

CHINS – Data Collection Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2006

People in Attendance: Senator Karen Spilka; Jim Morton, Juvenile Courts; Nicola Pagonis, Probation; Glenn Daly, EOHHS; Robert Tansi, DYS; Patricia Walsh, Probation; Carmen Cicchetti, Probation; Ruben Ferrira, DSS; Rosalind Walter, DSS; Jill VandenBosch, Chief-of-Staff Sen. Spilka; Ernestina Mendes, Office of Representative Shirley Owens-Hicks and Erin Bradley, Policy Analyst Sen. Spilka

Senator Spilka started by explaining the proposal of using an outside source for technical assistance to help us focus our efforts. The proposal includes two parts: 1. Designing targeted collection tools to support the data collection process. 2. Assisting the group in the development of an analytical strategy. This proposal is currently on the table. She then opened it up for discussion.

Concerns were raised as to why we needed this outside source. Questions arose about what the committee was looking for.

Others were in favor of bringing in some outside help, to assist in focusing our efforts. Also, this agency would have the time and tools necessary to work with all the agencies involved and hone in on what we need. This will help refine scope and look at the bigger picture. The discussion around the proposal is currently ongoing.

Court process may already have some of this information. Discussion amongst the committee about where we have the most information determined the application and petition phase, not much information about pre-petition. Type of analysis was discussed for example: Snapshot; pick a time period to search (day, month year – where the numbers are available); suggest taking a year to look at to see what followed the CHINS case. Goal is to look at entire system.

Need information from other sub-committees as to what their needs are and where their efforts are focused. Working on getting information from them so we do not duplicate.

Process broken down into three parts:

Pre-Application – Probation, Schools

Application/Petition – Courts, Probation, Schools, DSS

Post – CHINS

What data does the committee need?

- General demographics of all 3 phases
- How is the decision made to file a petition?
- Before petition stage, how many were diverted?
- Where was petition filed? What Court?
- What services were offered?
- Regional breakdowns? Regional differences?
- Where are there gaps in services?
- What services keep kids out of the system?
- Prevalence of types of CHINS?
- Some families not happy with this system, where can we improve?

Pre-Application Question: Some may overlap with Best Practices

- What services are offered to keep children off CHINS? What types of diversion processes are offered? Why do certain children not progress to become a CHINS?
- Geographical breakdown by region – number of cases?
- How do families find out about CHINS? How are referrals placed?
- Why do some families come to court but not file an application?
- Look at 3 separate children: 1. Never go to court. 2. On track but not CHINS. 3. CHINS.
- If family is involved with DSS, why do some children proceed to CHINS and not others in the family?
- Find common definition to what works and why.

Petition / Application:**Put the following questions together to get the full picture of the child**

- How long are cases open for or when do they age-out?
- What is the child's health/mental health?
- What is the safety level? (Court Involvement, 51A, Delinquency)
- What kind of skills does the child have? (Employment or School) (Vocational Focus Group)
- What is the child's civic involvement? (Activities)
- What are the child's other relationships? (Adults, Peers, Foster Home, Parents)
- How many are new cases? How many are recurring?
- Types of CHINS? (runaway, truancy, resist obeying parents, disobey school rules)

*****Looking for feedback in regards to these minutes and what else the committee is looking for. Please e-mail any questions you would like added to this list to Erin Bradley in Senator Spilka's office. erin.bradley@state.ma.us***