

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE/CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 26, 2018

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on Friday, January 26, 2018 at the Richmond Police Training Academy, Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present

Hum Cardounel, Jr.
Molly Dellinger-Wray
Robin Foster
Julia Fuller-Wilson
Allison Gilbreath
Malcolm King
Alicia Lenahan
Jim Pope
Eric Reynolds
Chris Spain
Ellen White

Members Not Present

Allison Jackson
Sandy Karison
Robin Morgan
Nancy Oglesby
Pat Popp, Chair
Frederick Rockwell III

Staff Present

Bianca Casper, (VCU Intern, DCJS)
Monica Jackson (DCJS)
Melissa O'Neill (DCJS)
Lynn Sivels (DCJS)

Guests

Aaron Heaberlin (MCV Resident Intern, VCU)

I. Call to Order: Julia Fuller-Wilson, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. Attendees introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes: The committee received a copy of the draft minutes of the November 2, 2017 meeting. Upon a motion by Ellen White and seconded by Allison Gilbreath, the committee unanimously approved the minutes of November 2, 2017.

III. Conflict of Interest Training and Financial Disclosure Update: Melissa O'Neill briefed the committee on Conflict of Interest Act requirements that include annual completion of financial disclosure forms by all members, and biennial completion of online conflict of interest training. These are separate requirements and members should complete them as directed.

IV. Legislative Review: DCJS staff compiled, and distributed to the committee, a list of bills and resolutions impacting child abuse and neglect that were introduced this General Assembly session, which convened January 10, 2018. The committee participated in a discussion of the bills and resolutions presented on the list.

V. CASA Program Update: The committee was previously provided a written update regarding the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program. Melissa O'Neill gave an overview of the CASA Desk Audit processes and reported that DCJS completed desk audits of Virginia's 27 CASA programs. She explained the next steps include onsite visits to the CASA programs throughout the state. She also briefly highlighted efforts related to the National CASA Association's (NCASAA) review of national and state CASA standards, as well as Virginia's upcoming, subsequent review of its CASA regulations.

Bianca Casper presented preliminary findings of an ongoing project conducted to compile and analyze CASA data of FY16 and FY17 to evaluate the impact of VOCA funding on program outcomes. She reported the findings reveal differences in the number of children served, the number of active volunteers, the amount of volunteer hours reported, and changes in staffing levels, among other outcomes. Completion of a final report of findings is projected within upcoming weeks.

Ms. Casper also reported the project will include developing a survey to gather input from CASA programs to support improvements in service delivery and resource utilization.

Melissa O'Neill requested feedback from the committee on the development of questions for the survey. The committee briefly discussed potential questions and proposed recommendations related to: fostering interactions with judges in the interest of promoting program awareness and advancement; evaluating the impact of staff turnover and staff reductions; and consideration of the impact of other crimes and trends on CASA program outcomes; among other recommendations.

Ms. Casper provided an overview of an upcoming project that will study the features of cross-over youth in general; and specifically, the impact of victimization on CASA-served cross-over youth.

Melissa O'Neill briefly discussed the features and purpose of the logic model Virginia developed at the direction of NCASAA.

VI. CJA Program Update: The committee was previously provided a written update regarding the Children's Justice Act Program. Melissa O'Neill briefed the committee on the Program's staff changes and the planned recruitment efforts. Lynn Sivels provided a brief overview of the three Child Fatality Death Investigation Trainings conducted throughout the state in 2017.

VII. Citizen Review Panel: Chris Spain, VDSS Child Protective Services (CPS) Program Manager, provided an overview of VDSS initiatives impacting investigations involving substance-exposed infants (SEI). He provided a general overview of the Department's purpose and role in developing guidance and support for providers and workers that conduct assessments. The committee was provided a draft copy of Section 10 of the VDSS

Child and Family Services Manual that provides guidance on mandated reporting and the development of Plans of Safe Care, and describes CPS' response to substance-exposed infants. He reported the manual will be revised in July, 2018. Committee members were invited to provide feedback on proposed changes.

Committee members discussed concerns about VDSS' response to inquiries and reports related to positive toxicology SEI cases. The committee recommended that CPS workers be provided increased guidance, training, and support regarding best practices when responding to SEI cases. Further recommendations included expanding multi-disciplinary team (MDT) access to information related to substance-exposed infants, which is currently restricted due to confidentiality laws and HIPPA.

VIII. New Business: Ms. O'Neill facilitated the process of appointing the Nomination Committee that will oversee the election committee officers. Humberto Cardounel and Chris Spain offered to serve on the Nomination Committee.

Julia Fuller-Wilson shared information about the *DCJS 2nd Annual Intersections of Crime Conference* to be held June 11-13, 2018 in Portsmouth, Virginia.

The committee recognized the retirement of Jim Pope and his service to the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee with the presentation of a certificate of appreciation.

IX. Adjourn: There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned with a motion made by Allison Gilbreath and seconded by Eric Reynolds at 12:10 PM.

Next meeting dates:

- April 27, 2018
- July 27, 2018