings. These subcommittees focus on four distinct areas of child welfare practice, which include: Safety, Permanency, Well-Being and Resources. The panels were asked to have one to two members from each CRP serve as representatives at these subcommittee meetings. By having direct involvement with the Council, panel members will have greater access to information at the state level including data and current priorities within the child welfare system.

The next two sections contain the individual reports written by the Northeast and South Central CRPs. While each report has a different focus area, they both have three primary components:

- Background information regarding the current topic area(s),
- Summary of the work completed throughout the year related to the topic area, and
- Formal recommendations for DHS.

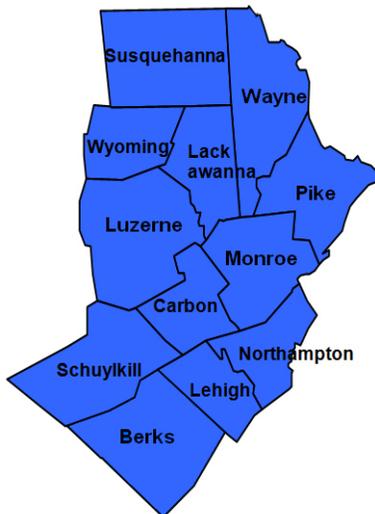
We hope that you find these reports informative and we encourage you to contact us if you have questions about the content of the report or if you have an interest in becoming a member. Additional information is available by calling the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center at (717) 795-9048 or by emailing the CAPTA Program Specialist at pacrp@pitt.edu.

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Northeast Citizen Review Panel Report and Recommendations

Introduction:

The Northeast Citizen Review Panel (NE CRP) serves twelve Pennsylvania counties and currently has six members serving on the panel. Information on the current work of the panels and membership can be found at www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/CAPTA.htm.



The mission of the PA CRPs is to facilitate citizen participation and provide opportunities for citizens to evaluate state and local child protection systems to ensure that these systems:

- Provide the best possible services,
- Prevent and protect children from abuse and neglect, and
- Meet the permanency needs of children.

The vision is that children will be safe; placed timely in stable, permanent living arrangements; have the opportunity for continuity of relationships and have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

The panel began to consider issues facing older youth in the child welfare system and to support change and implementation around this topic in 2016. We chose this topic after some members attended the 2015 National CRP Conference and heard several speakers, both youth and adults expound on the challenges of older youth within the child welfare system. The relevance and urgency of this topic was further confirmed at the 2016 National CRP Conference and through the panel's continued engagement and discussions with stakeholders and youth affected by the system.

Overview of the Focus Area:

Older youth within the child welfare system have a unique set of challenges. They are faced with an overwhelming number of adult decisions to make and oftentimes are not able to rely on family to help guide them as they make important transitions. These youth are at an age in which they can begin

working, driving, and completing various other independent tasks but find themselves without appropriate resources and freedoms to take those steps in gaining autonomy. As an answer to part of this issue, the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard was passed into federal and state law in 2015, allowing caregivers of children in care to decide what activities those children may participate in rather than requiring caseworker approval. This law focuses on normalcy for children and youth in care and promotes dignity and respect.

The panel delved further into this topic area with the purpose of addressing the unique needs of older youth in care. To understand the work that the panel has done over the past year and to provide context to our recommendations, the next several pages will lay out the definition of older youth and will outline the work we have done leading up to finalizing our recommendations for 2017.

Who qualifies as “older youth”?

Older youth are generally described as those individuals age 14 to 21 years who are or have been in out-of-home care and who are eligible for Independent Living (IL) services. For more information on IL services, please view the [2014 PA Youth Independent Living Services Guidelines Bulletin](#), a policy that guides statewide practice for older youth in out-of-home care. This bulletin provides information on a number of IL related topics including eligibility, permanency, placement services and setting types, and developmentally appropriate freedoms. Furthermore, the bulletin lays out the policy and procedures for IL services in Pennsylvania including the IL planning process, transition planning and services provided through IL.

What are the specific needs of older youth in care?

Older youth often face a myriad of decisions as they move towards “aging out” of care and becoming more independent. They may start thinking about living on their own and providing for themselves, graduating high school and starting a career or attending college, and finding the right insurance to meet their medical needs. While in care they may look to obtain a job to develop a greater sense of autonomy, they may need assistance with applying to colleges or technical schools and with paying for those applications, or they may want to open a savings or checking account. Along with growing older comes increased responsibility and pressure. These youth often do not have the financial and moral support of a biological family unit. Their opinions, desires, and goals may not be considered like those of their peers who are not in care. They require specific services such as IL to help identify their needs, whether it be budgeting, finding a job, getting a driver’s license, finding housing, applying to college, or a combination of any or all of these.

Highlights and key activities in 2017

Based on the research and information gathering the panel engaged in throughout 2016, the focus area was narrowed to two distinct topic areas:

1. The ability for youth in foster care to obtain a driver’s license and auto insurance; and
2. Tuition waivers for youth currently or previously in care attending postsecondary education at a state school.

At the National CRP Conference in June 2016, the panel heard a presentation from Arizona state CRP members regarding how their system provided full scholarships to state colleges and universities as well as vocational training programs for youth in foster care. This sparked NE CRP members' curiosity and motivated them to dig deeper into this matter. Through conversations with DHS, they discovered that [PA House Bill 453](#), introduced in 2015, was a proposed Act providing for financial assistance to foster youth and youth adopted from the PA foster care system to attend state postsecondary educational institutions via a tuition and fee waiver for undergraduate courses. Although this bill was introduced, it was not called by chamber leadership for First Reading and, therefore, the bill "died".

Additionally, when meeting with caseworkers and supervisors in Northampton County to discuss older youth issues, panel members heard about the struggle of youth in care to attain developmentally appropriate freedoms, specifically in the areas of obtaining their driver's licenses and auto insurance. Although many youth receive their driver's license, there are several barriers to actually being able to drive, including: not being added to their caretakers' auto insurance and not having enough money to purchase their own insurance. Ironically, as is the case for many youth, in order to pay for a car and/or auto insurance, they would need to secure a job, which often requires them drive.

The panel requested and were given statewide data and other relevant information within these areas which included:

- IL Site Visit report information for the Northeast counties related to how counties across the state address youth receiving their driver's licenses and obtaining auto insurance either through policies or practices within the county;
- Information on House Bill 453 of 2015 and its status;
- National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Cohort One data for Pennsylvania; and
- Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) Chafee Grant information from 2014-2016 including how many youth in foster care applied for the grant, how many were eligible, and how many actually received financial aid from the grant funds.

NYTD is a survey designed to track how states serve older youth, and to measure how well states are helping foster youth prepare for adulthood. The survey gives agencies, staff and lawmakers feedback about the services that are provided and whether they are making a difference for youth exiting or who have exited foster care. Surveys are administered to youth at 17 years of age then two follow-up surveys are given to smaller cohorts of the same youth (if they are available and responsive) at 19 and 21 years old.

In viewing the PA NYTD data, panel members learned that many older youth who participated in the follow-up surveys at ages 19 and 21 were not using a grant, stipend, student loan, voucher or other type of educational financial aid to cover educational expenses (79.6% and 83.3%, respectively). Additionally, many of these older youth were not attending college. Almost 36% of the 19-year-olds who completed the follow-up survey had not received any type of degree, while around 61% achieved their high school diploma or GED. Around 70% of 21-year-olds who completed the follow-up survey had received a high school diploma or GED.

The panel saw that for older youth previously or currently in the child welfare system, furthering their education beyond high school was not the norm. We had conversations regarding the barriers for older youth attending college and realized that financial aid is not always readily available to or

understood by older youth. According to PA NYTD data, when asked what barriers were preventing them from continuing their education, nearly 18% of the 21-year-olds surveyed identified paying for school, nearly 14% identified work, and about 20% indicated “other.”

Other data/information reviewed by the panel this year included:

- The Administration on Children and Family’s (ACF) NYTD Cohort One data (a summary of national findings), and
- The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FY 2015 data.

In addition to the panel’s work around older youth, members also participated in several additional activities to contribute to the improvement of the care and treatment of children in the child welfare system as well as efforts to reinforce the CRPs. These activities included:

- Meeting with DHS to review the status of past recommendations;
- Attending the 2017 National CRP conference in Anchorage, Alaska;
- Providing feedback for updated CRP recruitment material;
- Participating in a conference call with DHS to discuss recruitment efforts and the structure of the CRPs in PA;
- Formulating planned recruitment efforts using CRP members’ professional knowledge and resources;
- Actively participating in the rebranding of PA CRPs by updating materials to energize and elevate the mission of the CRPs;
- Participating in local and regional Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Meetings; and
- Recruiting a new member who joined in January 2017.

Northeast Citizen Review Panel Recommendations for 2017

In 2017, the NE CRP took on quite a bit of work that involved reviewing statewide data and meeting with stakeholders and older youth to receive feedback and insight into the challenges that face older youth in the system. The panel took time to narrow down their focus to ensure that their recommendations would be relevant and timely. Because of this, our recommendations for 2017 take the form of requests for additional information from DHS to further our work in specifically addressing financing post-secondary education for youth currently or formerly in foster as defined in Section 3(c) of [HB 453 of 2015](#) and examining legislation aimed at helping youth obtain driver’s licenses and auto insurance.

Recommendation 1

Provide current statistics for a revision of former HB 453 (2015 Session): “Provision of financial assistance to foster and adopted youth...by assisting families with financing of post-secondary education.” Specifically, we are requesting the following information:

- Number of youth in foster care in 2015 and 2016;
- Number of youth who age out of care each year (average);
- Percentage of individuals with a bachelor’s degree who were unemployed in 2015 and 2016;
- The percentage of those individuals who were unemployed with a bachelor’s degree in 2015 and 2016 who relied on any form of public assistance;

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- Percentage of foster youth who graduate from high school;
- Percentage of children not in foster care who graduate high school;
- Percentage of high school graduates who enter college (not in foster care);
- Percentage of foster youth in PA who enter college;
- Number of youth between ages 16 to 21 who were discharged from the child welfare system and were adopted in 2015 and 2016; and
- The number of youth in the child welfare system currently who are still waiting to be adopted.

DHS Response to Recommendation 1

The information requested by the Northeast Citizen Review Panel (CRP) has been provided with the exception of data that is not available to DHS.

2016 Data:

- In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016, there were 26,393 youth served in Pennsylvania foster care. During that year 669 youth aged out of foster care.
- In Pennsylvania during FFY 2016, of the 242 youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who were discharged from the child welfare system and were legally free to adoption, only 19.4% were adopted. As of September 30, 2016, 316 youth in the child welfare system who were age 16 or older are legally free and still waiting to be adopted.

2017 Data:

- In FFY 2017, there were 26,007 youth served in Pennsylvania foster care. During that year 807 youth aged out of foster care.
- In Pennsylvania during FFY 2017, of the 223 youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who were discharged from the child welfare system and were legally free to adoption, only 25.6% were adopted. As of September 30, 2017, 272 youth in the child welfare system who were age 16 or older are legally free and still waiting to be adopted.

Recommendation 2

Provide any additional data we may request for the purpose of drafting proposed legislation to help youth with driver's license and insurance issues.

DHS Response to Recommendation 2

DHS will provide additional data as requested, contingent upon the requested data being available to DHS.

Northeast Panel Proposed Focus Area/Activities for 2018

- Pursue the introduction of legislation with updated information for provision of college tuition youth currently or formerly in foster care as identified in [Section 3\(c\) of HB 453 of 2015](#) for youth aging out of foster care.
- Pursue drafting of legislation to provide for financial assistance for youth to obtain driver's licenses and to limit liability for foster parents and county child welfare agencies.

Additionally, while continuing to advocate for older youth within the child welfare system, as a panel we will continue to monitor our past recommendations.

Northeast Citizen Review Panel Current Members

Jason Raines – Lehigh
Steven R. Guccini - Pike
Mary Lou Scarf - Lehigh
Lorrie Whitfield - Monroe
Susan Lucrezi - Northampton
Kathleen Donson - Pike

2017 Citizen Review Panel Annual Report South Central Citizen Review Panel Report and Recommendations

Introduction:

The mission of the PA CRPs is to facilitate citizen participation and provide opportunities for citizens to evaluate state and local child protection systems to ensure that these systems:

- Provide the best possible services;
- Prevent and protect children from abuse and neglect; and
- Meet the permanency needs of children.

The South Central Citizen Review Panel (SC CRP) serves 13 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.



In the past, membership on the panel has fluctuated, although in 2017 membership remained rather consistent and the panel even gained one new member. The South Central CRP is dedicated to ensuring that the needs of Pa's children are being met within the current system. If you are interested in joining our effort, contact the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center CAPTA Coordinator at PACRP@pitt.edu.

Overview of the Focus Area:

Since the revision of the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) in 2014, counties have undergone numerous changes including: significant increases in reports of child abuse and investigations, additional paperwork which creates longer hours and less face-to-face interaction with consumers, and transitioning to and learning how to operate a new web-based system, the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS). These changes have resulted in a significant increase in the caseworker and supervisor turnover rates.

According to data from OCYF in FY 14-15, caseworker turnover rates increased statewide. Five counties experienced 58-75% turnover, nine counties saw 33-50% turnover, and 52 counties had 30% turnover rate or less.

In 2016, two workgroups tackled the issue of retention and recruitment of child welfare staff: The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) State Roundtable and the Pennsylvania House Children and Youth Committee. The AOPC workgroup was composed of 38 professionals representing dependency court, child welfare, and county and state entities all of whom examined the topics of state and national perspectives, the impact, and current statewide efforts within the realm of caseworker retention. This group provided recommendations for the state to improve the current situation with caseworker turnover, including: identifying evidence-based strategies to reduce worker

turnover, using data to determine appropriate caseload size and to identify the factors that cause workers to stay in the field, developing strategies to reduce job stress, developing documentation reduction strategies, and increasing supervisory trainings.

The House Children and Youth Committee held two hearings in 2016, one in April and one in May to explore this issue and to hear recommendations from caseworkers, administrators, and stakeholders for controlling the current high turnover rate in child welfare. As one administrator stated in her testimony in April,

“...it may be helpful that when legislating new mandates, it is necessary to keep in mind that to address the needs of the workforce to enhance the professionalism and retention are always forefront.”

Why is this important to us?

The panel learned that gaps are created when turnover within county agencies increase. This often leads to increased caseloads for the remaining workers and higher burnout rates. When morale suffers and agencies are short-staffed, children and families become more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. As experienced staff leaves, caseloads become overwhelming to new workers, potentially causing those workers to miss important indicators that cause increased threats to children’s safety. Increased maltreatment within the state leads to higher demands on caseworkers and thereby perpetuates the cycle of worker turnover. It is not just individual counties that struggle; but the entire child welfare system in the state. The panel cannot say it better than a caseworker herself who testified to the House Children and Youth Committee in April of 2016:

“Addressing the caseworker retention issues and improving caseworkers’ job experience is where the start of improving the overall child welfare system begins. If we can start now to move toward more positive changes in the child welfare system and retaining caseworkers, this may one day be an issue of the past.”

Summary of Work Completed

Highlights and key activities in 2017

The panel continued to pursue the issue of retention and recruitment of child welfare workers into 2017 with a more focused approach. Members specifically considered the topic of “care for caseworkers” which included two distinct topics:

1. Caseworker safety; and
2. Training and preparation of caseworkers.

At the beginning of 2017, two panel members attended a safety simulation training. This training, titled “Caseworker Safety and Responsiveness in Child Welfare Practice” launched in 2016 and is a partnership between the PA Child Welfare Resource Center and Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM). This training was available to all counties in 2016 and 2017. The training has caseworkers walk through three simulations in pairs and address the various safety issues that are present such as drug use, domestic violence, and environmental hazards. Caseworkers debrief after

each simulation with their supervisors who are also present at the training and with the trainers at the end of the training. The two SC CRP members who attended two separate trainings were observers only and reported their observations back to the group afterward. Overall, the feedback was positive, and members felt that this training is necessary, especially for caseworkers who are new to the field.

The previously mentioned State Roundtable Caseworker Retention Workgroup continued in 2017 to look at the issue of caseworker retention and provided updates to their previous recommendations which the panel reviewed together. Members benefitted from seeing the work occurring throughout the state around the issue of caseworker retention. They were encouraged to see efforts continue to move forward in promoting the profession and identifying evidence-based strategies to reduce caseworker turnover in Pennsylvania. Of special interest to the SC CRP was this group's work distributing Stay Surveys to caseworkers and supervisors throughout the state. Stay Surveys focus on asking caseworkers and supervisors what makes them stay at their job and what challenges would lead them to leave. Panel members were not surprised to see that stress was a main reason for workers wanting to leave their job. Also of note was that the highest ranked specialized trainings caseworkers identified they would like were on: drug and alcohol, mental health, sexual abuse, and trauma. Almost half of the supervisors identified that they would like specialized training in trauma. To see this and the 2016 reports in their entirety, go to <http://www.ocfcpacourts.us/childrens-roundtable-initiative/state-roundtable-workgroupscommittees/caseworker-retention-workgroup/state-roundtable-reports>.

In April of 2017, the panel hosted caseworkers from counties within the South Central Region to provide input and feedback on the current challenges in their work as well as their ideas and recommendations for improvement. Panel members created discussion points specific to their topic areas in preparation for the meeting to keep the conversation focused and gather relevant information.

Fifteen caseworkers from the following counties participated:

- Lebanon
- Lancaster
- York
- Cumberland
- Juniata
- Adams
- Fulton

The following topics were discussed during the meeting:

- Emotional support in the workplace;
- Paperwork in relation to workload;
- What caseworkers perceive they need to feel more valued in their role;
- Safety issues/concerns in the field;
- Training for safety and how to handle high risk situations;
- Trauma debriefing in the workplace; and
- Training provided for caseworkers on the topic of mental health in order to better serve consumers.

Information gathered during this meeting was very similar to what panel members have heard and received from other sources such as last year's Pennsylvania House testimonies and the Caseworker Retention Workgroup Report. For instance, caseworkers feel they do not have enough time to complete paperwork, new mandates make it difficult for them to keep up with the work and, for most counties, caseloads are high, causing caseworkers to feel overwhelmed. They often feel stressed and overworked and many feel they do not receive adequate emotional or moral support in the workplace.

With the information gained from the meeting and the safety simulation training, the panel moved forward with their efforts using the information they had gathered. They reviewed the 2017 State Roundtable Report by the Caseworker Retention Workgroup and discussed how the information in that report compared to what they heard from caseworkers in April. Then the panel began to draft recommendations in the areas of training, safety in the field, and vicarious trauma. The panel also felt it was important to support the work of the Caseworker Retention Workgroup and to acknowledge their efforts over the past two years related to caseworker retention.

The panel was pleased to read Pennsylvania Auditor General Eugene DePasquale's "State of the Child" special report released in September 2017, which highlighted several of the issues that the South Central CRP has focused on over the past year. Among the highlights of the report were counties' difficulty with finding enough qualified professionals for caseworker positions, inadequate training and sometimes, dangerous working conditions in the field, high caseloads and burdensome paperwork, low pay, and high turnover rates. This report validated the panel's motivation and work in 2017 to increase training opportunities, ensure workers' safety, and address vicarious trauma experienced by caseworkers. We as a panel agree with the recommendations the Auditor General provided in his report. To view the report in its entirety, please use the following web address: http://www.paauditor.gov/Media/Default/Reports/RPT_CYS_091417_FINAL.pdf.

South Central Citizen Review Panel Recommendations for 2017

Recommendation 1

Develop strategies to enhance caseworkers' understanding of drug and alcohol and mental health issues such as:

- a. Have information readily available within county agencies related to various mental health and drug and alcohol issues that caseworkers can reference prior to home visits. The panel understands that it is not always possible to have every caseworker, especially those who are new, to be well-informed of all issues they will encounter on the job. In order to assist with increasing caseworkers' knowledge and therefore their confidence in dealing with mental health and drug and alcohol issues, the panel believes it would be beneficial for counties to have information on various mental health diagnoses and drug and alcohol issues, in the form of pamphlets or articles that are quickly and easily accessible. This information, however, should not take the place of formal trainings that provide more in-depth information on these topics.
- b. Increase opportunities for counties to participate in trainings on the topics of mental health and drug and alcohol by making county administrators,

supervisors and caseworkers aware of the current trainings available in PA on these topics.

DHS Response to Recommendation 1

DHS agrees that it would be beneficial for caseworkers if CCYAs and private children and youth agencies provided information related to mental health and substance use disorders. This information should be quickly and easily accessible in the forms of pamphlets and/or articles to allow a caseworker to review prior to meetings, court appearances, home visits, and/or phone contacts. This information could potentially be shared with other service providers, families, and with children and youth, as appropriate. There are reliable resources available to the CCYA that would enable case workers to conveniently access information in various formats.

The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) is a national resource center providing information, expert consultation, training and technical assistance to child welfare, dependency court and substance abuse treatment professionals to improve the safety, permanency, well-being and recovery outcomes for children, parents and families. NCSACW is an initiative of the United States Department of Health and Human Services and jointly funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Children's Bureau's Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN). Their mission is to improve family recovery, safety and stability by advancing practices and collaboration among agencies, organizations and courts working with families affected by substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders and child abuse or neglect with a goal of developing a substance abuse- and trauma-informed system of care for families involved in the child welfare and court systems. Resources and topics include child welfare and treatment statistics; current issues in the field, such as family treatment drug courts, opioid use disorders and medication-assisted treatment in pregnancy, methamphetamine, and infants with prenatal substance exposure; enhancing services and systems. Training and technical assistance is offered in the form of videos and webinars, online tutorials, toolkits, and in depth technical assistance (IDTA). NCSACW can be accessed at <https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov>

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. SAMHSA Strategic Initiatives help provide treatment and services for people with mental and substance use disorders, support the families of people with mental and substance use disorders, build strong and supportive communities, prevent costly behavioral health problems, and promote better health for all Americans. In order to meet their mission, SAMHSA will:

- Increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders;
- Promote emotional health and wellness;
- Address the prevention of substance abuse and mental illness;
- Increase access to effective treatment; and
- Support recovery.

SAMHSA devotes its resources, including information and data, to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on U.S. citizens. To this end, SAMHSA makes resources and publications available, including manuals, tool kits, fact sheets, resource guides, brochures, posters, and advisory bulletins. The Knowledge Application Program, (KAP) is one such resource, which is designed to support the professional development of behavioral health workers by providing information on resources and best practices. KAP products are as follows:

- Treatment Improvement Protocols (TIPs) are best practice guidelines in the form of manuals for the treatment of substance use disorders, which are useful to clinicians, administrators and other service providers.
- TIP Quick Guides are pocket - sized booklets for clinicians, administrators and other service providers that highlight key information from TIPs manuals.
- KAP Keys are concise, portable, easily accessed how-to information based upon the popular TIP series, designed to meet the needs of the busy behavioral health service provider.
- Technical Assistance Manuals (TAM) s are manuals that offer practical guidance and information related to delivery of treatment and services to individuals with substance use disorders.
- KAP brochures and serials address substance use issues and are designed to inform professionals, clients and the general public.
- Consumer products provide basic information on substance use disorders, treatment and recovery, the effects of substance use on families and communities, and other related issues. Consumer products include fact sheets, posters, and brochures addressing the following topics:
 - Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs;
 - Behavioral health treatments and services;
 - Data, outcomes and quality;
 - HIV, AIDS, and Viral Hepatitis;
 - Homelessness and housing;
 - Mental and substance use disorders;
 - Prescription drug misuse and abuse;
 - Recovery and recovery support;
 - Specific populations;
 - Suicide prevention;
 - Trauma and violence;
 - Underage drinking; and
 - Veterans and military families.

SAMHSA also offers a series of 13 Fact sheets on specific conditions or substances, for example, prescription pain medications, alcohol, heroin, cocaine, illegal drugs, and ecstasy. Also offered are brochures such as “understanding child trauma”, which teaches parents and caregivers about the types of traumatic stress among youth. This brochure teaches parents and caregivers about the types of traumatic stress among youth. It explains the impact of traumatic events on physical and psychological health, and includes a list of resources to assist with recovery. In order to access, browse and order products from SAMHSA via internet, individuals should go to <https://store.samhsa.gov/>. Many products are also available in Spanish.

PA's Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) is committed to providing education, intervention and treatment programs to reduce drug and alcohol abuse and dependency for PA's citizens. In order to receive state and federal funding, PA's counties are required to designate an agency to function as the Single County Authority (SCA). These agencies, for which DDAP has oversight, are located within county jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth. Many SCAs are located either in the same county municipal building as the CCYAs are located or are located in close proximity to the CCYA and may serve as a resource for consultation, information sharing and providing guidance about substance use, co-occurring and problem gambling disorders. Some SCAs may have an onsite resource library of reference materials, including manuals, books, and brochures. DDAP is required to offer training and education throughout the Commonwealth. The majority of training events are available to human service providers and may be accessed through the DDAP Training Management System (TMS). In order to access DDAP training courses offerings and schedules, individuals must register for a TMS user identification and password. Training courses are offered at no cost (or very low cost) through various modalities, which include:

- Mini Regional Trainings are offered six times per year and are rotated through Pennsylvania's Public Health Districts.
- On-site trainings are provided locally on a per request basis. A provider or agency in the field may determine a need for a specific training then make an on-site training request through their Single County Authority.
- Specialized Trainings are provided by DDAP as needed due to new requirements, evidence based practices or "pressing issues" related to substance use, co-occurring, or problem gambling disorders that need to be addressed in a timely manner. Specialized trainings may be of various timeframes from one to five days. An example of these events is the five day "Clinical Supervision Training".

Trainings are currently available to county children and youth agencies through the CWRC which address the topics of mental health and drug and alcohol and include the following:

- 309 Drug and Alcohol Issues: An Introduction for Child Welfare Professionals;
- 309 Heroin;
- 309 Prescription Drug Abuse;
- 309 Methamphetamine;
- 309 Sex and Drugs: Dual Companions;
- 309 Refusal Skills: Relapse Prevention Perspective;
- 303 Childhood Mental Health Issues: Application to the Casework Process;
- 303 Understanding Reactive Attachment Disorder;
- 303 Childhood Mental Health Issues: An Introduction for Child Welfare Professionals; and
- 308 Adult Mental Health Issues: An Introduction for Child Welfare Professionals.

An online calendar of workshops is offered by the CWRC bi-annually and is accessible by contacting county training liaisons who can register caseworkers for workshops directly through the CWRC. Specific information related to each workshop is listed in the calendar including date, location and trainer information. Workshops can also be scheduled at the request of the county, which would be in addition to those listed on the training calendar.

The workshops in the calendar are sponsored by the School of Social Work of the University of Pittsburgh. The University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work is Council on Social Work Education

accredited and a Pennsylvania pre-approved provider of social work continuing education. Many of the workshops in the calendar meet the applicable educational and professional standards for Continuing Education (CE) hours for licensed social workers.

Additionally, the CWRC offers a variety of online courses that are available through the E-Learn website page at www.e-learn.pitt.edu. These online trainings can be accessed at any time by the children and youth agency employee. The following courses on substance use are available on the E-Learn website:

- 9000 CAST II Module 7: Substance Use: As a Risk Factor for Child Maltreatment: A Macro Perspective;
- 9000 CAST II Module 8: Substance Use: Addressing Substance Use as a Risk Factor for Child Maltreatment: A Micro Perspective; and
- 9000 CAST II Module 4: Psychotropic Medication.

Recommendation 2

Inform and educate counties on the importance of increasing caseworkers' safety and feeling of safety in the field by:

- a. Making administrators across Pennsylvania aware of and encouraging them to have caseworkers and supervisors participate in the safety simulation training by SAM, Inc. The panel recommends that DHS communicate to administrators through various avenues such as via email or at Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) meetings to remind administrators of the safety simulation trainings and of the importance of scheduling incoming caseworkers to participate in the training.
- b. Sending caseworkers to home visits in pairs. The panel consistently heard from caseworkers during their April meeting that going to home visits in pairs is desired but often discouraged within counties. Obviously, caseworkers have several responsibilities that fill their time and pairing up for home visits would cut into time they would use to complete some of their work; however, safety and the feeling of safety is of utmost importance in the field of casework. The panel believes that feeling unsafe and unprotected can lead to feelings of stress, which was the highest reason noted in the Stay Survey for caseworkers wanting to leave their job. We believe that having caseworkers attend home visits in pairs would help them feel safer, more secure, and less stressed.

DHS Response to Recommendation 2

In early 2016, two trainings became available to CCYAs through the CWRC. These courses were developed and implemented in response to county agencies' request for training and technical assistance regarding case workers' personal safety in the field. By partnering with Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM, Inc.), the CWRC provided simulation based training sessions to caseworkers and their supervisors through the following courses:

- 400: Caseworker Safety and Responsiveness in Child Welfare Practice
- 500 Providing Feedback to Support Caseworker Safety and Responsiveness in Child Welfare Practice".

The CWRC incorporated a structured format and the PA Practice Model skills, including engagement, assessment, and cultural competence into SAM, Inc.'s preexisting scenario based curriculum. The simulation sessions are limited to 12 participants and consists of three different scenarios which incorporate substance use, mental health, and physical safety hazards. Participants respond to these scenarios as they would in the field, calling upon practice model skills and values to engage the role players and assess the situation. These simulation training sessions include an innovative component of incorporating supervisors in the simulation sessions for which they received credit. After each simulation, supervisors provide feedback to caseworkers on their employment of practice model skills while managing personal safety. In addition, safety experts provide caseworkers with feedback, confirming what they did well regarding personal safety risks for themselves and others, and offer suggestions on what to do differently. Finally, at the end of the session the caseworkers, supervisors, and safety experts participate in a large group debrief. In addition, online pre-work sessions were created to prepare caseworkers and supervisors prior to attending the simulation session. These online sessions served to optimize the participants' time in the simulation session by minimizing classroom lecture. This course was extremely well received by counties.

As mentioned, "Caseworker Safety and Responsiveness to Child Welfare Practice" was first offered to counties in March of 2016. Training sessions were scheduled as part of a statewide roll-out plan which included 115 training sessions ensuring that all of Pennsylvania's 67 county agencies had the opportunity to participate prior to September 2016. Following the initial statewide roll out, the course has continued to be offered to counties.

An online calendar of workshops is offered by the CWRC bi-annually and is accessible by contacting county training liaisons who can register caseworkers for workshops directly through the CWRC. Specific information related to each workshop is listed in the calendar including date, location and trainer information. Workshops can also be scheduled at the request of the county, which would be in addition to those listed on the training calendar.

As of February 1, 2018, Caseworker Safety and Responsiveness in Child Welfare Practice has been delivered a total of 225 times and 2,320 participants attended.

In addition to the simulation training, the CWRC also offers the following courses available on the E-Learn website:

- 9000 Caseworker Safety in Child Welfare Practice; and
- 9000: Caseworker Safety in Child Welfare Practice – Supervisor Module.

DHS agrees that it is important for caseworkers to feel safe while they carry out their duties and responsibilities in the field, especially when conducting home visits. During the April 2017 CRP meeting, caseworkers verbalized that the practice of conducting home visits in pairs would increase feelings of safety but this is discouraged within their CCYA. Reducing the number of children and youth for which caseworkers are responsible, i.e. their caseload size, would afford them additional time within their workday. This extra time could be used to accompany each other when conducting home visits, thus increasing feelings of safety. At this time, the current 3130 Child Welfare Regulations are being re-written. Once issued, the revised 3130 regulations, which will be known as the Chapter 3131 Operation and Administration of a County Children and Youth Social Service Program will reduce caseload size thereby increasing the amount of time caseworkers spend working

directly with children and families. The changes to caseload size may also positively impact caseworkers' ability to conduct home visits in pairs. Recommendation 2 will be shared with the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA).

Recommendation 3

More assertively address the vicarious trauma that caseworkers experience by: providing opportunities for counties to receive formal training on vicarious trauma for caseworkers and supervisors by making administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers aware of the training currently provided in Pennsylvania on this topic. Similar to training for mental health and drug and alcohol, it is important to arm caseworkers with the knowledge of vicarious trauma, as they will undoubtedly come into contact often with individuals who have been severely traumatized, and caseworkers themselves may experience traumatic events while on the job. Similarly, it is important for supervisors to have this training when supervising caseworkers who may be experiencing vicarious trauma but also to help them identify vicarious trauma they may be experiencing.

DHS Response to Recommendation 3

We agree with this recommendation to more assertively address the vicarious trauma that caseworkers experience by providing training opportunities on this topic. Since 2016, a number of trainings have already been completed in the three areas list below, and are currently available to county children and youth agencies through the University of Pittsburgh's Child Welfare Resource Center which address the topic of trauma and traumatic stress and include the following:

- 313 Managing the Impact of Traumatic Stress on the Child Welfare Professional;
- 533 Building a Trauma-Informed Culture in Child Welfare; and
- 701 Introduction to the Trauma-Informed Approach.

From January 1, 2016 to present the following trainings have been requested:

Curriculum Title	# of Workshops Provided	# of Participants
313 Managing the Impact of Traumatic Stress on the Child Welfare Professional	47	1018
533 Building a Trauma-Informed Culture in Child Welfare;	16	265

In addition to the course listed above, workshops have also been offered to county children and youth administrators and their management teams through the Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy is a collaborative venture among the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and the University of Pittsburgh's Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center. The Leadership Academy works to improve the outcomes for Pennsylvania's children by offering high quality management and leadership training to county children and youth administrators and their management teams. Additionally, the Leadership Academy provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences.

In June of 2015, a three-hour workshop entitled “Introduction to the Trauma-Informed Approach” was delivered at the PCYA quarterly meeting as part of the Leadership Academy. In August of 2016, it was offered a second time as a result of a county specific request and 31 participants attended.

In March of 2018, another three-hour workshop entitled “Managing the Impact of Stress and Traumatic Stress on the Child Welfare Leader” was offered at the at the PCYA quarterly meeting as part of the Leadership Academy and is available to counties at their request.

In addition, an online calendar of workshops is offered by the CWRC bi-annually and is accessible by contacting county training liaisons who can register caseworkers for workshops directly through the CWRC. Specific information related to each workshop is listed in the calendar including date, location and trainer information. Workshops can also be scheduled at the request of the county, which would be in addition to those listed on the training calendar.

The workshops in the calendar are sponsored by the School of Social Work of the University of Pittsburgh. The University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work is Council on Social Work Education accredited and a Pennsylvania pre-approved provider of social work continuing education. Many of the workshops in the calendar meet the applicable educational and professional standards for Continuing Education (CE) hours for licensed social workers.

Recommendation 4

The panel supports the recommendations provided by the 2017 State Roundtable Caseworker Retention Workgroup; and will continue to monitor progress on these recommendations within the next year. Recommendations from the report are as follows:

- Approve the distribution of the Stay Interview data analysis;
- Approve the distribution of the guide: Reducing Caseworker Stress in the Courtroom;
- Approve the distribution of recommended targeted solutions for reducing turnover;
- Continue to develop strategies to enhance knowledge, understanding and respect for the profession of child welfare caseworker;
- Continue to assess evidence based strategies and promising practices aimed at reducing caseworker turnover and provide a comprehensive list to the 2018 SRT;
- Develop and implement a plan to gather additional statewide and local data to better assess Pennsylvania’s turnover and vacancy rate;
- Collaborate with key stakeholders, including Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association to assess documentation requirements and provide strategies, to streamline documentation at both the state and local level, to the 2018 State Roundtable;
- Continue to collaborate with the Child Welfare Resource Center to refine and enhance supervisory trainings specific to the findings of the Workgroup; and
- Consideration, by the Office of Children and Families in the Courts, to develop and convene a training specific to Solicitors and Child Welfare

Supervisors on their role in preparing and supporting the Caseworker throughout the court process.

DHS Response to Recommendation 4

DHS also supports the recommendations provided by the 2017 State Roundtable Caseworker Retention Workgroup. As the South Central Citizen Review Panel continues to monitor progress on these recommendations within the next year, DHS will respond, in a timely and effective manner, to requests for information from the South Central CRP. DHS, OCYF, adheres to principles and practices that support alignment with the recommendations provided by the 2017 State Roundtable Caseworker Retention Workgroup in tandem with an organized approach to monitoring progress. DHS, OCYF, is committed to utilization of a CQI framework and process to help improve the outcomes for children, youth, and families served by Pennsylvania's child welfare system. CQI is defined by Casey Family Programs and the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement as "the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions."

In 2013, OCYF, in collaboration with system partners, developed the PA Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model), which was established to help guide the work of those involved in the child welfare system in collaborating to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. The Practice Model helps to provide a consistent basis for decision making; sets forth clear expectations and values for approaching work with children, youth, and families; places a focus on desired outcomes; provides guidance in working with service providers and other child welfare systems; and establishes a way to evaluate practice performance. The Practice Model asserts that children, youth, families, child welfare representatives, and other child and family service partners should participate as team members with shared community responsibility to achieve and maintain outcomes. Collaboration is a foundational component of the Practice Model and must be modeled at every level and across all partnerships to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. Building, supporting, and retaining a qualified, skilled, and committed workforce whose own well-being and safety is valued is also one of the key principles and values outlined in Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model.

The PA Child Welfare Council (Council), which was established in 2016, is the dynamic entity that provides sustained, shared leadership and guidance to support strategic visioning for members of Pennsylvania's child welfare system. Comprised of over 50 individuals representing a broad range of stakeholder groups, the Council serves to inform this strategic visioning through utilization of quantitative and qualitative data in order to guide the establishment of priorities related to federal, state, and locally driven improvement efforts using a continuous quality improvement process and framework. The Council was identified as the key stakeholder group responsible for helping develop, implement, and monitor Pennsylvania's Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Four subcommittees were convened under the Council beginning in October of 2017 and met regularly in order to help devise the goals, strategies/interventions, and key activities for Pennsylvania's PIP. Based upon review of available data and root cause analysis, key themes emerged in the recommendations developed by the Child Welfare Council Subcommittees, which served as the basis for the overarching goals addressed in Pennsylvania's PIP. The four key areas were identified as crossing systemic factors and connecting back to key outcomes and core practice elements outlined in Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model. One of the four key areas identified is "Workforce". Within subcommittee discussions, issues regarding workforce turnover emerged as key root causes for identified state performance gaps. Barriers to retaining staff also included large caseload sizes and ensuring

caseworkers have the necessary time to devote to working directly with children, youth, and families. Challenges in recruiting qualified staff were noted throughout subcommittee discussions and the critical role of the supervisor in the professional development and ongoing retention of staff was frequently acknowledged.

DHS has demonstrated its commitment to addressing caseworker retention by identifying the first goal as part of Pennsylvania's Program Improvement Plan (PIP), as follows: Pennsylvania will recruit, retain, and support a qualified, skilled, and committed child welfare workforce. Goal 1 is further broken down into strategies and key activities. Pennsylvania must report to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau (CB) on PIP progress through quarterly and biannual updates.

Proposed Activities for 2018

The South Central CRP plans to review past recommendations in the next two meetings and identify any that may need revisited. We will work with DHS to obtain updates on those recommendations and any work that is currently being done at the state level within those areas. Should there be any recommendations that we feel have not been adequately addressed, we will reexamine each one, request any information or data needed, and make updated and relevant recommendations.

South Central Citizen Review Panel Current Members

Phyllis Dew – Dauphin
Martha Martin – Adams
Heather Hoffman – Lancaster
Caroline Tyrrell – York
Clare Flynn – Mifflin
Joy Fleming – Dauphin