

Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children

MEETING MINUTES

January 15, 2015

*****APPROVED*****

Members Present:

Sgt. Mark Boody
Dr. Johanna Buzolits
Deborah Carley
Thomas Cottrell
Jerry Dorsey, IV
Kathy Hagenian
Cassandra Harmon-Higgins
Thomas Knapp
Mary Lovik
Hon. Cheryl Matthews
Mary Jane Tramontin
Dorie Vasquez-Nolan
Christopher Wigent
Carol Hackett Garagiola, Chair

Members Absent:

Dr. Angie Kennedy
Phyllis Van Order

DHS Staff Present:

Kelcy McArthur
Danielle Marek
LaShawn Thurman

Guests Present

Rebecca Gordon
Rachel Webster

Welcome and Introductions

Chair C. Hackett Garagiola convened the seventh meeting of the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children, at the General Office Building, Conference Room B, 1st floor, 7015 Harris Drive, Dimondale, MI 48813 on January 15, 2015 at 9:00 am, welcoming and thanking Task Force members and DHS staff for their participation. Newly appointed Task Force members Mary Jane Tramontin, representing school boards, and Cassandra Harmon-Higgins and Christopher Wigent, representing individuals with expertise in education, also were welcomed,

introduced, and thanked for bringing to the Task Force their expertise in school-related matters. Guests Rebecca Gordon and Rachel Webster were welcomed to the meeting and thanked for their presence and participation. Task Force members and DHS staff introduced themselves.

Approval of Agenda

Motion: T. Cottrell to approve January 15, 2015 meeting agenda. Seconded by J. Dorsey, IV. Motion carried.

Approval of December 9, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Motion: T. Cottrell to approve the December 9, 2014 meeting minutes. Seconded by J. Dorsey, IV. Motion carried.

Administrative Matters

Members were advised that the Governor's Office had expedited the appointments of new members C. Harmon-Higgins, M.J. Tramontin and C. Wigent to fill the vacancies for a school board representative, and for individuals with expertise in education, created by the retirements from the Task Force of members P. Fitzgerald and K. Clark. The Governor's Office was sensitive to the timeframe for completion of Task Force responsibilities and made the appointments on an expedited basis to support the efforts of the Task Force.

Members were advised that HB 4493, which had been pending in the 2013-2014 legislative session, and would have removed section (6) from MCL 722.632b, which section prohibits reimbursement of Task Force members for their Task Force-related expenses, had expired in that legislative session. It is unknown whether a similar bill will be introduced in the new legislative session. Task Force members were advised to continue to assume that no reimbursement for their Task Force-related expenses would be provided unless a law removing section (6) from MCL 722.632b is enacted.

DHS liaison K. McArthur advised members that DHS had updated its mandated reporter website to include additional educational materials for the public about mandated reporter responsibilities, and a hotline for any concerns about DHS response to reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. K. McArthur also advised that DHS is updating its publication of the Child Protection Law to reflect recent changes in that law, particularly provisions regarding duration of registration on the Child Abuse Registry.

Presentation by Rebecca Gordon – Technical Assistance for Comprehensive Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Efforts

Rebecca Gordon appeared and discussed with the Task Force her work in Missouri and elsewhere under a contract with the U.S. Department of Justice to provide technical assistance to communities that are developing child sexual abuse

prevention initiatives. Her appearance was arranged through the generosity of member D. Busley. The Task Force expended no public funds for the appearance and presentation by R. Gordon. She advised that there is no one “silver bullet” for preventing child sexual abuse, and that prevention of child sexual abuse requires “comprehensive reform.” She advised that the best and most comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention models and strategies available are based upon the Spectrum of Prevention, Ecological Model, and Public Health Model that are described and promoted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She noted, however, that while these models exist and are useful, there is little assistance available to practically and directly apply them to specific and comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention planning and programming in communities.

She presented to and reviewed with the Task Force the tools that she and her colleagues working under the US DoJ contract had created to translate these accepted and best models and strategies into specific and comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention planning and programming for communities. She also advised that she had not seen a “model” curriculum for child sexual abuse prevention, but there were some well-known curricula in existence that provide helpful information to specific and general audiences. She advised that she and member D. Busley had identified those curricula for the Task Force. Members thanked R. Gordon for her very helpful presentation, and discussed using the tools she provided to assist with Task Force work.

Presentation by D. Busley – Awareness Programs Overview

Member D. Busley presented an overview of the most well-known community-based child sexual abuse prevention awareness programs and curricula currently used in the U.S., including: Darkness to Light; Stewards of Children; Prevent Now; Enough Abuse; Stop It Now; Stop It Now – Circle of Safety; Talk About Abuse to Liberate Children; One with Courage; Protect Yourself; The Mama Bear Effect. D. Busley noted that the awareness programs do not coordinate their efforts, and tend to have little funding for development, improvement and research. D. Busley is investigating additional child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs in the U.S., and exploring how those efforts might be consolidated and coordinated. Members who had reviewed some of the curricula, commented on the strengths and value of existing curricula, as well as gaps in content. Members also discussed the merits of requiring mandated reporters to participate in Darkness to Light or similar educational programming about child sexual abuse prevention.

Presentation by M. Lovik – Protocol Development Plan

Member M. Lovik had volunteered to take on the leadership role for the protocol development work mandated under MCL 722.632b. She provided to Task Force members a draft action plan for protocol development, reviewed the plan, and led a discussion about accomplishing the plan. She provided an overview of protocols received from a number of faith-based organizations she had contacted. Members discussed the merits and gaps apparent in these protocols. While the protocols

generally focused on preventing children from becoming victims of child sexual abuse, a notable gap in many protocols was lack of attention to preventing children from becoming perpetrators of child sexual abuse. Members identified some resources that address that gap. Members T. Cottrell and K. Hagenian agreed to develop a list of resources that best address that gap. Members C. Harmon-Higgins, M.J. Tamontin, D. Vasquez-Nolan, D. Busley, Hon. C. Matthews, guest R. Webster, and chair C. Hackett Garagiola volunteered to work with M. Lovik on the protocol development effort M. Lovik is leading.

Report of Conversation with Elizabeth Letourneau – Youth-Perpetrated Child Sexual Abuse

C. Hackett Garagiola reported on the telephone conversation with Professor Elizabeth Letourneau that had taken place on December 12, 2014. Members had been invited to participate in the call as schedules permitted. Participants in the telephone call with E. Letourneau included members T. Cottrell and M. Lovik, University of Michigan School of Law Professor Frank Vandervort, and chair C. Hackett Garagiola. Members were advised that the call was for informational purposes only and that no deliberations toward Task Force decisions or recommendations took place during the call. E. Letourneau is an associate professor in the Department of Mental Health, and Director of the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She has worked for 25 years in the field of research about child sexual offending and prevention. She advised that one-half of all child sexual abuse is perpetrated by other children and youth, and that the Moore Center focuses on prevention of youth-perpetrated child sexual abuse. She discussed circumstances correlated with youth-perpetrated child sexual abuse. She noted that while some primary prevention programming in schools such as “Safe Dates” has been shown to effectively reduce peer sexual violence in dating relationships, most youth-perpetrated child sexual abuse does not occur within dating relationships, but rather involves youth sexually touching younger children. With regard to that latter and more prevalent circumstance, she noted that there is a “black hole” of prevention programming.

She described the report of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Task Force as including the best available research that identifies services needed for youth who perpetrate child sexual abuse. She further described best and evidence-based practices for interventions with youth who perpetrate child sexual abuse, including multi-systemic therapy, and less intensive interventions with a family focus that are appropriate for most youth who perpetrate child sexual abuse. She described cutting edge prevention programming in Philadelphia involving “SWAT team” partnerships between juvenile justice professionals and schools. She identified additional resources addressing effective responses to youth-perpetrated child sexual abuse. She noted the myths that attach to youth who perpetrate child sexual abuse: including that these youth are different from other youth; they are likely to re-offend; and they are resistant to treatment. She stated that research shows the opposite is true: that the majority of youth who perpetrate are not different from

other youth; do not re-offend; and require brief, targeted community-based interventions.

She described the best and evidence-based practices for interventions with children who have been sexually abused, including trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, and family-focused CBT.

She advised that research demonstrates that victim-focused primary prevention does not reduce child sexual abuse, and that adult and perpetrator-focused prevention is necessary.

She advised that teachers do not receive needed and specific education about preventing teachers' sexual involvement with students, including self-awareness and peer intervention. She described the CDC's resources on preventing child sexual abuse within organizations as "not evaluated" but a good place to start, especially with regard to peer identification and reporting of child sexual abuse.

Information Gathering Status and Updates

Members K. Hagenian and T. Cottrell reported on the status of outreach to survivors, including plans for focus groups and survey dissemination. Member D. Vasquez-Nolan and guest Rachel Webster offered to assist with these efforts.

J. Buzolits reported on the progress of the survey dissemination. The professional survey will be released for response in 2-week phases. Phase I of the release will occur in mid-January for those organizations confirmed as ready to disseminate the survey. In each phase of dissemination, the survey will remain open for response for two weeks. Phase II is scheduled for early February. Phase III is scheduled for mid-February.

Lunch

Members participated in a lunch at their own expense, using no public funds.

Public Comment

R. Webster advised members that appropriate and supportive responses by parents and families to children's disclosures of child sexual abuse are critical for the child's healing, and encouraged members to address this issue in Task Force recommendations.

Thank you and next meeting

C. Hackett Garagiola thanked members and guests for the thoughtful discussion that took place during the meeting. The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for:

Thursday, February 12, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
General Office Building
Conference Room B – 1st Floor

7015 Harris Drive
Dimondale, MI 48813

Adjournment

Motion: M.J Tramontin to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by C. Wigent.

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Hackett Garagiola