

# Child Advocacy Center – Multidisciplinary Team Advisory Board

Nydia Monagas, Chair  
John Esmerado, Vice-Chair

**October 7, 2022**  
**1:30 p.m. – 3:30 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting**

## Minutes

### **In Attendance:**

Christine Beyer  
Mary Coogan  
Jacquelynn Duron  
Gladibel Medina  
Nydia Monagas  
Debbie Riveros  
Javier Toro

NJ Department of Children and Families  
Advocates for Children of New Jersey  
Rutgers University School of Social Work  
Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center  
New Jersey Children's Alliance  
Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office  
Hudson County Prosecutor's Office

### **Guests:**

Pete Boser  
Joseph Pargola

New Jersey Children's Alliance  
NJ Department of Children and Families

### **Staff:**

Daniel Yale

NJ Department of Children and Families

## **I. Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order and the Open Public Meetings notice was read.

## **II. Approval of Minutes**

The Board reviewed the minutes from the June 3, 2022 meeting. Debbie Riveros made a motion to approve the minutes. Mary Coogan seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve the minutes without edit.

## **III. New Business**

### **Changes to the Annual Progress Review Report**

The revised Annual Progress Review form was sent to all members for review prior to the meeting. At the previous meeting, members discussed revising the Annual Progress Review report in order to make better decisions about future CAC funding. One of the requests was that members be able to review prior year progress reports to compare data and progress. In the revised form, data, recommendations for development from the prior year, and progress that has been made towards those recommendations have been included. The Board also discussed the possibility of making recommendations to CACs for improvements.

A question was raised regarding whether a uniform method of data collection had been developed. Nydia stated that each county still has their own process for collecting data. The data report was developed to encourage streamlining of definitions, but that process will need to include higher level representatives from the County Prosecutor's Association of New Jersey (CPANJ), the Attorney General's Office, etc. The thought is that the recommendations from the data report might lead to conversations that will

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develop commonalities across the counties and how terms are defined. In many counties, even though standards may be set, those that collect data may not have the authority to change the type of data that is collected or how data is collected. The Board spoke about creating standards for CACs so that the data the Board receives is more accurate and can be evaluated more appropriately. Nydia stated that, even if the Board were to create standards, unless upper management is in agreement with changes to data collection, it will not occur.

Christine spoke about creating definitions even if the Board can't direct counties to answer in a particular way. If we have definitions, there may be a way of determining what some of the differences are in their responses. Pete agreed and stated that each county doesn't realize that their definitions are different because they are only involved in one system. Javier suggested that a meeting or training be developed for individuals that have the authority to make decisions. A Power Point presentation can be created that clearly defines what the Board is seeking, explains what they expectations are, and provide examples so that they have a better understanding. Mary suggested that the training should also be an opportunity for attendees to weigh in on definitions. Nydia stated that NJCA will create a draft of the Annual Progress Review that includes definitions. This can also be open for discussion amongst stakeholders. Once these trainings have occurred with stakeholders and they are aware of this information, the Board will consider it more when making determinations about eligibility for funding. Pete will create a draft Power Point presentation that will include definitions to be shared with the Board.

## **Discuss State Funding Allocated for Case Managers**

Nydia explained that there are children that are not accessing services because they are not DCPD-involved and do not get referred. This not only applies to child-on-child cases but also other children that are not involved with DCPD. There was an addition to the budget this year for \$2.1 million for case managers at CACs with the intention of having these case managers provide support to those cases that are not DCPD involved. The Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse workgroup has been discussing how this will be rolled out. Christine informed the Board that she is following up regarding the parameters and flexibility or whether there needs to be a request for a language change in the resolution.

Nydia informed the Board that the Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse workgroup discussed that the case managers should have clinical training and expertise to do an assessment on these cases to determine whether they should be referred back to DCPD or law enforcement and making determinations about mental health and medical needs, ensuring that there is a warm handoff to services and not closing the case until the child engages in services or the family refuses treatment. They also discussed where the case managers would be housed and under who's budget the case managers would fall.

Jacquelynn asked if the case managers will follow standardized intake and assessment forms and whether the system has the capacity to handle the influx of cases. Nydia stated that the workgroup discussed standardization of the assessments, that the clinicians are all trained the same way, and ensuring that all clinicians are collecting the same data. Regarding capacity, there is a meeting scheduled to discuss how the system can increase capacity, train providers, and where they are needed.

Christine informed the Board that one of the ideas that was being discussed was the possibility of creating a centralized fund that would be used to pay for any services that children may require. Creation of a statewide fund would also allow for data collection regarding the services that are utilized and/or requested the most along with outcomes, which would allow resources to be directed where they are needed most.

## **Data Report – Next Steps**

In addition to the Board discussing improving consistency of data collection in CACs, Nydia asked if there were any other recommendations from the data report that members would like to address in terms of

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standardizing, collecting, and utilizing data across the state. An example would be the use of InfoShare software with the CAC module. Each county-based CAC uses InfoShare, but many have certain modifications that change how data is collected and what types of data are collected. The Board discussed the possibility of implementing a requirement that all CACs use the InfoShare CAC module to be eligible for future funding. In the event that a county uses a different tracking system, that county would be required to produce the required data points.

## **Child on Child Sexual Abuse Workgroup Updates**

Updates were provided during the State Funding Allocated for Case Managers portion of the meeting.

## **Update on FY23 Funding**

Nydia stated that one of the issues that has been identified is that CACs want to have mental health and medical evaluations onsite. The CACs would like to use the Child Advocacy Development Grant funding from DCF to allow for this; however, the RDTCs also receive state funding from DCF. Nydia asked for suggestions on how the Board can support CACs to provide these services at their sites while using state grant funds. The Board discussed several issues that occurred with RDTCs that have allowed staff to travel to CACs to perform evaluations in the past. These issues were only related to cases that involved DCPD involved children. The Board also discussed whether any contract issues would arise between the RDTCs and DCF if the RDTCs agreed to travel to CACs to provide services for non-DCPD involved children. DCF will look into whether there would be any conflicts if this type of agreement between CACs and RDTCs was approved.

An additional issue that was raised was regarding mental health services for non-DCPD involved children. Once a mental health evaluation occurs, there needs to be a mechanism for referral for treatment, funding, and follow-up.

## **IV. Announcements**

No announcements at this time.

## **V. Adjourn**

Next meeting Friday, December 2, 2022.