



**AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, September 3, 2014, 8 am
15506 County Line Road, Suite 103
Spring Hill, FL 34610**

Committee Members Present: Marsha Carpenter, Dr. Steve Kanakis, Joe Mascaro

Committee Members Present via Phone: None

Committee Members Excused: Dr. Amy Anderson

Coalition Staff Present: Jim Farrelly, Jak Jakubauskas, Betsy Kier

Others Present: None

I. Welcome and Call to Order – Mr. Jim Farrelly, Executive Director

Mr. Farrelly called the Ad Hoc Committee meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. and welcomed attendees to the first meeting to discuss mandated enrollments.

II. Selection of New Chair

Mr. Farrelly explained the first order of business was to elect a Chair. He stated that Dr. Kanakis is not eligible for the Chair position as he is the sitting Board Chair. Mr. Farrelly requested nominations from the floor. Dr. Kanakis moved to nominate Mr. Mascaro as Chair and Ms. Carpenter seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

III. Statement of Issue – Jim Farrelly and Betsy Kier

Mr. Farrelly explained the Coalition has not enrolled Income Eligible children since the beginning of April due to the possibility of not being able to continue their funding throughout the year. The providers are beginning to question why the wait list has not been opened. In response to their questions, Mr. Farrelly explained the (attached) letter was emailed to providers.

He explained that even though the Coalition received a budget increase of \$73,000, the wait list is independent of the new funding year. Additionally, the Direct Services budget has been increased by \$248,000.

The primary contributing issue is how the signing of HB 7165 into law has changed the enrollment priorities. Priority 1 is now TANF children, Priority 2 is PS children and Priority 3 is Income Eligible. Since early April, no Income Eligible children have been placed into services; however, 1,120 mandated children have been placed since April. The Coalition currently has over 900 children on the wait list and mandated placements in each priority are averaging about five (5) per day. At this rate, 80% of the Coalition's children will be from Priority 1 and 2 categories.

Ms. Kier distributed the (attached) list breaking down the enrollments per month and explained that PS children have the highest enrollment numbers in the 0-9 age category. She explained there are usually peaks in PS client enrollment throughout the year with higher peaks during the summer and winter school breaks. The spikes that are currently occurring and continuing monthly are not the norm. Ms. Kier explained that PS clients aged 9-12 are in the Priority 5 category and when the wait list is open, they would become eligible for services.

Ms. Kier explained that a request has been sent to OEL for a report on statewide enrollment numbers, but this information has not yet been received.

IV. Committee Discussion

Ms. Carpenter explained she has reached out to administrators in Protective Services at DCF, but has not yet received any information on any direct correlation. She explained there are trends in the abuse calls received and services provided. There was no information available from the TANF administrators as their referral process is handled by CareerSource.

Ms. Kier explained the Coalition's concern is there are strict guidelines on valid versus non-valid referrals and whether these guidelines are being followed. In reply to Mr. Mascaro's question on who writes the PS referrals, Ms. Kier explained that multiple agencies are involved.

Ms. Kier explained that a recent referral had come through, but there was no open case. The DCF caseworker explained the client had self-reported and expressed the need for child care assistance. Ms. Kier requested confirmation from OEL on self-reporting and OEL reached out to DCF in Tallahassee and was informed this is not a valid referral. Ms. Kier questioned whether the Coalition's increased referrals were due to many of them not being open cases.

Ms. Carpenter stated that people are aware they cannot obtain services so they self-report. She will investigate further into this matter.

Ms. Kier explained that referrals come in from Children's Home Services, Youth & Family Alternatives, Eckerd, the local police/sheriff's departments and many others. DCF contracts with all of these agencies which are then included under the DCF umbrella, but she questioned how many of these agencies know all the rules regarding referrals.

Mr. Mascaro inquired what guidelines DCF uses to determine an eligible case. Ms. Carpenter stated an investigator reviews the case to determine if it is valid. She will obtain clarification on how soon a referral is originated once a case is opened.

Ms. Kier explained that if DCF determines there is no abuse and the case is closed, the parent would not be eligible for another referral.

Mr. Farrelly remarked that if the collaborating community agencies were strictly following the rules, there may not be as many referrals. He suggested contacting the heads of the different agencies to suggest a training session to make sure all referral signers understand the rules. He stated the Coalition will offer to host the training session.

Ms. Carpenter stated this was an excellent idea for the program administrators of the referral process as there are different entities and each may process referrals differently. No resistance should be expected as these are all community partners who understand the importance of working together to benefit the children. Turnover in staff within the referral departments may have also increased the number of referrals.

Mr. Farrelly explained that a training session may reduce the number of unnecessary referrals by 25%. He explained that a partnership with DCF and CareerSource is needed in order to obtain the contact lists of those individuals who need to be brought into the training session. Ms. Kier suggested this request needs to come from a top agency such as DCF to the leaders within these other community agencies.

Mr. Mascaro requested a motion to establish a meeting date and reach out to community service partners who distribute referrals to come to a brainstorming meeting. Dr. Kanakis moved to pick a specific date for this meeting and Ms. Carpenter seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

Mr. Farrelly suggested holding the meeting at least a month from today's date as it will reduce date conflicts and will provide time to obtain the contact list and distribute the information.

The Committee agreed to hold the meeting on Wednesday, October 15, 2014 beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Coalition's main office. Mr. Mascaro offered to host the meeting at his location in Spring Hill if the attendance response becomes too large. He suggested calling it a "Guidance Discussion" explaining that it is for input, discussion and training.

V. Schedule Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc SR Eligibility Committee was scheduled for Tuesday, October 7, 2014 at 8 a.m.

VI. Public Input

None.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Mascaro adjourned this meeting at 8:57 a.m. with no further discussion.

Respectfully submitted by,
Ramute "Jak" Jakubauskas
Administrative Assistant