

Summary of CHINS Executive Steering Committee Meeting June 2, 2009

In attendance were **Senator Karen Spilka**; **Michael Dsida**, Deputy Chief Counsel, Committee for Public Counsel Services; **Angelo McClain**, Commissioner, Department of Children and Families; **JaneTewksbury**, Commissioner, Department of Youth Services; **Dave Murphy**, Legislative Director, Department of Children and Families; **Pat Walsh**, Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of Probation; **Jim Morton**, Administrative Office of the Juvenile Court; **Deb Pinals**, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Mental Health; **Lisa Lambert**, Executive Director, Parent/Professional Advocacy League; and **Peter Forbes**, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Youth Services; **John Bynoe**, Associate Commissioner, Department of Early and Secondary Education; **Stacey Bloom**, Assistant General Counsel, Department of Youth Services; **Tina Adams**, Department of Mental Health; **Steve Cidlevich**, Director of Constituent Affairs, Department of Mental Health ; **Dan Hurley**, Office of Representative Paul Donato; **Mary Anne Padien**, General Counsel, Office of Senator Spilka; **Colby Dillon**, Legislative Aide, Office of Senator Spilka

After Senator Spilka gave a brief overview of the history and substance of S. 68/H. 1278, *An Act Regarding Families and Children Engage in Service*, the steering committee engaged in a feedback discussion. There were several comments regarding the prevention and intervention programs for truant youth, data collection and suggestions for planning the large task force meeting to be held in July.

Truancy

The CHINS reform legislation requires students, prior to being expelled or referred by school administrators to services outside of the school, to participate in a DESE-certified truancy program if such a program is offered at the school. Associate Commissioner Bynoe mentioned that an early identification program is currently being piloted in 10 school districts and suggested that this program might be appropriate to use as the DESE-certified truancy program. He also noted that truancy is currently part of a larger indication system used in dropout prevention programs. There is a report expected in June from DESE with recommendations to schools for specific programmatic changes to improve dropout and truancy prevention and intervention programs.

Data Collection

Mike Dsida suggested that the bill should include a provision that ensures data collections of the CHINS population from various agencies are integrated. Senator Karen Spilka agreed and felt that a system should be created that tracks children and families as they leave the services of one agency and enter the services of another agency. Commissioner Tewksbury noted that DYS has a MassHealth tracking system, which allows the services that children receive and are covered by MassHealth to be visible. Senator Spilka also stated that the standardized billing and coding bill passed last session, and currently being implemented, will allow services covered by private insurance to be captured as well. In addition, Lisa Lambert informed the committee that Massachusetts recently received the Robert Wood Johnson Grant to help bring the percentage of insured kids to 100%, which should increase the number of children that can be tracked.

According to Jim Morton, the juvenile courts are also in the process of launching a new MIS system, which will allow easier identification of where the family is in the system.

Commissioner McClain suggested that the steering committee obtain data to better understand the legislation's financial impact on the Commonwealth and to support the duration of time for which this bill proposed children and their families receive services from the CSAs. The Commissioner also suggested that research should be completed to establish whether the CHINS population was considered in the volume used for determining funding of the implementation of Rosie D. If the CHINS population was not considered, what is the estimated number of CHINS kids who will utilize the services provided by the CSAs, and what will be the effect on the implementation costs of Rosie D.?

Next Steps

The Executive Steering Committee also briefly discussed the format of the large task force meeting in the beginning of July. One idea was to have presentations given by the respective experts in each field (e.x. Emily Sherwood could give a presentation on Rosie D./CBHI and Associate Commissioner Bynoe could speak about the early identification program).