



CHILDREN'S ADVOCATES, ROUNDTABLE NOTES

JANUARY 22, 2015

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: 2015 BUDGET AND CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM

WILL LIGHTBOURNE

- Administration was tasked to return to the legislature with recommendations.
- Very clear, this was not simply an issue of GH reform

- What would go to the Legislature would ultimately be the Administration's recommendations.
- Challenges:
 - Proposition 30- cost neutrality of proposals more difficult to balance out.
- Any of these systemic changes won't see cost savings initially so the state may need to offer investment to realize later savings.
- Belief on the part of the administration that children belong in home-like environments and institutional settings should be used for crisis care or short-term treatment resource centers.
 - Idea is that all children would have treatment plans that include movement to lower levels of care.
 - Services would follow a child as they move toward the placement that is most appropriate.
 - We don't want to fail children up through a series of placements.
- County operated placement shelters are not treatment facilities and are therefore inconsistent with the CCR approach.
- Boarding schools licensed under GH regulations

- How do we reconcile truth that some kids might do well in “boarding school” settings with idea that we also need to continually be looking primarily and first for familial permanency for the child?
- For youth that have been in congregate care for longer periods of time, we have to be sensitive to the experience that they have lived and not make assumptions that transitions for them will be simple.
- Timelines for implementation of reform are multi-year. Pace will move differently in different localities. However, it is a statewide implementation.
- Expectation is that lower level GHs will cease to be licensed and rated. Those treatment centers (as we are redefining them) will reform to have the treatment resources expected.
- Evaluation construct will continue out into the future. This evaluation will also be tied to the use of particular facilities or agencies.
- Not interested in looking toward an incentive-payment structure. Good performance will be normative and will be required for continued operation.

GREG ROSE

- We have looked at implementing and coordinating services and supports so that we are not just talking about FC dollars but are looking at MH dollars as well.
- Step through the recommendations:

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Placements are based on good quality assessments where common domains are used. Assessments use child and family team process where there is a voice and a choice in the process. (Wrap-around, Practice model for Katie A.)
2. Accreditation – value in having providers nationally accredited.
3. Honoring young people’s voice in the transition process. Look at strategies for older youth who are not interested in home-based placements.

HOME-BASED FAMILY CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Allow public agencies to operate an FFA. So services can be provided in home and community.
5. Strengthening resource family recruitment, training requirements and retention strategies. A modest amount in this years budget to start work in this area. Retention strategies talk about treating resource families with respect and true partnership and using them as tools for recruitment of new families.

6. 2 types of FFAs – treatment and non-treatment FFA. Treatment FFA would provide a cluster of services that would need to be funded out of EPSDT and FC dollars. Katie A. treatment model (when approved by feds) fits into this model.

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Core services for residential treatment programs. Stays longer than 6 months must have high level of review by placing agency.
 - a. County operated shelters will be phased out
 - b. Boarding schools – don't ask for kids to choose between education and family.
8. Short term residential treatment Centers (STRTCs) and FFA Treatment Centers (FFA/Ts) must be certified by local mental health plans to provide those services.
9. Lower Levels of GHs will be phased out.
10. Increase minimum age for newly hired STRTC child care workers.
11. Increase the minimum qualifications for all newly hired STRTC child care workers.
12. Enhance training for new and existing STRTC staff.
13. Establish “STRTC peer partner” and “STRTC volunteer” staff classifications and allow STRTCs to use these classification as needed to support their program. We heard in our workgroup process that these positions are important. It is a matter of professionalizing the child care staff.

FISCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

14. Rather than having a tiered rate classification system, there will be a single rate for STRTCs.
15. Creates a responsibility for coordinated audits and program reviews from a number of entities to make sure each appropriate entity has a sense of the quality of services. Allows a transformation of DSS program audits. We hope this focuses the audit on quality – not simply paper.
16. Need specific rates for intensive treatment foster care and therapeutic foster care.

Performance Measures and Outcome Recommendations

17. We publish performance measures (federal and state standards) by counties, let's also have those for STRTC and FFA providers to help county placing agencies better understand some of the specific programs certain FFAs offer and how well they perform those functions.
18. Client satisfaction survey – looks at more than just quantitative data and gets qualitative data from young people served and their families.
19. Make sure there is the availability of the information that is publicly accessible. Just like licensing folks have recently come up with the transparency website. This would have that kind of information but much more outcome based information.

QUESTION/ANSWER

- Regarding #8, above – who does this licensing? CCL would still be required to license facilities. However, we want to go past that
- When a child is placed with one caretaker who, later, needs higher needs, how does that one caretaker get reassessed for a higher rate?
- How are you going to increase family foster homes? How do you sequence that so that you know there is a significantly large pool to take in the kids moved out of group home placements?
 - It’s a developmental process but there is a good reason that was the primary piece funded in governor’s budget. There is an understanding that is the piece that really does have to come first.
 - Ideas for recruitment strategy
 - Improve the relationships with existing foster parents and foster parent associations
 - Family finding at the very front needs to happen. We recognize this is very important.
- How does this all mesh with prevention strategies and supporting and funding those?
 - This isn’t meant to shift the focus. It is an “and” not an “or”.
 - Strategy that allows counties to move children more quickly into home-based care.
- We need to recognize that we also need to adequately fund counties to appropriately fund family-finding efforts in the first place.

CALIFORNIA BUDGET

KEELY BOSLER

- Education is a big piece of the budget
- Budget is balanced and there is a rainy day fund
- Prop 30 is temporary and in 2016 tax rates will start to go down.
- Moving forward, the state will take an ongoing portion of the share for the option Medi-Cal expansion program.
- Economy continues to grow and we have tax revenue growth.
- Threat of a recession exists although we are not projecting that.
- We are 9 months past the average expansion period.
- Dealing with income inequality across the state

CHRISTIAN GRIFFITH

- Try to get big problems fixed
- Try to get us focused on long-term solutions

- We want to do more than little incremental changes at the grant level. We want to change who is in poverty and who is not. We are going to be exploring those things in our hearings but we need to hear more from you now and in the future.

SCOTT GRAVES

- Child care and development – we are putting fewer dollars into child care and development than we were before the recession
 - 100,000 fewer slots today than in 2007/2008
- Cal-Works:
 - We have made some progress but the maximum grant for a family of 3 in high-cost counties is less than it was 7-8 years ago.
 - We are having families operate at a pre-recession levels
- Budgets are about priorities. (Fixed pie of dollars to deal with.)
 - Is there a vision to change the status quo?
- This budget doesn't make any big plans on poverty.
- Where have the dollars gone?
 - We are spending less on students
 - Intentionally or not the state's priorities have shifted over the last 5-6 years.
 - We have the resources to do what we were doing 8 years ago but we aren't doing it anymore. Those dollars must be going somewhere else.
- Policy makers are making decisions based on what they are hearing from the community.

NEXT MEETINGS:

CHILD WELFARE ADVOCATES' SUBCOMMITTEE:

Third Thursday of the month from 1-3pm

Next Meeting: February 19

Location: California Endowment offices at 1414 K Street, Suite 500 in Sacramento

CHILDREN'S ADVOCATES ROUNDTABLE – QUARTERLY MEETING

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 21

Location: 980 9th Street, 2nd Floor, Sacramento