

Division of Family Services Monthly Update December 2010

Managing by Data

During the month of December, the Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis unit (OBRA) continued working with local agencies around the Commonwealth to promote performance management and data driven decision making. Onsite trainings that review performance management basics and DFS data tools were provided to Pittsylvania, Danville and Henry/Martinsville DSS. Pamela Sheffield also provided National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) training to the Piedmont region and Charlottesville DSS.

The release of the automated Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Assessment Tool (VEMAT) is currently being discussed with the Permanency Unit and will be available when guidance is finalized. In addition, OBRA continued to work with local data team pilot members (Culpeper, Fredericksburg, Louisa, and Lynchburg). OBRA will be working closely with each agency on individual outcomes. These outcomes vary from a desire to improve on timeliness of adoption and reunification to wanting to increase family based placements. OBRA is looking to replicate the data team model to another cluster of LDSS in the spring of 2011.

The SafeMeasures contract was extended and details are being finalized to ensure delivery of this very useful and functional data tool through 2011. As 2011 begins, OBRA job functions will be expanding beyond promoting performance management and data driven decision making, development and management of DFS data tools and IT development for DFS systems. OBRA will now be managing performance based contracting, strategic finance, and sub-recipient monitoring. OBRA will also be welcoming Elwood Johnson to their team who will assist primarily with sub-recipient monitoring.

During the month of January, OBRA will remain engaged with our local partners. Performance management and data tool trainings will be conducted in Louisa and Fredericksburg (a part of local data team membership) as well as in Hampton and Dinwiddie which have requested the training. Pam Sheffield will be conducting resource training in the central region and NYTD trainings in the Western region as well as in Prince William County. In addition, development continues on the next two releases of OASIS. A release date for version 3.8 will be determined in January.

Family Engagement

The Family Engagement Program Manager, Tamara Temoney, and members of the Child Welfare Regional Team for the Central region (Monica Hockaday, CPS Regional Consultant; Lavinia Hopkins, CRAFT Coordinator; Dave Nichols, CSA Technical Assistant; and Lisa Tully, Permanency Consultant) facilitated a family engagement information session for representatives of Buckingham, Cumberland, and Prince George. The participants included the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Judge, LDSS staff, CSA staff, and community partners. This event allowed localities an opportunity to discuss concerns and challenges and also develop strategies for continued collaboration.

In addition, family engagement roundtables were held in the Central, Eastern, and Northern regions. The Roundtables have been beneficial for information sharing, problem solving, and peer to peer networking. The Roundtables have also been useful for discussing barriers to implementation and

continued supports needed from VDSS to support family engagement practice. Localities are continuing to have challenges working with the legal community, establishing buy-in with community partners, and working within budget and staff limitations.

Broadcast 6666 posted with additional information about the Family Partnership Meeting Incentive allocation to support family engagement activities from September 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. In the coming months, a family engagement newsletter with information about family engagement practices around the state will be developed and disseminated.

Resource Families

Training for the use of the Resource Family Screens in OASIS was conducted in the Northern and Piedmont regions by Pam Sheffield of the Outcome Based Analysis and Reporting unit.

Sandy Bell, Resource Family Consultant for the Northern region, facilitated training on the Provider Regulations and Guidance. Sandy Bell also facilitated a session for public and private providers entitled “Unpacking the No” during an ADOPT meeting. Over the next month, the Unit will be discussing training and technical assistance needs for next year.

In addition, Gardenella Green joined the CRAFFT Team as CRAFFT Project Manager, working out of Norfolk State to supervise the five, existing CRAFFT Coordinators.

Training

On December 6th and 7th, two trainers from the Institute for Human Services (IHS) trained Area Training Center Managers in the process of identifying, assessing, and supporting Subject Matter Expert curriculums and training skills. The training is part of the planning that is underway to use this approach to workshop development as a way to be more responsive to local agency training needs.

The sixth and final module of the Child Welfare Supervisor/Manager Pilot, presented by trainers from Ohio, was completed on December 13 and 14th. Feedback from the twenty-seven child welfare supervisors and managers who participated was universally positive, and the feedback from this pilot will be used in modifying the current Child Welfare Supervisor’s training.

Child Protective Services

The CPS Policy Advisory Committee convened on December 8th. Topics of discussion included CPS data and outcomes to improve CPS processes, proposed language in the CPS Out-of-Family regulation 22VAC40-730 to conform to 22VAC40 –705, and training and implementation plans for Structured Decision Making for CPS Intake, Safety and Risk assessments anticipated in the spring.

CPS staff formulated a training plan for a two day CPS course for SDM Intake, Safety and Risk assessment to be offered in May, June and July 2011. Regional staff will confirm dates, locations, and solicit trainers from local departments to assist in co-training this curriculum. A two-day training session for trainers to review this course is planned in April.

In addition, CPS Program Staff had an initial phone consult with a representative of the National Resource Center on In-Home Services to begin discussions around plans to improve policy and guidance on CPS Ongoing Services cases. A follow up call is scheduled for January.

CPS staff participated in the Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC) advisory committee meeting for the Part C and Early Intervention Services on December 1st. Staff also participated in discussion of CPS issues at the Appeals and Fair Hearings staff meeting with the CPS Hearing Officers and Solomon Abah, Division Director. A draft guide was completed for the CPS Regional Consultants to use when reviewing CPS investigations of school personnel.

CPS staff conducted a monitoring visit at Children, Youth, and Family Services, Inc. in Charlottesville, VA, a VOCA Recovery Act sub-grantee for the Child Abuse/Neglect Program, on December 8th. The meeting was held with the program's Executive Director, Youth Services Program Manager, Finance Manager and the three Treatment Specialists currently involved with the VOCA program. The monitoring report was completed and the letter of monitoring results was sent to the sub-grantee on December 21st. In addition, staff completed the monitoring report for the CASA for Children of Augusta County, Staunton & Waynesboro, a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Child Abuse/Neglect Treatment Program sub-grantee regarding the November 18th monitoring visit that was conducted.

CPS staff completed and submitted the VOCA sub-grantee award/staffing report required by Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) prior to the Dec 15th VOCA Administrators' meeting. Staff also attended the VOCA Administrators' meeting at DCJS on Dec 15th. Items of discussion included the following: updates regarding the VOCA allocation and the National Crime Victims' Rights Week grants, the VOCA Performance Reports and the Recovery Act Quarterly Report, the DCJS site visit at the VDSS which is now scheduled on March 9, 2011, the Grants Management Information System (GMIS) which we will be required to use for the filing of biannual VOCA reports, and the upcoming training around the issue of compliance with federal requirements concerning civil rights. The next VOCA Administrators meeting will be held on March 16, 2011.

Permanency

Several major activities took place during the month of December in the Permanency Unit. First, three Permanency Unit members retired after many, many years of public service, and we thank them for their service to the Commonwealth. I am sure that Pamela Cooper, Diane Reid, and Sue Shuleeta are enjoying the second half of their lives!

In addition, the first draft of the revised Adoption Assistance Guidance was completed. The first LDSS and licensed child placing agency adoption expert workshop is scheduled for January 2011. A draft of the VEMAT guidance was completed and given to the rate structure workgroup for final revisions. The revised Foster Care Guidance Manual is located on SPARK and the VDSS web page.

The annual on-site contract monitoring review of FACES of Virginia's Families was completed. <http://facesofvirginia.org/> In addition, the Title IV-E Eligibility group convened and met with an advisory group to develop the initial elements of the Corrective Action Plan required as a result of failing the IV-E review in August 2010.

Five focus groups were conducted to assess LDSS needs regarding adoption contracts in preparation for new contract requests for SFY2012. In addition, an audio conference was held regarding adoption assistance guidance with the eastern region directors at their request.

Education Specialist Peyton McCoy, organized, facilitated, and served as a presenter for the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Education statewide information webinar sessions on December 14th. The webinar was a collaborative information session presented by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The purpose was to promote awareness and provide information regarding educational components of the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. The resource tools and guidance for our state was presented. These tools included the (a) Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Department of Social Services Joint Guidance on School Placement for Children in Foster Care; (b) Best Interest Determination Form; (c) Immediate Enrollment of Child in Foster Care Form; and (d) The VDOE Superintendent's Memo. Webinar attendees included local departments of social services workers, school social workers, school personnel, advocates, foster parents, and private agency staff. At the request of the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections, 15 other states also attended.

The Project LIFE Independent Living Consultants continue to work collaboratively with the regional teams by providing ongoing support to local DSS agencies around family engagement, preparing older youth for family partnership meetings, transitional living plans and accessing resources once they leave care. The IL consultants have offered local and regional youth events on finding and maintaining affordable housing, building social skills, defining and identifying permanent connections, and bringing awareness to the purpose of regional youth advisory councils. One region started listening tours to inform other youth in and transitioning out of foster care on independent living services and how the council can help them advocate for themselves. The next statewide Virginia Youth Advisory Council (VYAC) Conference will be held March 18-20 in Roanoke, VA. More details are available on Project LIFE's website at www.vaprojectlife.org.

Adult Services

Funding for the Elder Justice Act, which would provide the first-ever federal funding and oversight for state APS programs, was not included in the federal budget extension for FY 2012. The national Elder Justice Coalition has focused its efforts on full funding of the EJA in the FY 2013 budget. Secretary Sibelius has delegated EJA implementation activities to the Administration on Aging.

Local agencies continue to express concern about current and projected reductions in funding for home-based companion (BL 833) and purchased protective services (BL 824). Local agencies submitted mid-year budget requests for \$1 million in additional funding in these two budget lines. Less than \$100,000 was available for redistribution.

Home Office staff continued to address local concerns about significant increases in requests for pre-admission screenings for children – more than 900 for children age 6 and under last year. The nursing division of the Virginia Department of Health shares concerns that the Uniform Assessment Instrument (UAI) is inadequate for assessing children and has joined in expressing those concerns to the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS).

Adult Services also has notified DMAS that local agencies are not authorized to conduct screenings for private-pay participants in the PACE program and are not required to do so. In addition, updates to the Auxiliary Grant Guidance Manual have been submitted to the Commissioner for review. Participation in the new VISSTA Auxiliary Grant training course has been strong, as have signups for future classes.

The status of various Adult Services/APS proposed regulations vary. The 22 VAC 40-740, Adult Protective Services, is at the Secretary's Office while 22 VAC 40-25, Auxiliary Grants Program, is in the Governor's Office. 22 VAC 40-745, Assessment in Assisted Living Facilities, will finish NOIRA public comment at the beginning of January and a workgroup of stakeholders will be convened to review proposed changes to the regulation.

In addition, the 2010 AS Program Report was posted on SPARK and the VDSS public website, and we are working with Public Affairs to publicize it in the media. The report is available on SPARK at http://spark.dss.virginia.gov/divisions/dfs/as/2010_program_reports.cgi and on the DSS public site at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/adults/as.cgi>.

Prevention

The Prevention Unit and the DFS Prevention Committee, with help from the Virginia League of Social Services Executives, is in the final stage of developing a prevention services survey for local agencies to inform the development of prevention guidance. The survey will be posted online and should be available soon. Also, the Committee has scheduled a January 28th meeting during which each of the committee workgroups will identify tasks and timelines leading to development of prevention-related definitions, guiding principles, guidance, OASIS screens, and a communication strategy to inform and educate stakeholders regarding the efforts of the Committee.

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

There were 182 new ICPC cases this month for a total of 3,062 cases. Placement statistics for the month of December are listed below:

- Adoption – 36
- Foster Care – 58
- Parental Placements – 31
- Relative Placements – 0
- Residential – 57

In regards to ICAMA, there are a total of 3,019 cases – 74 of which were new for the month of December. Denise Dickerson, ICPC/ICAMA Program Manager, participated in a national conference call facilitated by the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children office in Washington, D.C. This discussion was related to the revised recommendations for ICPC Regulation 7: Expedited Placement Decision. This call addressed questions related to this regulation and, after a lengthy discussion; the vote was taken and approved with revisions. It will be presented at the national meeting for the final vote and acceptance. The final conference call on the new Regulation 12 Private/Independent Adoptions was also held in December. This Regulation will go to the ICPC

Executive Committee and after their approval will be presented at the national meeting for the final vote and acceptance.

Legislation

Governor McDonnell has allowed DSS to go forward with two of our legislative proposals. They are both clean-up measures and they will be combined into one bill. Delegate Crocket-Stark and Senator Barker will carry this legislation for DSS. The legislation will require background checks for all adults in a household where a child will be placed. This is consistent with practice and with guidance and will make the Code compliant with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The legislation will also correct the definition of "Foster Care Placement" by removing the reference to the community policy and management team (CPMT). The current definition incorrectly indicates that a child can be placed in foster care by an agreement between the parents and an agency designated by the CPMT.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Transitioning to Quality Service Review (QSR) continues. In the upcoming month we will distribute the QSR protocol which identifies the child and family status indicators and the practice performance indicators that will be the foundation of the review. 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. Reviews scheduled at this point for 2011 include Norfolk Department of Human Services the week of February 7th, Richmond City Department of Social Services the week of April 4th and Roanoke City Department of Social Services the week of May 16th.

We are currently accepting applications for QSR reviewers from staff in local departments of social services as well as from VDSS state staff. In selecting reviewers, we are looking for individuals who couple a belief in the Children's Services System Practice model and 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, understand the QSR process and protocol and, be able to score objectively based on the QSR protocol and understand scoring method.

The second training for reviewers is planned for June 2011. Anyone interested in finding out about opportunities as a reviewer with Quality Service Review should contact Judy Fogleman, Quality Analyst, at 804-840-0831 or judy.fogleman@dss.virginia.gov

Send me a note if you got this far...and thanks!

Paul