

Children’s Services Committee

Location: WebEx Address: [Click to Join WebEx Meeting](#)
 Call in number: 415-655-0003 Access Code: 616 179 513
 Date: Tuesday, 10/20/2020
 Time: 1:00 P.M. CDT

TCCY Staff			Absent		Commission Members	Absent
1	Executive Director	Richard Kennedy		1	Amy Jones, Chair	
2	Deputy Executive Director	Craig Hargrow		2	Mackenzie Johnston	
3		Jennifer Drake-Croft		3	Glenda Terry	
4		Laritha Fentress		4	Petrina Jones-Jesz	
5		Sumita Keller		5	Steven Neely	
6		Melissa McGee		6		
7		Gerald Papica		7		
8		Steve Petty		8		
9		Bill Latimer		9		
10		Cory Bradfield		10		
11		Jennifer Jones	X	11		

1) **Call to Order – Amy Jones, Commission Member**

Jones called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

2) **Staff Updates**

Ombudsman Program

Papica reported that TCCY has received 30 new referrals from July to September. For the same reporting period, 37 new case were logged in 2019 and 27 new cases were logged in 2018. Training for this year 2020 with 20 individuals from various offices indicating interest. The distribution of the 30 referrals include 25 active cases (83%), 3 information-only cases (10%) and 2 foster home-related cases (7%). Papica has participated in two Foster Care Review Board meetings, a Board of Review settlement meeting and eight Child and Family Team meetings and leave it at that. He also attended eight CFTMs by Zoom or by phone on 07/09, 07/15 (two cases), 7/22, 7/31, 08/04, 09/11 and 09/22. Lastly, four half-days New Ombudsman Training via ZOOM is scheduled to take place in mid-November. Record attendance is expected to meet the training needs of USOA members, as nearly 40 attendees signed up immediately. In response to a question from Jones, Papica responded that trainees come from federal and state offices and that the price has recently become more affordable due to an increase in funding. In response to another question from Jones, Papica responded that the Zoom meetings (for FCRB and others) have been a satisfactory replacement for in-person meetings.

Building Strong Brains Tennessee

As Drake-Croft reported previously, due to challenges with COVID-19 the Building Strong Brains Conference Content Committee decided to move forward with an online Lunch and Learn Series throughout the summer. At the end of September, TCCY and the BSB TN Lunch & Learn Content Committee wrapped up the series. Being online made the series available to those who would not normally be able to attend in person. In addition to around 100 views in real time, more were able to view the series on TCCY's YouTube channel. Drake-Croft has been partnering with the TN Department of Health to release an updated brief on the state of ACEs in TN, including updated TN-specific data. This brief should be completed by the end of the year. Keller, Drake-Croft, and Newland have been partnering with DCS to develop a BSB TN website. The website is nearing completion and should be live by the end of October or, more likely, November. Since the departure of Mary Rolando from the Department of Children's Services, TCCY staff have taken over the coordination of both the weekly Coordinating Team meetings and the quarterly Public & Private Sector Meetings.

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

Petty reported that the Youth Transitions Advisory Council met October 1, 2020 via WebEx. Over 40 people participated. They heard information from Tennessee Housing and Development Agency on availability of housing grants for youth aging out of foster

care. The Office of Independent Living at the Department of Children's Services provided additional housing information. Data from the office reveals that while the overall number of young people receiving Extension of Foster Care Services in FY 2020 increased, that number fell significantly between April and August, likely due to the pandemic. While it increased slightly in September, there are still 36 fewer young adults participating. There are also 30 fewer applications for Education and Training Vouchers compared to this time in 2019, reversing gains made in early 2020. Petty informed the Commission that all four Resource Centers provided updates. All are still providing opportunities for growth while maintaining social distancing requirements, though those opportunities are still limited. The Office of Children, Youth and Young Adults shared a new Public Service Announcement developed by the Young Adult Leadership Council. Also, the State Apprenticeship Director gave a presentation on the new apprenticeship program at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Petty has is currently proofreading the YTAC annual report and expects to deliver it tomorrow.

Council on Children's Mental Health (CCMH)

McGee reported that CCMH met on August 20th with a focus on engaging children and families during the pandemic. Presenters, including the Young Adult Leadership Council, shared information on building rapport using telehealth, engaging youth, young adults and families, as well as a grant-end evaluation update for System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT). CCMG met again on October 15th after the planning committee identified a theme focused on suicide prevention and awareness.

System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT)

McGee acknowledged Laritha Fentress's final committee meeting, then reported that System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) federal funding ended on September 29, 2020. TDMHSAS was awarded a new Substance Abuse and of Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded award, extending four additional years at a total of \$12 million, representing roughly 28 SOCAT teams. Also, Laritha Fentress will remain with TCCY in the interim and will be transitioned to TDMHSAS as the SOCAT Network Community Engagement Coordinator. Laritha has been an incredible asset to TCCY and will be missed but know she will continue to do excellent work in the new grant. The SOCAT Network will allow for expansion of new geographic areas across Tennessee to serve more children, youth and families. TDMHSAS also received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding from the Department of Human Services (DHS) to continue providing services in existing sites. Funding was granted at current SOCAT level

for three years pending legislative approval. Lastly, the CCMH Director position will be partially funded with each funding stream, the percentage increasing when SOCAT Network dollars are approved and distributed. McGee and Fentress continue to conduct trainings and Fentress continues work on a training for employees of Family Support Specialists. Fentress is sad to leave TCCY but excited to continue her work with TDMHSAS.

Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA)

Keller reported the September HVLA Meeting was cancelled due to multiple date conflicts with the federal MIECHV site visit with the Department of Health. Keller was invited to participate in a meeting during the virtual site visit. Keller and Bradfield were able to attend the MIECHV virtual site visit and highlight the work being done. The next HVLA meeting is scheduled for November 17th and will be the last meeting for 2020 and will be held virtually. Keller learned from our partners at the Department of Health that the expansion of home visiting to all 95 counties supported by the Department of Human Services' TANF funds is confirmed, complete with legislative signatures/approval. This funding is a significant investment in EBHV and will make the services available across the entire state. This will more than offset a previous decrease in funding for EBHV. Much credit for the TANF funds goes to Carla Snodgrass from the Dept of Health.

Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council

Bradfield Reported that the last general meeting was held via WebEx on 09/02 and featured updates from the Tennessee Department of Human Services office of Child Care, the Early Childhood Initiatives section of the Tennessee Department of Health, and the Governor's COVID Child Well-Being Task Force. In addition, the council's assigned technical assistance provider from national nonprofit ZERO TO THREE (ZTT) introduced the *Building Strong Foundations for Families* project, of which the council is a part. The next meeting will be held in December, date TBD. The TNYCWC Newsletter continues to be issued monthly. The newsletter features upcoming webinars, job postings, issue spotlights, and profiles of participating agencies. The Steering Team has filled one of two vacancies, welcoming Assistant Commissioner of Early Childhood Education Darlene Estes-Del Re, from the TN Department of Education, to the team. The team has switched from a quarterly meeting schedule to a monthly one, as the Steering Team is officially merged with the Core Team of the *Building Strong Foundations For Families* project. The council's work with the ZTT on this project has begun. TCCY, and the TNYCWC specifically, is the lead agency for the state on the project. The goal of the project is to

support a cohort of states in building and strengthening comprehensive policies, programs and systems that ensure families with infants and toddlers have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. The TNCYWC meets regularly with a consultant from ZTT to discuss technical assistance needs and met with team leads from other states on 10/16. The Director, along with the Steering Team, will participate in a virtual meeting with the other state teams on 10/23. Lastly, Bradfield reported that he assisted as requested by TDH along with Keller in preparation for and during a site visit from HRSA to Tennessee on 10/19.

Second Look Commission

Hargrow reported that the Second Look Commission (SLC) met virtually on August 11, 2020. During the quarterly meeting, the SLC members checked in with each other during the introductions to make sure the members were doing well during pandemic. Hargrow updated the members regarding the sunset audit. Hargrow stated he received questions from the Comptroller's office but had not started working on them at the time. SLC members discussed including COVID-related information in the annual report.

During the August investigatory meeting, SLC members made the following preliminary findings and recommendations:

1. Overall, DCS continues to improve its documentation;
2. DCS representatives provided good case work and coordination with other agencies and entities;
3. DCS made excellent efforts to locate and engage parents; and
4. There continues to be an opportunity to share family planning information with parents involved with DCS.

The commission held another meeting on October 13th. Hargrow submitted the SLC responses to the questions provided by the Comptroller's office. Hargrow anticipates submitting names for open appointments on the commission during the sunset hearing, which was rescheduled for December. Hargrow responded to a request that the commission review more cases with the consensus belief that this would not improve the functionality of the commission. Hargrow notified the comptroller of a need for an individual with a mental health background to be included in the commission's makeup. There needs to be a greater awareness among law enforcement and other stakeholders as to meeting the needs of caregivers with intellectual disabilities. Hargrow described an incident wherein a caregiver was hallucinating and

unable to care for children present, who law enforcement then proceeded to leave alone for several hours until returning with DCS. Papica echoed praise for DCS, specifically improvements in documenting their cases, and transitioning case notes between case workers. Hargrow noted that this has been a long-standing recommendation of the commission.

3) **Approval of August Children's Services Minutes (ACTION)**

Jones, noting a quorum, asked for a motion to approve the Children's Services minutes from the August Commission Meeting.

Drummond moved to approve the minutes from August 2020.

Harlan seconded. Unanimously Approved.

4) **Additional Items or Comments**

Jones mentioned that the Chapin Hall Group is having a call with judges to discuss placement and other DCS issues. Both the number and quality of placement options were the subject of the group's questions.

Kennedy referenced a conversation he and Hargrow had regarding this topic in recent months.

Jones reported that the TJCFJ group was contacted by Commissioner Nichols in response to a question from Kennedy about which judges were selected for these conversations.

Petty recounted that Chapin Hall is conducting an evaluation of evidence-based services related to JJ funding being administered by TDMHSAS.

Jones describes a lack of evaluation of these services thus far and describes a lack of available placements as a potential reason for this.

Kennedy explains that the Building Strong Brains Tennessee Innovation Grants are being looked at by the newly-minted Office of Evidence and Impact and speculated as to whether this office would be looking into these evidence-based practices as well.

5) **Motion to Adjourn**

Harlan moved to adjourn the meeting. Drummond seconded and all approved.

Prepared by: Cory Bradfield

MINUTES