

Division of Family Services Monthly Update for November 2010

Managing by Data

During the month of November, the Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis unit (OBRA) continued to work closely with LDSS to improve performance management across the Commonwealth. Onsite trainings that review performance management basics and DFS data tools were provided to Albemarle, Culpeper and Washington County DSS's. Pamela Sheffield also provided National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) training to Newport News DSS.

Automation of the Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Assessment Tool (VEMAT) was completed and is ready for implementation. OBRA staff will be working with the Permanency Unit to issue the necessary guidance for local staff.

The Managing by Data workgroup meeting was held on November 18th. Topics of discussion included the adjustment of performance standards on the Critical Outcome Reports (CPS contact outcomes are now at 90%) and the prioritization of future SafeMeasures reports. The next meeting has been scheduled for January 19, 2011.

OBRA held its first local data team meeting with Culpeper, Fredericksburg, and Louisa DSS's on November 29th. OBRA will be working closely with each agency regarding specific outcomes on which they would like to improve performance. These agencies will receive additional trainings and resources while sharing practice tips with one another during this process. OBRA will look to expand this pilot in the spring of 2011 to another grouping of LDSS's.

During the month of December, OBRA will continue to work closely with our partners at the local level. Performance management trainings are currently scheduled with Lynchburg, Frederick, Prince William and Pittsylvania LDSS's. In addition, Pam Sheffield is conducting OASIS trainings in the Northern and Piedmont regions that will focus on NYTD and Resource Screens. An additional training is also scheduled with Charlottesville DSS.

Thanks to each LDSS for embracing data driven decision making in 2010. OBRA has been in over 30 LDSS this year and we are very appreciative of the hospitality we have been shown. We are now averaging over 17,000 SafeMeasures hits a month and have seen a remarkable improvement in CPS data quality in recent months. Finally, all of our outcomes continue to improve including the highest permanency rate ever recorded at over 73%. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact matthew.wade@dss.virginia.gov.

Family Engagement

The Family Engagement Program Manager, Tamara Temoney, and Bragail Williams-Brown, Transitional Coordinator for Richmond City DSS, co-facilitated a workshop at the 25th Virginia One Church One Child Conference about "Achieving Permanency through Family Engagement." In addition, Tamara Temoney Satara Graham, TDM Facilitator from Richmond City DSS, and Dr. Cindy McFeature, Family Partnership Meeting Facilitator for Washington County DSS, co-facilitated a workshop about "Understanding the Role of CASA in Family Partnership Meetings."

A full day session about family engagement was held with the Expanded Regional Child Welfare team to discuss the progress of the past year, continued challenges, and strategies for sustaining teaming practices. We also discussed the ongoing need of continued technical assistance and support to LDSS. Team participants included the following regional consultants: Permanency, CPS, Resource Family, Project LIFE, CRAFFT, and CSA.

A pilot training facilitated by Eric Reynolds, Esq. of Chesterfield County, and Christie Marra, Esq. of the Virginia Poverty Law Center, was held for attorneys in the Central region regarding family engagement. The one day session provided an overview of family engagement, a discussion about the role of parents' attorney's and GAL's in Family Partnership Meetings, and ethical issues. It is anticipated that this training will be offered next year in each region.

During the month of December, family engagement roundtables will be held in the Central and Eastern regions. In addition, the Family Engagement Unit will discuss training and technical assistance needs for the upcoming year. The charge for 2011 is to assist local departments in implementing all four components of Family Engagement (FE) through training, facilitating meetings/roundtables, providing consultation, monitoring and providing feedback, making resources and information more readily available, or providing any other assistance needed – to the degree possible. The four components include: Family Partnership Meetings, Family Support, Family Search and Engagement, and Family Resource Development.

Resource Families

Dr. Tamara Temoney has accepted the position of Family Placement Program Manager for the Division of Family Services. She will provide oversight to both the Resource Family Unit as well as the Family Engagement.

Chasity Fitzpatrick, Piedmont Resource Family Consultant, and Lana Mullins, Western Resource Family Consultant, and Lori Ryan of the Annie E. Casey Foundation facilitated Family Search and Engagement training in the Central, Piedmont, Eastern, and Northern regions. Training was attended by local DSS staff from CPS and private providers and focused on the purpose of family search and engagement, search strategies, and techniques for engaging youth, birth parents and relatives.

Sandra Bell, Northern Resource Family Consultant, Flora Harris, Eastern Resource Family Consultant, and Chasity Fitzpatrick facilitated workshops during the 25th Virginia One Church One Child Conference. Sessions included "Unpacking the No," "Family Search and Engagement," and "The Effects of Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Parenting on Biological Children."

In addition, Lana Mullins held a graduation event for local agencies that completed the series of Regional Peer Collaborative in the Western Region. Agencies report that the process for resource development, support, and recruitment was improved, and that they have benefitted from peer-to-peer networking and information sharing with other agencies.

Training

In an effort to make the work of the Virginia Child Welfare Training Program (VCWTP) more accessible to all, the Communications Subcommittee has placed several important documents on the Children's

Services Transformation website (www.vafamilyconnections.com). The site now includes Virginia's draft Child Welfare Supervisor/Manager Core Competencies that were developed over the summer as well as training updates, one-pagers, and online tools. This site will be updated regularly.

In addition, VCU-VISSTA is working closely with Area Training Centers to build capacity around the development of subject matter expert workshops. VISSTA is also working on acquiring new survey software that would enhance their ability to evaluate both training classes and trainers. The Knowledge Center Users Group is continuing its work on developing enhanced reporting capabilities.

The fourth and fifth modules of the Supervisor Core Pilot series were held during the month of November. The final module, which focuses on professional development of staff, will take place in December. This series has consistently received positive feedback from the 28 child welfare supervisor and manager participants.

Child Protective Services

During the month of November, CPS staff attended the one-day conference "Making Kinship Care Work in Virginia: Partnering for Progress" held in Fairfax. They also attended the one day Diligent Search training for CPS workers at the Central Regional Office and at the Northern Regional Office. This training supported CPS workers in obtaining information about birth families.

CPS staff continued to consult with DFS and IT staff around OASIS changes to support improved CPS documentation. Activities included participation in the CPS OASIS committee meeting to review and draft changes for OASIS to support CPS documentation for Structured Decision Making and advising on CPS records retention issues. In addition, program staff met with CPS Regional Consultants to formulate a Structured Decision Making (SDM) training plan for a two day CPS course for SDM Intake, Safety and Risk assessment to be offered late next spring. Regional staff will confirm dates, locations, and solicit trainers from local departments to assist in co-training this curriculum. Two-day training for trainers to review this course will be planned in April.

CPS staff completed a review of the Quarterly reports submitted by the grantees of the CPS treatment and prevention grants including Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention, Virginia Family Violence Prevention, Child Advocacy Centers, and Healthy Families grantees. Ongoing consultation and technical assistance is provided to all grantees. Also, submitted to the Department of Criminal Justice Services were the VOCA Victim Assistance Grant Program State Performance Reports for the VOCA Child Abuse/Neglect Treatment Program and the VOCA Recovery Act Assistance Grant on Nov 3rd. Contract modifications were made to the 36 Healthy Families programs including revised award and match amounts based on FMAP funds, revised work plans, and budgets. CPS staff worked with staff from www.protect.org in gaining a better understanding of how non-caretaker sexual abuse cases are being documented and handled on a local level. A meeting was held with the State Police and staff from www.protect.org on November 9th. A monitoring visit was conducted at the CASA for Children of Augusta County, Staunton & Waynesboro on November 18th, 2010.

The Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect (GAB) met on November 5th. Several new members were introduced. The GAB are involved in planning the Child Abuse Prevention Conference in April and in hosting the GAB awards to those who have done outstanding work in the area of child abuse and neglect.

On November 10th, CPS staff participated in the Home Visiting Consortium (HVC) site visit made by the federal project officers from the Health Resources and Services Administration Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA) for the Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program grant. The meeting provided an opportunity for exchange of information and questions related to the grant implementation. In addition, staff participated in the Goal II Smart Beginnings work group meeting held November 15th at Prevent Child Abuse Virginia. The group is looking at training on parent involvement and leadership for prevention and early childhood programs as one initiative for the upcoming year.

Permanency

At the beginning of November, Pamela Cooper, Kim McGaughey, Lisa Tully, and Dawn Caldwell met to initiate revisions to the Adoption Assistance guidance. This workgroup produced a significantly revised guidance section that incorporated adoption assistance changes identified by the Permanency Advisory Committee, the framework developed and introduced in the revised Foster Care manual, 2010 Virginia Code changes related to adoption assistance, and clarifications regarding how adoption assistance should be administered. Several issues were identified for further discussion with the Permanency Advisory Committee and based on interpretation from the Office of the Attorney General. The draft produced in November represents significant movement towards a more useful approach to service delivery around adoption assistance. The Department's Medicaid unit has been asked to review and update guidance related to Medicaid and Adoption Assistance. The target date for publication of the revised section is the beginning of 2011.

Twelve months ago advocates, educators, social workers, foster parents, and other stakeholders interested in the educational needs and outcomes of youth in foster care and older adopted youth convened around a primary objective of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act—promoting educational stability. Through the collaboration, tools were developed to facilitate this objective. The tools include (a) the Commonwealth of Virginia Departments of Education and Social Services Joint Guidance on Best Interest Determination for School Placement, (b) the Best Interest Determination for School Placement Form, and (c) the Immediate Enrollment of Child in Foster Care Form. An article was published on SPARK to announce the statewide roll-out of guidance related to the educational requirements in the Fostering Connections Act. An informational Webinar on the Educational Requirement of the Fostering Connections Legislation will take place on December 14th. For details, call Peyton McCoy at 1-804-726-7944 or e-mail peyton.mccoy@dss.dss.virginia.gov.

The contract with United Methodist Family Services' Project LIFE is being modified to be more consistent with performance-based principles. Permanency Program staff and General Services staff will finalize changes to the contract in December. Project LIFE provides independent living (IL) services to youth in and aging out of foster care as well as technical assistance to LDSS on IL services. The Project Life staff continues to provide training and technical assistance to LDSS workers on National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) in conjunction with Pam Sheffield who is providing the NYTD OASIS Training. UMFS/Project LIFE have applied for a grant to fund a pilot mentoring program for youth ages 18-21 who were formerly in foster care and receiving IL services from their LDSS. The mission is to create lifelong connections between mentors and mentees that are meaningful and goal-driven. The program will provide ongoing support, training and resources for both mentor and mentees as they work toward mutually identified goals.

As always, November was Adoption Awareness Month. House Joint Resolution Number 41 declared November and each succeeding November as “*Virginia Adoption Awareness Month.*” November is the month identified as the time to highlight adoption of children in foster care awaiting a permanent and loving home. It also focuses on the needs of birth, foster and adoptive families throughout their family life cycle. A proclamation was issued by Governor McDonnell and is now posted on the internet for local departments of social services to print and post in their offices.

In addition, the SFY 2011 Achieving Permanency through Adoptions Initiative challenges adoption contractors to meet a goal of 300 finalized adoptions by June 30, 2011. Monthly reports submitted in November indicate 33 final orders have been achieved since July 1, 2010. The November 2010 SafeMeasures report of adoption data indicate there are 628 children who have termination of parental rights (TPR) and are not in an adoptive placement or permanent living arrangement. Three focus groups were held to clarify the needs of LDSS to inform the new Adoption Services’ Request for Proposals (RFP’s) which will be issued in early 2011. The focus groups were held on November 4th and 15th in the Richmond area and November 18th in the Roanoke area. An additional videoconference was held in early December for LDSS staff in southwest Virginia.

The Virginia One Church, One Child conference, paid for under contract with VDSS, was held on November 4 – 6, 2010. The conference offered an “Extreme Recruitment” institute on Thursday, November 4th which focused on intense recruitment strategies for difficult to place youth. The Match Reception was well attended by families wanting to adopt with LDSS from the eastern and central regions being well represented.

Adult Services

A total of 17,141 APS reports were made to local APS units and the APS Hotline in FY 2010, a 9.7% over the previous fiscal year and a 20% increase over the past two years. The accelerating Age Wave, economic stress and lack of public awareness of the extent of abuse are credited with the unprecedented increases. FY 2011 APS Hotline call volume indicates that the growth rate is continuing – the Hotline received 440 calls in the first quarter, a 39% increase over the first quarter of FY 2010. The full report will be posted online in December.

AS/APS staff responded to follow-up questions from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) about state needs and preferences for federal support and funding for APS programs in the areas of standards, data collection and analysis, best practices, technical assistance, training and a national APS resource center. GAO is conducting a national study of state APS programs requested by U.S. Senator Herb Kohl. The GAO team visited VDSS earlier this year for an intensive overview of Virginia’s APS program, and Program Manager Gail Nardi assisted GAO in developing a national survey of state APS administrators. The follow-up questions were related to proposed federal resources and first-ever state APS funding authorized by the Elder Justice Act, which became law in March but has not yet been funded. The GAO report is scheduled for release in February.

Adult Services continues to respond to concerns raised by local AS/APS staff regarding significant increases in requests for private-pay participants in the PACE program and Medicaid waiver screenings for children. Home Office staff has notified DMAS that the Code does not authorize local agencies to conduct screenings for private-pay clients unless they will be eligible for Medicaid within six months. Regarding screenings for children, local staff maintains that the UAI is unsuitable for use with children

and that they are not trained to screen children. Adult Services has met with DMAS and VISSTA staff to discuss training on children's screenings and continues efforts to resolve the issue.

Adult Services also is pursuing local agency concerns that a growing number of acute-care hospitals are not doing UAI screenings for patients discharged to nursing homes for short-term recovery and rehabilitation. As a result, patients are being discharged from nursing homes without adequate discharge or continuing care plans, which puts them at further risk.

A poster addressing nursing facility and assisted living facility staffs' responsibility to report suspicions of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation has proved to be an effective and cost-efficient way to raise awareness of mandated reporting responsibilities. Mandated reporter posters were mailed to 79 facilities in Southwest Virginia. Project coordinator Paige McCleary conducted a follow-up phone survey with a randomly selected sample of facility administrators. The project was financed by a grant from the Family and Children's Trust Fund (FACT). The program plans to apply for a second FACT grant to replicate the poster campaign in another region of the state.

The Money Follows the Person Program (MFP), a federal long-term care "rebalancing" initiative has been renewed for five years. DMAS reports that more than 270 individuals have moved or are in the process of transitioning from nursing homes and state institutions into community living settings. Federal officials report that, like Virginia, most state MFP programs are not meeting their targets, mainly because of a lack of suitable community housing for clients.

Home Office Program Consultant Tishaun Harris-Ugworji continues to provide training on the Auxiliary Grant Program for VDSS Licensing inspectors, assisted living providers and provider organizations. Topics include proposed revisions to the AG regulation now pending in the Governor's office, provider certification requirements and eligibility criteria.

Prevention

The DFS Prevention Committee finalized its work plan and is working with the Virginia League of Social Services Executive's (VLSSE) Child and Family Services Committee to create a local agency survey to ascertain the nature of prevention services being delivered by local DSS's around the state. The survey results will give the Committee valuable information regarding when and how prevention services are initiated, as well as what funding sources are used and how prevention services are being documented. All of this information will be used in the development of prevention guidance, the addition of a prevention presence in OASIS, and creation of an online prevention resource list for use by state and local DSS staff and community partners.

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) & Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA)

There were 212 new ICPC cases this month for a total of 3,099 cases. Placement statistics for the month of November are listed below:

- Adoption – 25
- Foster Care – 76
- Parental Placements – 35
- Relative Placements – 18

- Residential – 58

In regards to ICAMA, there are a total of 3,005 cases – 40 of which were new for the month of November. The ICAMA Program Consultant was asked to join the national nominating committee for the Association of Administrators for the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (AAICAMA). The committee will select a national slate of officers and the vote will take place during the national AAICAMA meeting in April 2011. In addition, the Program Manager and staff conducted an ICPC training session for the Family Placement Unit at the November 17th ROCO meeting. The Program Manager and staff are also participating on the ICPC national work group that is writing a new ICPC Regulation that will address the process for approving private and independent adoptions.

Program Improvement Plan

The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) measurement component was accepted and case reviews using a modified Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) instrument will begin in January 2011, PIP Quarter 2. In addition to case reviews, several other reports and SafeMeasures will be utilized for the measurement process. The Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis (OBRA) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) units have been very helpful throughout the PIP planning process.

The first PIP quarter comes to a close on December 31, 2010. The first report is due to our federal partners by February 15, 2011.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Transitioning to Quality Service Review (QSR) continued during the month of November with a successful pilot in Chesterfield-Colonial Heights DSS. QSR is a system improvement tool and process used to assess the quality of child welfare practice to improve outcomes for children and families in Virginia. The pilot provided us with the opportunity to utilize the newly-developed protocol that operationalizes the Virginia Practice Model. The pilot also provided the opportunity to test and assess the process for review. Final edits to the QSR protocol will be completed in December, and in January, we will disseminate the revised protocol to various stakeholders. Planning is currently underway with the Norfolk Department of Human Services for a quality Service Review the week of February 7, 2010.

We are currently accepting applications to be a QSR reviewer from both LDSS and VDSS staff. In selecting reviewers, we are looking for individuals who couple a belief in the Children's Services System Practice Model with the ability to interview and accurately summarize a case. After training, reviewers will understand how case practice skills operationalize the values and principles of the Practice Model, the QSR process and protocol, and how to score objectively based on the QSR protocol.

The first training for reviewers will be offered on January 19th and 20th at the VDSS Central Regional office. Anyone interested in finding out about opportunities as a reviewer with Quality Service Review should contact Judy Fogleman, Quality Analyst, at 804-840-083, or Judy.Fogleman@dss.virginia.gov.

Thanks, and take care all!

Paul