



**Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Wednesday, November 13, 2019
DeVos Place, Grand Rapids**

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Dr. Tana Bridge (chair), Dr. Shannon Lowder (vice-chair), Daniel Babin, Lori Budnik, Danita Echols, Hon. Cheryl Lohmeyer, Dr. Bethany Mohr, Dr. Lisa Niergarth, Lt. Jennifer Pintar, Hon. Kelly Ramsey, Veda Thompkins, Christopher Wirth

Members via Teleconference: Dr. Cynthia Smith

Members Absent: JooYeun Chang, Fredrick Gruber, Julie Nakfoor Pratt

Non-members Present: Chayna Brunner, Kevin Bryan – MDHHS, Elizabeth Henderson – SCAO, Julie Knop – PAAM, Colin Parks - MDHHS

Public Comment: No public comment.

➤ **Welcome – Dr. Tana Bridge**

- Meeting called to order at 4:01pm

➤ **Consideration of Minutes from 09/06/2019 – Dr. Tana Bridge**

- Motion by **Dr. Lisa Niergarth** to adopt the minutes which was seconded by **Dr. Shannon Lowder**. Motion unanimously carried.

➤ **Chair Report – Dr. Tana Bridge**

- The budget was distributed. **Dr. Tana Bridge** indicated a vote on the budget would not occur today. All budget proposals and motions should be made during the December 2019 meeting. All committees must comply with the Executive Order as well as CJA funding requirements if utilizing CJA funding. A discussion was held regarding prevention and it was indicated prevention work does not comply with CJA funding requirements. If committee chairs have any questions, they should direct them to **Dr. Tana Bridge** or **Kevin Bryan**. Committee chairs were requested to submit budget requests to **Dr. Tana Bridge** prior to the next meeting.
- Discussion was held regarding potential role changes and membership changes. **Dr. Tana Bridge** indicated the appointments division stated they would fill these roles in January 2020. Dr. Bridge announced that **JooYeun Chang** is officially the MDHHS designee. **Colin Parks** will no longer be a member of the task force; however, he has agreed to continue to work with the task force in the future. **JooYeun Chang** will begin attending meetings starting in December 2019 (see MDHHS Report – Colin Parks)

- **Dr. Tana Bridge** indicated she was continued to network on behalf of the task force. She recently met with **JooYeun Chang**, Director of the Children's Services

Agency and **Lisa McCormick**, Michigan Ombudsmen. During these meetings, both pledged support to the task force and working together collaboratively in the future. **Lisa McCormick** indicated she would like to focus on reoccurring themes in child serious injury cases She desires to approach the GTF as she believes a multi-disciplinary approach similar to Death Child Review or Forensic Interviewing is warranted. **Lisa McCormick** will attend a future task force meeting.

- **Dr. Tana Bridge** also wrote a received a small grant (Brinkley Foundation) that will afford her and a colleague (Caron Putzu) time to support the POSC Steering Committees. Se desires to obtain more funding through various means such as grants. This funding would be utilized to obtain expert witnesses, improve training, and activities of the Protocol and Citizen’s Review Panel, etc.
- Accomplishments of 2019: **Dr. Tana Bridge** discussed the improved processes as well as the improved relationship with MDHHS. Communication has improved and there is collaborative support for GTF projects. Further, she discussed compliance with Appointment office requirements. Other accomplishments include built energy and engagement of all members and external partnerships.

➤ **Coordinator’s Report – Kevin Bryan**

- **Kevin Bryan** indicated numerous things had been streamlined throughout the last year. Payment processing for travel expenses no longer requires numerous signatures. The process to apply for yearly CJA grant funding has been streamlined which will improve the application process.
- Budget concerns have been alleviated over the last year. The task force was found to have ample funding and there has been increased transparency. Further he has worked with **Dr. Tana Bridge** to ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act and ensuring the website is updated.

➤ **MDHHS Report – Colin Parks**

- **Colin Parks** indicated he was added to the task force as a full member in error. He had been the department designee for years; however, the previous administration listed **Colin Parks** as a full member. He indicated **JooYeun Chang** will be able to serve the task force in new ways and will be able to help further task force projects. She was reported to have the ability to accelerate projects as needed. **Colin Parks** indicated he will continue to support the task force in any way he can.
- **Colin Parks provided MHDDS updates:**
- The Supervisory Control Protocol (SCP) was created as a result of audit remediation. The SCP helps supervisors assess if policy was followed and appears to be a meaningful change to ensure supervisory oversight. The SCP will continue to be updated as policy is changed.
- MDHHS is in the process of shrinking policy across all program areas. This will allow workers the ability to have independence and make decisions based on the needs of the family rather than blanket guidelines. Although policy is being removed, child safety will continue to be the focus of MDHHS.
- Currently, there are nearly 450,000 unique placements on Central Registry which occurred for a variety of reasons. Based on how placement on Central Registry occurs, placement on the registry may not always adequately address child safety. Looking forward, MDHHS would like to have only egregious acts lead to

placement on Central Registry. MDHHS is working with legislators in a bipartisan effort to address potential changes to Central Registry.

- MDHHS is in the process of creating a worker safety protocol. The protocol is in the final stages of revision prior to departmental review. The protocol will require local safety teams be created to assess safety as well as safety concerns in the field and agency offices. The goal of the protocol is to support and guide child welfare staff during safety concerns, as well as attempt to obtain uniform reporting to allow MDHHS to better address worker safety.

➤ **Child Advocacy Committee – Representative unavailable**

- The committee was reported to be completing church forums to obtain additional foster parents. During the previous task force meeting, a motion to support multiple efforts of this committee was supported. These will serve as the goals for the upcoming year. Should anyone have any questions regarding this committee, please contact **Fredrick Gruber**.

➤ **Law and Policy – Hon. Cheryl Lohmeyer**

- The group did not meet prior to the meeting as was customary.
- The need for additional members on this committee was discussed. There was discussion regarding the current members. Anyone with interest, or who know someone who might have interest in joining the committee, please contact **Hon. Cheryl Lohmeyer**.
- **Dr. Tana Bridge** highlighted an accomplishment specific to a recommendations to MDHHS regarding relative caretakers. She also indicated the committee would be needed in the future when the task force addressed plans of safe care.
- **Danita Echols** indicated she was concerned regarding potential legislation to move the age of health care benefits for former foster youth from 26 to 21. Discussion was held regarding this issue.
- **Daniel Babin** indicated he was concerned Michigan CASA had \$500,000 removed from their budget due to state budgetary concerns. Discussion was held regarding should the task force become involved in these types of issues. The conversation was robust and addressed issues of role of the GTF, the Executive Order, and appropriateness of forwarding a statement or position specific to budget/spending.
- Conversation occurred regarding past practice of the task force. **Colin Parks** indicated he was only aware of one time in which the task force **made a public statement. This occurred over ten years ago. A judge on the task force authored the statement and the chairperson signed the statement on behalf of the task force. Although the public statement was impactful, the task force has historically not become involved with issues outside of the Executive Order and CJA funding requirements.** **Dr. Shannon Lowder** indicated in the past, a vote was conducted regarding any potential public comments.
- **Dr. Tana Bridge** requested that all members reviewed the Executive Order. After review, all believed that forwarding recommendation to the Governor aligns with the charge in the Executive Order. Dr. Bridge indicated the discussion had moved into two sperate discussions (Health care benefits for youth and CASA/budget recommendations). **Dr. Tana Bridge** made a motion to draft two separate letters to forward to Governor Whitmer. **Hon. Cheryl Lohmeyer** indicated the importance of the format and presentation of the letter with law cited. **Dr. Bethany Mohr**

seconded the motion. **Christopher Wirth** requested an amendment to the motion indicating that the Law and Policy committee would draft the letters. **Hon. Cheryl Lohmeyer** provided support for the amendment. Vote was called by Dr. Tana Bridge. Motion to have the Law and Policy committee draft a proposed recommendation to the governor carried unanimously. The GTF will review these letters at the December 2019 meeting.

- Discussion was held regarding what was considered a “front end issue” and a “back end issue” as well as what complied with the Executive Order and CJA funding requirements. Eventually it was agreed a vote on anything which may be considered prevention should be tabled until more information could be obtained.
 - This committee will continue working to address PSM 713-08, Special Investigative Situations. They have met with the legal department for MDHHS Children’s Services Agency and will be working with the Office of Family Advocate in the future.
- **Mental Health/ Training Committee – Dr. Shannon Lowder and Dr. Lisa Niergarth**
- Dr. Shannon Lowder indicated the committee is looking into utilizing the last option year on the Relias contract. 95% of mental health clinicians which contract with the state were in compliance with training requirements. The other 5% had their contracts terminated or were placed on a corrective action plan.
 - The sexual abuse training is nearly completed. Four modules are currently completed. The lead legal expert for this project is no longer working on the training. Further, the committee is awaiting review and comment from Colin Parks; therefore, there has been a delay in completion of the training. **Dr. Shannon Lowder** will send the task force a sample of the training in the future.
 - **Dr. Shannon Lowder** indicated she would like to have MDHHS change their contract parameters regarding mental health to allow for telecommunication. Insurance companies accept telehealth. It has many advantages to youth in care. Further all platforms are HIPAA compliant
 - **Dr. Lisa Niergarth** expressed appreciation regarding the work **Elizabeth Henderson** and **Kevin Bryan** did regarding the 2019 Summit. **Dr. Lisa Niergarth** indicated anyone with questions regarding the 2019 Summit over the next two days can contact **Kevin Bryan**.
- **Protocol Committee – Julie Knop on behalf of Julie Nakfoor Pratt**
- The Model Child Abuse Protocol revision committee met recently to discuss the changes received from the editors. The revision committee will work to have something to the task force by the December meeting. **Dr. Tana Bridge** indicated anything which required a vote must be sent to task force members at least one week prior to the vote.
- **Citizen’s Review Panel – Lt. Jennifer Pintar and Dr. Tana Bridge**
- The current focus of the CRP is specific to Plans of Safe Care, with surveys and focus group data collection to medical professionals, CPS workers and home-based providers across the state. This comprehensive study outcomes will be complete and presented in February.
 - MDHHS requested to participate at focus groups regarding child welfare staff;

however, the committee denied this request. The committee agreed to provide MDHHS with the information obtained from the survey and focus groups.

- The protocol committee is formulating steering committees to address gaps in all groups. The committee will also reach out to other committees for help with various tasks depending on their role on the task force.
- Accomplishments: **Lt. Jennifer Pintar** reviewed with Dr. Janes Henry progress toward 2018-19 Secondary Traumatic Stress workshops. Further, she highlighted that she discussed the yearly Citizen's Review Panel report with **Dr. James Henry** recently. Further she discussed the CRP annual conference. **Dr. Tana Bridge** indicated four members attended and presented at the national Citizen's Review Panel conference in New Mexico on Plans of Safe Care. It was well received.

➤ **Data Committee – Dr. Tana Bridge**

- The data committee has been working with the CRP committee to address their research needs.
- 35 focus groups were completed. Surveys were received from 529 Children's Protective Services staff, 108 from medical personnel, and 142 from contract providers to date.
- The data committee will work with the Protocol committee in the future.
- **Daniel Babin** indicated he will be heading three steering committees. **Dr. Bethany Mohr** will chair medical providers, **Colin Parks** will chair Children's Protective Services, and **Shannon Laskey** will chair contract agencies. The steering committees will utilize outside resources and address issues within their area of expertise.
- **Lt. Jennifer Pintar** indicated she wanted to thank **Dr. Tana Bridge** for her work on this project.
- Discussion was held regarding the need for three steering committees, as well as the pros and cons of this approach. **Hon. Cheryl Lohmeyer** indicated the committee may want to add a fourth group as the courts play an important role within child welfare. The difference between safety plans and plans of safe care were discussed. Various data elements were discussed as well.
- **Daniel Babin** indicated anyone interested in participating in a steering committee should contact him by email.

➤ **New Business**

- All members were reminded of the group dinner plans for the evening.

➤ **Next Meeting:**

- December 6, 2019 at 11:00am in Lansing at the Hall of Justice.

➤ **Meeting Adjournment:**

- **Dr. Tana Bridge** adjourned the meeting at 6:01pm.