

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

**MINUTES – TELECONFERENCE MEETING
May 15, 2023, 2:00PM-4:00PM**

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

Members Absent: None

County Staff Present: Sheri Green, Rob Kesselring, Chevon Kothari, Michelle Callejas

Agenda Item

I. Welcome and Introductions

Conduct Agreement Acknowledgement

Chair Sako commenced the meeting at 2pm, the Conduct Agreement was acknowledged, and introductions were made.

Chair Sako announced a shift in today’s agenda with Disability Rights and Asm. Gipson joining at a future meeting due to schedule conflicts.

II. Presentation on Child Welfare System & Foster Youth Services by FosterHope, Erin Brown

Erin shared her screen, providing background on FosterHope; providing support for children, teens and facilities. Program for foster care, creating community/family support and placement stability. Juvenile trauma response court for justice involved youth diversion and support program. Youths harmed; trauma/mental health due to separation from family, placement/displacement and criminalization. Rights versus care, empowering children whether they stay in care versus going out in the streets. Foster Care bill of rights viewed with every child coming into foster care. Good for children to know their rights but also giving them option to walk out the door. No lock facilities and unable to prevent them from leaving. The messaging needs to be worked on. System Change AB 403, Oct 2015. Effective January 2017. Increase use of home-based family care to short-term residential care for youth in crisis. A group home became intervention instead of placement with various contribution factors. The perfect storm. Many youths displaced, new requirements on foster/resource families resulting in retirement. With inflation, families struggling. Shortage of homes, a system challenge. Barriers for families to have a stay at home parent. Need to invest in youth trauma interventions, family restoration, placement options. Recommend solution – professionalize foster care. Focus on 1-child at a time wrapped with individual care services. Increase pay for foster reimbursement, provide relocation support/housing, offer sign-on incentives, offer individualized therapeutic services beyond WRAP, needs assessment, root cause analyses behavioral intervention and more intensive, monitored care.

Member Padilla-Castro likes the recommendations, very insightful and makes a lot of sense. Asked for reimbursement now and when where they implemented. According to Erin, regular rates haven’t increased in a long time. Staff can’t be paid enough. Just of \$1k per child and doesn’t go too far. Intensive care is about \$2800 a month, require extensive amount of time with a stay-at-home parent. Care for 1-2 intensive care youth at one time. Not viable for a stay at home and requires another job. Recommended rates seen between \$4k-\$6k per child. Healing occurs through relationship with families.

Member Wentzel inquired about the definition of professionalized foster care and if this has been successfully implemented anywhere in the country. Per Erin, it’s a stable/regular

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income, with vacation/respice built into the rate. A San Luis Obispo agency has been successful in this program and will be connecting with them for more information. Member Wentzel inquired on the funding for foster care? Per Erin, it's the Foster Care Bureau set by the state distributed to agencies through the county. Other counties have supplemented to increase rates for families which has not yet happened in Sacramento. Member Wentzel inquired on number of youths needing placement. Per Erin between 15-20 at any given point of time, evolving and changing.

Member Padilla-Castro asked how many are in placement? Michelle Callejas introduced herself and responded that there are 1230 in placement with Sac County. The County has many foster homes locally used. About 20+ in sac county and several out of county. At the WET center there are 13-16 at any given day. Need to expand home-based placements with strong mental health services and support, with rates for foster parents to take 1-2 to wrap services around. Capacity for group homes reduced with federal change, impacting providers.

Chair Sako commented there's a lot of common ground with Erin and Michelle's statements.

Sheri shared a behavioral health program therapeutic care model. Foster parent provides behavioral health care service with clinician oversight, since 2018. Any foster care family interested can go to <https://dhs.saccounty.gov/Pages/Contractor-Bidding-Opportunities.aspx>. \$230 a day from county to agency.

Sarah/CDSS mentioned the ability to request "Innovative Models of Care" rate structures for ISFC, (<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/Letters-and-Notices/ACLs/2022/22-21.pdf?ver=2022-03-10-144744-350>) created in funding, allowing to work with provider for provider/child rate. ISFC models for children with complex needs. Can also be considered for home-based models. Member Wentzel asked how long the process takes to pursue this model? Per Sarah, depends on where they are at development of model. It can take a long time; needs budgetary clarity and providers need to recruit homes and train them up. Takes several weeks at minimum and several months at max. Require to have a site/home and agency needs county partnership for this.

III. Presentation on Foster Youth Needs by California Youth Connection, Mercedes Parker and Markeia Warren

Mercedes/Markeia shared their screen and provided background on CYC. Heal campaign; wellness & health, education, a place called home and lifelong connections. Impact of covid 19 transitions/challenges. Foster stability survey on pandemic; 21% had to move as result of covid, 25% dropped/withdrew from class course, 29% unmet mental health needs. 10-point vision plan from survey. Overmedication research shows how detrimental this is to health of youth. Current gaps in mh support for youth. Youth rushed /premature diagnoses, barriers to access funding and displacement of series when moving from county to county. On youths housed at the WET center, it's a violation/disrespect. It violates foster youths bill of rights - criminalizes them. Facility is not equipped for mental health support and exacerbates trauma. Required to inform bill of rights every 6 months and as youth is placed in a new home. WET placement is close to law enforcement facility. Recommendations to county; short term – look at root cause for lack of foster care in county. Identify short term housing, including transitional housing. Long term – address root cause in prevention and intervention, adopt a holistic approach centering needs of youth, prioritizing their mental health. Foster youth stipend pilot program funded by state funds proposed to counties

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throughout California. Counties can opt-in with Sac at \$1.4m. Eliminate need of diagnosis to receive care. Access to alternative treatment. Right to request reevaluation of diagnosis. Solution is not SB 408; investing in expanded congregate care settings – not adequately staffed. Institutionalization; Behavior is criminalized, perpetuates youth to criminal life. It doesn't address lack of foster care placement, leading to hopelessness and lack of support system.

Sheri shared that CalAIM is bringing needed reforms, not to rush in diagnosis for provider to be paid. Foster youth can access mental health; access to alternative treatment. CalAIM also bringing changes to peer model of service. Can now can talk with youth advocate peer, opening doors to more options.

IV. Presentation on Disability Rights California's 5/09/2023 Report on Foster Youth Housed at Former Juvenile Detention Facility

-To join at future meetings.

V. Presentation on Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Appropriate Housing for Foster Youth

-To join at future meetings.

VI. Roundtable Discussion Regarding Sacramento County Foster Youth Behavioral Health Needs

Chair Sako looked to committee members if still at info gathering phase or can recommendations on this issue be put on paper? Members Padilla-Castro and Wentzel requested to hear from the public (see Public Comments below).

Member Wentzel would like more detailed info on budget aspects of this picture to know impact of BOS decision for foster care funding.

Chair Sako agrees and struck with number or resource family with foster youth in home with high needs, reimbursed \$2800/mo. Professionalized parent with a need of \$4k-\$6k is a huge gap. Unable to recommend to state but maybe can uplift for county to supplement.

Member Padilla-Castro still need to compile all issues/challenges from all presentations to make recommendations and still need to address WET issue.

Director Kothari assures all this is number 1 priority, working across departments to look at system of care. New strategies coming out, intend to have youth voices. Recommends to come/present to the committee in June.

Chair Sako confirmed committee members availability for CSOC meeting on June 26th at 2pm.

VII. Public Comment (3 minutes per person)

Public comment 1. Want to focus on budget piece for strong recommendation to use whatever funds necessary for this long term issue. Might want to get data for a firm wrap for BOS expenditures/budget.

Public comment 2. Excited about CalAIM Reform for access to youth and care. Youth placement disruption can lead significantly to therapeutic. Encourages creativity to avoid disruptions in placement.

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Public comment 3. Youth in WET have most trauma. Welcomes discussion and partnership to work together to serve foster youth with ways to reduce them from WET, to keep families together so they don't become system-involved.

VIII. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned by Chair Sako at 4:14pm and CSOC to meet next on June 26 at 2pm.