

**Sacramento County
Children's System of Care Committee**

**MINUTES – TELECONFERENCE MEETING
April 24, 2023, 2:00PM-3:45PM**

Present: Patricia Wentzel, Maria Padilla-Castro, Corrine McIntosh-Sako (staff: Glenda Basina)

Absent: None.

Guests: Laura Heintz, Bina Lefkowitz, Marika Puente, Theresa Clift, Wade Brynelson, Onston Placide/Sierra Youth

Agenda Item

I. Welcome and Introductions

Conduct Agreement Acknowledgement

Chair Sako requested to record the meeting for purpose of sharing with YAB. Maria preferred not and deferred to group. Member Wentzel agreed to recording. Meeting recorded and Chair Sako commenced the meeting at 2:03pm. Introductions made and Conduct Agreement acknowledged.

II. Presentation on Sacramento County Foster Youth, Melissa Lloyd, MSW – Deputy Director, Department of Child, Family & Adult Services, Sacramento County Child Protective Services

Melissa shared that DFACS is made up of 3 divisions: CPS, senior/adult services and administrative. She is responsible for CPS for Sac County. Chair Sako inquired on count of foster youths and placements and, mentioned the Sacbee article. Melissa explained the CPS system is multi-layered and in the county there's a little over 1200 kids 0-17 in foster care. 322 of those children are in a home with a guardian. Guardianship is a form of permanency, gets paid with funding. About 950 with no adoption/guardianship. Melissa shared that she's been with the County for quite a while and back then the county had 3800. Chair Sako asked about the 900 and Melissa responded they're planned for reunification, adoption and guardianship. There's a lot being done to keep the family intact, to avoid trauma through removal and that child safety is always first. If any reason to remove; a lot of process and agencies involved. Poverty does not equal child abuse. A lot of questions leading to child safety issues. There's been a lot of circumstances when they're helped without removal.

With Black youth a lot of involvement in CPS at 34%, about 175 cases. Native American youth is smallest in the county but have highest rate in open CPS cases (children not living at home). Asian Pacific Islander at 4%. 23% of the county are placed in non-blood related extended family member. Latino youth make up a large portion at 32% of these placements. Congregate care 4% of foster care population. Within congregate White at 6% and Asian/Latino at 2%. Black youth make the largest portion at 41% of congregate care placement. Congregate care is a group home, short-term residential, therapeutic providers which changed with Continuum of Care Reform in 2018 and AB 403 becoming into law in 2015. 38% of population of Sacramento in care for 2+ years. About 100 in care for youths age 1. 350 at age 17. Rate in foster care placements drops as kids gets older, decline starts at age 11-12. County social workers perspective on kids in the system will say for kids in foster care had shifts in caretakers where the younger population have phenomenal resource parents. No problem placing kids 11 and younger in stable/loving homes. Challenge is when kids have multi-level trauma and needs not met through home, educational or medical setting. Trauma is expressed in their behaviors. Challenging for caretakers with their own children at home, a very small population 10-15 on any given day. These are the kids with significant trauma, often with delay/interruptions in mental health services. Issues with

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trust/trauma and not inclined to attending appointments. Need training and higher rate of compensation. Chair Sako asked what type of services are provided to youth/family? Melissa responded that there are a variety of services available for kids and that the County is not lacking in services for kids. The challenge is the requirement to have mental health services. Some are victims of exploitation and there's specialized training for caretakers planning to take youth in their home whether Sac county licensed home or agency. Ongoing training is provided. Just lack of STRTP placements for kids who qualify across the state and the county is not alone in this. California kids are placed anywhere. Some doesn't want to be in placement. Some doesn't want to be far away. When kids leave placement, they go to mom/dad or relative, though may have lost reunification with the court. They do second chance through court, leveraging what parent is doing/providing.

Member Padilla on congregate care, inquired about the detention facility where a lot of kids are being housed. Who are there and how many? What is it like and is it possible for the committee to do site visit? Melissa answered that it's a previous wing of YDF and refurbished. It's a little bit more of a group setting feel without the institutional feel. They're not in cells. The article described the area in negative slant. The youths are sleeping in rooms, not cells. No littles there. Onsite are social workers, child development, family service, sac county office of education, tutoring, showers. Meals are provided and there's an open area to play games, watch tv, do homework, gym and patio with grass and basketball court. Member Padilla asked if another group could give an assessment/evaluation of the facility, so we don't have this negative image. Also asked why not build a new facility? This is another trauma, being put in a facility when they didn't do anything. Per Melissa there's an LOI/RFP out to contract for a temporary shelter facility, currently finishing up evaluation and will have info publicly shared in a short amount of time. Hope to have an answer in 3+ weeks. This is different from getting a license which is concurrently being applied for as well. Hoping a minimum of 2 facilities for those services. License for Sacramento County takes a lot longer. Chair Sako asked if any reason why license was not applied previously. According to Mellissa it's because we had a contract provider. Member Padilla asked if the County considered a response to the negative piece. Melissa is not sure but knows PIO/Media folks are working on what the next steps will be. Member Padilla asked for reasons of youth removal from home and the typical diagnosis of youth. Melissa responded that removals are usually around substance, domestic violence and neglect which has been typical for kids who's been with them awhile. Approximately 1000 youths are in the right direction. Melissa stated that better assessment is being done. Where kids were removed, they're helping for family to stay together, give services and help them heal, never compromising safety. Doing better with upfront services which has changed significantly in the past decades. There are more prevention/partnership work occurring.

Chair Sako commented that in understanding trauma and disrupted attachments, these kids need special attention. Melissa responded that the current circumstance/environment is just a temporary resource and are doing the best they can. They want kids stable, with family/return to family and if not possible, in a homebased setting with a family. They're putting all efforts in working with community partners. They have the license going and RFP to help with this population for shelter sites, which is a high priority. Member Wentzel asked if there's a county in California doing a superb job serving youth as a model. Per Melissa, she's in talks with colleagues in the state weekly, some are able to shelter, all relative in terms of population size, funding, location. Most counties are struggling. Riverside is able to stand up a facility. Fresno had hard time and had media on them. Member Padilla wants update from Melissa in 4 weeks on status of RFP. Maria thanks Melissa and staff for all the hard work.

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III. Presentation on Behavioral Health Services for Foster Youth by Stanford Sierra Youth & Families, Dr. Laura Heintz, CEO and Ontson Placide, CPO

Dr. Heintz happy to have joined while Melissa presented. Presented powerpoint: Commitment is permanent connections, thrive in community/family homes. Committed with high end mental health services for youth through wraparound, juvenile justice program and finding resource. Providing 6700 youth/families across California with 6 physical locations. Supports youths across counties. Pathways to permanency, reunification, kinship, adoption, guardianship. Wraparound services; a few of youths served that were in congregate facility. Provides family setting where all services, youth and family is on the table and with peers. Juvenile justice intervention services – close relationship with sac county probation. Services into mental health; group and individual programs. Flexible Integrated Treatment (FIT) – provide safety net for youth focused on individual/group/family therapy. Support families for homelessness to reduce chaos in family home. Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS) – for wraparound/FIT youth. Focused on high-risked behavior. 88% effectiveness in this service. What sets the agency apart? A Strong partner. Focus for all young people to thrive. Looking at equity/outcome reports, tools and youth/family information.

On data and outcomes, Onston presented. MH program; JJIS, FIT, Wraparound. Served 1400, FIT largest program. JJIS is probation referral. 55% of FIT and 45% Wraparound. CANS standard measure – how youth is doing with needs. JJIS needs are anger controlled, substance abuse (alcohol/marijuana), having disruption at school. With FIT, anxiety, depression adjustment to trauma. Wraparound – adjustment to trauma, anger control and anxiety. Diagnosis of FIT (55 youth foster care) – trauma disorder is diagnosis and by gender, female 51% and 42% male. Overwhelming trauma disorder. Speaks to addressing and attention to trauma for youths in foster care. Member Padilla asked if anyway to identify the trauma (abuse, homelessness). Per Onston, child abuse/neglect is high. With Pearls assessment all staff are trauma-informed and gives indication on what happened to the youth. Wraparound (working with most difficult youth) diagnosis is similar to FIT. Results: 92% of youth improved upon discharge as stated in their CANS and PAC. Various therapies provided and always continue to look at evidence-based therapies available. Looking at lens of consumer, parents and youth. What other help can be put out there and much more room in connecting with community for healing/growth. Member Padilla inquired about foster youth, that come in the system, graduating from high school. Per Onston, he has the data and can provide to committee. Laura added that County tracks this county-wide. Overall foster youths have struggles in graduating high school, advancing in their education as well as homelessness. Substance use is new and don't have date as of yet. Member Wentzel asked if they track youth that come out and come back. Per Laura, it's a very small number 1-2%. Laura added that a lot of youths don't want rejection from home or don't want to be separated from their siblings. Making sure youth voice is heard, connecting through peer advocates. Struggle is in finding families. Member Wentzel inquired on trajectory in terms of mental illness diagnosis, anyway in tracking it? How many transitioned from child to adult. Per Onston, the County would be best to provide this information.

Chair Sako, at 3:35pm and mindful of time asked if the committee had any final questions.

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Member Wentzel wondered if they have a pressure to graduate kids too early. Per Onston, there's timelines for services and no other choice but to work with youth. Tricky with 18-19 age with timeline issues. Chair Sako thanked Laura/Onston for presenting.

IV. Discussion/Action Item: Review and Approve Letter of Support for BHYAB Policy Brief, CSOC Committee

Chair shared letter onscreen. If approved by committee then to MHB for approval. Nothing surprising or new. Making mental health prevention accessible. Much aligned with CSOC recommendations last year. Member Padilla moved to approve, seconded by Member Wentzel. Passed unanimously. Per Chair Sako to be on MHB meeting on 5/3.

V. Public Comment (3 minutes per person)

None

VI. Adjournment

3:44pm Chair adjourned meeting. Next meeting to be on 5/15, 2pm.