



# Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee

*The mission of the Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee is to provide oversight for and promote communication between the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Social Services and its related agencies, and the community, with emphasis on providing information and recommendations that make the system more effective and efficient.*

## MINUTES

August 7, 2024

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Meeting held in-person for Committee Members and public.

Virtual option via Microsoft Teams for public only

### I. Call to order and introductions.

Rosemary

- Meeting called to order by Committee Chair, Rosemary Alanis, at 9:03 AM with roll call by DSS Support Staff, Julia Perez.

### II. Approve Minutes for June 5, 2024 and August 7, 2024 Agenda.

- Patricia Scovill (District 3) motioned; Wilma Hashimoto (District 5) seconded to approve the June 2024 Minutes and August 2024 Agenda.

### III. Updates

#### A. Receive Report From Department of Social Services Addressing Critical Areas

Kimberli

- Child Welfare Services (CWS) Deputy Director (DD), Kimberli Smith asked if anyone from the Committee had any questions regarding the Mod C Data. District 3 Committee member, Patti Scovill asked if there have been any incident reports and was informed that there is a Policy and Procedure Guide for daily incident reporting at Mod C as well as a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team that tracks the data of each incident.
- Youth at Mod C are assigned a therapist or Wraparound if they are not coming off of AWOL for an extended period of time.
- District 2 Committee member, Kevin Lisitsin, asked how many times youth will have a Social Worker change. There is no report that tracks how many different Social Workers a child may have. The standard CWS process is as follows: there is an initial investigation during Emergency Response (ER), conducted by an ER Social Worker. If substantiated, the case is then transferred to the appropriate division where a corresponding Social Worker is assigned. This Social Worker will maintain the case moving forward, for about 6-12. If an assigned Social Worker becomes unavailable due to Leave of Absence (LOA), case load overload, or staff/department restructuring, then a more experienced Social Worker will be assigned to the child's case.
- A side-by-side comparison of Placement metrics was requested for future CWS data.
- In response to Kevin's question regarding Social Worker changes, Wilma said the Social Work Supervisor would be the individual who plays a continuous role in the CWS case.
- Contributing a school perspective, Maisie Young (District 2), added that if there is a Social Worker change, the Foster Care Liaison will be contacted, who will also be able to provide details for the CWS case.
- CWS has been implementing the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT), which promotes "out of the box" thinking to assist with understanding the trauma youth experienced.

### IV. New Business

Rita

#### A. Mod C Presentation

- Rita Bohannon is the Division Chief over Mod C.
- Mod C is close to being licensed as a Transitional Shelter Care Facility (TrSCF). At the upcoming September 10<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisor's meeting, there will be an item to present the list of Administrators for Mod C and then that list will be provided to CCL which should be the last step in getting formally licensed.
- Rita acknowledged concerns that were brought up at the last meeting regarding Mod C. One of the concerns was the "lack of structure". Rita relayed that it is sometimes difficult for teenagers with complex needs to follow structure. The daily schedule that is utilized at Mod C was provided to the Committee. Rita added that most youth at Mod C do follow the designated schedule; some of the youth prefer to engage in "daily life tasks", so the tasks presented on the schedule are replaced with those.
- Wilma asked if there are any other models in California that have a transitional home license. Rita said there are a handful of counties that have shelters that follow the same regulations as Mod C; however, Mod C is the only shelter that currently adheres to Chapter 12 regulations.
- It was additionally added that when youth come off AWOL after an extended period of time, they are typically not connected to

school in any way, so it this makes it difficult to provide them their tools for an education. Youth also tend to arrive at Mod C to eat, sleep and shower but almost immediately go AWOL again.

- District 1 Committee member, Karina Perez, asked what will be done differently at Mod C after being licensed. Rita responded that Mod C is already operating as if they were licensed. There will be quarterly reports presented to the Board of Supervisors once Mod C is licensed.
  - A handout detailing the shifts and duties for Mod C staff was provided.
- There was additional discussion regarding Mod C and it was acknowledged that there are frustrations that Mod C could not immediately improve a youth's situation just by them being there, but the complexity of the trauma youth experience requires an extended amount of time and effort for treatment.
  - There is a "runaway plan" for youth that have a history of AWOL. A "runaway plan" consists of identifying a youth's triggers and incentives to keep them from leaving.
  - Youth at Mod C have fruit, salad, and various snacks available to them and meals are provided by Denny's, per the Department's contract..
  - When youth are AWOL from Mod C, there is no reimbursement to the County from the State.
  - It was suggested that encouraging mindfulness and verbal communication to youth could assist with the treatment process for youth who have experienced trauma.

## **B. Audit Inquiry**

**Rosemary**

- Rosemary inquired how often audits are done and what trends are common. CWS DD, Cathi Huerta, said she and her staff are responsible for continuous audits.
- From a State perspective, CWS is required to review 100 randomly selected cases annually. There are continuous audits that can be based off something as simple as a phone call regarding concerns with a case. Cathi's staff reviews and reports back to her. The reviews and existing audits identify trends and are reviewed by CWS Deputy Directors and Supervisors.
- For any case that gets reviewed, there is an established, written process that is followed, which includes questions/statements such as:
  - Do you agree with the findings? If not, why?
  - If you agree with the findings, work to rectify the identified issue(s).
- Rosemary requested a quarterly update from Cathi and her staff regarding the findings and trends in these CWS audits.

## **C. Discuss FCSOC Retreat**

**Rosemary**

- FCSOC retreat is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, September 4, 2024 from 8:00am – 11:00am.

## **V. Subcommittee Update**

### **A. Education**

**Pamela**

- A Foster Notification Process between DSS and each of the Districts is being fully implemented on October 1, 2024. The process includes communication with the District Liaison and school sites. Maisie added that the notification process started in May/June and that is has been very helpful.
- More districts have joined the Foster Literacy NIC and more literacy coaches will be added this year.
- Regarding Head Start and TK, Patti asked how many foster kids were eligible last year to start preschool in Fresno Unified and how many kids aged 3-4 actually started last year. She believes it is essential for all eligible children to attend a preschool and kindergarten environment to enable improvement of speech, vision, hearing, dyslexia, and socialization. She also believes CWS should have procedures to be ensure youth attend school and if they cannot be transported to school by their resource parent, then different alternatives should be presented.
  - Cathi added that CWS pulls reports of youths' progress in early education. She will report back on Patti's requests. Cathi would first like to be informed of the current state of early childhood education to proceed with what improvements could be made.
- Wilma added that CASA Social Workers are trained to administer the developmental assessment tool called the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire* (ASQ). This assessment, along with the partnership of the resource parent(s), allows for early identification and mitigation of identified issues in the youth prior to the age of 5.

### **B. Children's Mental Health**

**Kevin**

- The nonprofit organization, *Prodigy*, presented at the last meeting. Prodigy has various mentoring programs to assist youth and their families achieve and maintain healthy and productive lifestyles.
- Kimberli mentioned DSS utilizes several non-profit Neighborhood Resource Centers that offer various support services for youth and their families.

## VI. Announcements

- CASA will be hosting the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Crab Feed on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup> from 6:00pm – 10:00pm.

## VII. Adjourn

- Next meeting will be held Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 8:00am, in-person for Committee members and the public. Virtual option via Microsoft Teams, for members of the public only. Please note: participation in FCSOC meetings require in-person attendance. Virtual option is view-only. Meeting adjourned by Rosemary at 10:38 AM.

### Committee Attendance

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sal Quintero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ari Martinez (Proxy)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karina Perez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Lisitsin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patti Scovill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Alanis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Hancock
<b>Vacant</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maisie Young	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ed Avila
<b>Vacant</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Kashian	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilma Hashimoto

\* Marked Boxes Indicate Committee Member Attended

### Attending Staff and Guests

**In Person:** Kimberli Smith, Cathi Huerta, Rita Bohannon, Megan Lambert Amina Flores Becker, Brian Van Anne, Rocky Vang, Chad Valorosi, Kathy Milne, Sandra Alvarez, Allison Howell, Julia Perez, J’Lyne Montejano, Taylor Chavez