

Joint Task Force on Children's Justice/Child Sexual Abuse
VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES

March 24, 2022 - 10:00 AM

Attendees

Alfaro-Frazier, Natalie	Johnson, Anthony	Smith, Rae Anne
Allen, Sandra	Knowles, Catherine	Snodgrass, Carla
Beckham, Pierce	Koslick, Amy	Stallworth, Virginia
Bevans, Rebecca	Laman, Angel	Talley, Jackie
Boshears, Marlene	Lowen, Deborah	Wade, Pat
Bottoms, Delaine	Maifair, Sammi	Woerner, Stephen
Boyd, Ellen	McGee, Melissa	Wyatt, Verna
Cobb, Dana	Meise, Michael	Wilkerson, Jason
Cooper, Tim	Miller, Stacy	Wyatt, Verna
Davis, Kristen	Murphy, William	UT Staff
Ebert, Jon	Nieves, Linda	Frierson, Stephanie
Etheridge, Stephanie	Page, Jacque	Hadjiharalambous, Sissie
Farrar, Lynne	Paisley, Bella	Lawal, Toni
Graham, Ryan	Paisley, Lori	Regrets
Hargrow, Craig	Perales, Marymer	Alexander, Denise
Harper, Dawn	Randolph, LaShonda	Carter, Bobby
Hart-Curry, Marjahna	Seeman, Larry	Franklin, Rebecca
	Sinback, Kathryn	Miner, Tom

Welcome

President Lynne Farrar thanked everyone for participating in the video conference meeting. Roll call was conducted via Zoom chat. Following the welcome, Farrar shared the following announcements:

- Tom Miner, who retired as the Assistant District Attorney for the 31st Judicial District a year ago has resigned from the JTF. Farrar also noted that Miner was a member of the JTF for more than 10 years and served in two leadership capacities - CPIT Committee Chair for and President.
- On behalf of the JTF and Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (TCJFCJ), Judges Sheila Calloway and Michael Meise sent an email

message on January 24 to DCS Commissioner Nichols pledging support to the Department for addressing the staffing shortages.

Committees Goals/Progress Update

- CPIT Committee Chair Dawn Harper reported that the Committee was close to completing the updates to the CPIT Best Practice Manual when the National Children's Alliance (NCA) released the new standards for accredited Child Advocacy Centers. This required the Committee to "take another look" to ensure the manual models NCA standards. Harper also reported that the Tennessee General Assembly passed a bill that recently went into effect (March 15) allowing medical participation in CPIT meetings. Judge Meise chimed in and said the (TCJFCJ) is glad the language was changed.
- Court Improvement Committee Chair Kathy Sinback updated the group on the booklet preparing children for dependency and neglect court involvement. Sinback reported Metro Arts Commission, the agency that is lending support is using a grant to hire some former foster youth to do the art and illustration work. Upon completion, the booklets will be disseminated statewide.
- Outreach and Awareness Committee Chair Sandra Allen reported on the newly revised Erin's Law guidelines. Allen reported that the recently revised guidelines include child sexual abuse curricula information for grade levels, description and cost. Allen also reported on a survey conducted last year of schools' child abuse coordinators. The Committee assisted DCS OCS with developing questions for the survey, which assessed what trainings they have had, their comfort level with providing some training, and training needs. Allen noted that most school personnel receive training on child sexual abuse on a regular basis. In addition, Allen reported the Committee looked at the Department of Human Services (DHS) Keeping Kids Safe curriculum, which was developed in the early 1990s. Allen reported the Committee made some revisions and the information was submitted to DHS child-care leadership team for review in December. Ellen Boyd, who represents DHS on the JTF chimed in and reported that DHS is going through a transformation modernization initiative, and anticipates a reply after this initiative is completed.

Following the Committee update, President Farrar chimed in to report on the JTF Executive Committee with the House Committee on Children and Families in February. Farrar reported the legislators were very much interested in the Outreach and Awareness Committee work, particularly the mandated reporter training.

- Treatment Committee Chair Jon Ebert reported that the Committee is implementing the CSEM document next steps (e.g., distributing it to individuals and agencies). Ebert also noted the CSEM document was presented at the fall 2021 Connecting for Children's Justice (CCJ) conference and that all of DCS regional psychologists have a copy of it and will use it to train DCS staff so that they can be familiar with the work. In addition, Ebert reported the Committee is looking at children with sexual behavior problems and that they are gleaning from the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers most updated information, developing some resources and actively reviewing some of the new best practices in this area.

DCS Updates

Amy Koslick, DCS Office of Child Safety (OCS) Executive Director, provided the following updates:

- Children's Justice Act annual grant. The OCS is working on developing the CJA annual grant. The annual grant will include the efforts by the JTF for addressing the Department's workplace shortages as well as the sections the JTF coordinator is required to complete related to the Children's Justice Task Force federal mandate.
- Staff Capacity/Vacancies. The Department staff capacity statewide is approximately 70%; however, some regions were hard hit – for example, the staff capacity in Davidson County is approximately 31% and 55% in South Central. To address vacancies, the Department is being more strategic and creative in hiring new staff. They are looking at shift work and flexibility. Also, the Department is participating in career fairs across the state – for example, HR staff attended career fairs at Austin Peay State, Union, and University of Tennessee universities and is using Indeed and social media to advertise jobs.
- Severe abuse. OCS looked at child abuse hotline data from 2019 to 2021 and saw a significant increase for severe abuse. The two top ones were for child sexual abuse and drug exposed allegation. For example, in 2019, there were 14,847 allegations of sexual abuse and in 2021, 16,094. For drug-exposed children, the Department went from 1,281

allegations in 2019 to 1,865 in 2021. Koslick stated the increase has an impact on the CPIT team within DCS and the multi-disciplinary teams across the state.

- National Child Abuse Awareness Month. The Department expects to see a slight increase in referrals in April and May due to the celebration of National Child Abuse Awareness Month in April. In anticipation of the increase, OCS leadership is working with staff to manage their case, and has hired some retired employees and other part-time persons to help out.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes for December 5, 2019 and March 19, 2020

Vice President Pat Wade asked if any members had corrections or comments for the December 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes. None voiced; minutes approved in the present form.

General Announcements

The JTF announcements were primarily regarding job announcements at DCS, Nashville Children's Alliance, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlandds. Other announcements included the following:

- Tennessee CASA Annual Virtual Conference will be held April 6 – 8.
- East Tennessee State University developed a brain institute for addressing forms of trauma and stress, including how trauma and resilience-informed approaches can promote better health and well-being in individuals, workplaces, and the larger community.
- Department of Health, Community Health Access and Navigation in Tennessee (CHANT), a voluntary care coordination service through the Local Health Departments referral process is now available online to assist families with coordinating medical and social service needs.
- Centers of Excellence for Children in State Custody (COEs) continue to serve, provide consultations and trainings. For example, COEs, in consultation with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), have developed three regional TF-CBT Learning Collaboratives, and have trained over 190 clinicians and administrators from 32 community treatment agencies across the state. The COEs also have disseminated evidence-based practices related to ACEs and childhood trauma, including children and youth with posttraumatic

stress and co-morbid psychopathology; children with problematic sexual behavior; youth who engage in self-harm and other risky behavior; children with severe disruptive behaviors; and infants and young children who have, or are at risk for, disrupted attachment.

Breakout Meetings

Before the Committees' breakout meeting sessions, President Farrar reminded the Chairs to submit their minutes to Toni Lawal by March 31.

Committees Minutes

The Committee chairs or designee minutes included the following:

- CPIT: Chair Dawn Harper reported the Committee discussed the following:
 - CPIT Best Practice Manual. Harper reported the meeting began by discussing next steps for completing the manual – Committee member Amy Koslick agreed to review the new NCA standards and send out information to the Committee by the second week in April. The Committee then will submit edits to Koslick and the manual will be complete before the June full committee meeting. Harper reported when the Committee met last time, there was conversation around a potential issue for Tennessee Child Advocacy Centers because the Tennessee statute, TCA 37-1-607, does not mandate that a medical representative (other than a representative of the mental health disciplines) be a member of the CPIT team. Since the Committee's last meeting, HB2046 has passed and amends TCA Title 37, Chapter 1, Part 6, which permits each child protective team to include one appropriately credentialed medical providers as a member of the team.
 - Human Trafficking. Harper reported the Committee also discussed Human Trafficking bills that could integrate HT agencies into the CPIT case review process. Harper reported there was discussion about some rural areas possible having difficulty with this and it would be important to get input from CACs from around the state. In addition, Harper reported there was a large discussion around CSEM cases and the multidisciplinary team approach. DCS and TBI worked well together on an investigation in which alleged victims were identified as CSEM.

- Court Improvement: Chair Kathy Sinback reported the Committee discussed the following:
 - What Happens in Juvenile Court—Dependency and Neglect (D/N) Cases Booklet. Sinback reported that Natalie Alfaro-Frazier, Equity & Restorative Practices Manager for the Metro Arts Commission talked through the concept of the book the Committee is developing. The feedback from foster youth and CASA involved youth will be incorporated into the design and the ideas will be submitted to the Youth Advisory Group with the idea that it will be interesting and colorful. The idea is that the booklet will be interesting, cost-effective and widely accessible and make it available as a PDF online.
 - Social Workers as Witnesses at Court curriculum. Sinback reported Committee member Rae Anne Smith reported that she will check the curriculum for accuracy – Smith also noted that it may be time to do an overhaul of the curriculum. The PDF version is online, but potential presenters need to ask permission to use the actual PowerPoint to ensure they are qualified to present the material and that they are not charging admission to present the information. In addition, Sinback reported that Smith shared with the group that her social work intern may be able to update the PowerPoint with more graphics and color.
 - TJCSA Conference in August. Sinback reported that the event is being hosted by her employer - the Nashville/Davidson County Juvenile Court. There will also be a Judicial Academy in August for all newly elected judges.
 - Standardized Statewide Pro Se D/N Petition. Sinback reported that Committee member Judge Meise submitted some suggestions that will be incorporated into the documents.
 - Mid-Winter Judicial Conference. Sinback reported that Committee members Sammi Maifair, DCS attorney, along with Stephanie Etheridge of the AOC provided training to the juvenile judges at the Mid-Winter Judicial Conference covering the case law in regard to the noncustodial cases to further enhance compliance with policy and law.

In addition, Chair Sinback reported there was discussion about the high level of stress and emotional dysregulation among very caring professionals in

child welfare as a result of the continuing stress of COVID, the economy, the state of the world. Suggestions were made regarding some steps the courts can possibly take – for example, have safe rooms where people can get away, cry, scream, a garden respite area to promote calm, or whatever they need to regulate emotions. A suggestion was also made to develop training for judges in courtroom management when emotions get out of control. Training about civility, professionalism, and respect may be warranted.

- Outreach and Awareness: Chair Sandra Allen reported the Committee discussed the following:
 - Disseminating the Updated Erin’s Law Guidelines Document. Upon completing a cover letter for the document, the Committee identified agencies/organizations to distribute to – for example: Departments of Children’s Service, Commission on Children and Youth, Education, Health, Human Service, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; Office of Criminal Justice Programs, Head Start and Office of Extended Learning at DOE; Systems of Care at Tennessee (SOCAT); DCS Community Advisory Boards and service providers, CACs/TNCAC, Child Sexual Abuse workgroup, Juvenile Courts, Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital and other children’s hospital across the state, Young Child Wellness Council, United Way, UT Extension, UT SWORPS Child Care and Referral programs. The Committee also discussed a place for maintaining the document, and it was agreed that it would be maintained on DCS website.
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/dcs/documents/safety/JTF_Erins_Law.pdf
 - CAST Updates. Committee member Rebecca Bevans reported that ETSU is planning to implement the child abuse studies program. Discussions with APSU and UTK about interest in implementation have occurred.
 - Mandated Reporting. Rebecca Bevans reported that 48,851 people have completed the training.
 - National Child Abuse Awareness Month. Members were encouraged to spread the word about the national month event and to include messages about the online mandated reporting training to underserved groups. Also, Bevans reported that she created a prevention message on TikTok and thus far has received 40,000 hits.

- Treatment: Jon Ebert reported the Committee continued to discuss their goals and placed action steps on them, including addressed challenges as it relates to data.

Strategic Planning Objective 1: Expand work already done related to therapeutic practices and needed services for youth who have experienced CSE.

Action Step: Finalization of Document -Executive summary needs to be added to current document online.

- i. Obtain final Exec Summary from Committee member
Larry Seeman
- ii. Send to Toni Lawal, JTF coordinator
- iii. Ask Lawal to update formatting and PDF & upload new version.

Action Step: Summary Documents – Ebert offered to work with someone on summary sheets, beginning with male victims. Committee to review the new research document and put comments into Basecamp notes.

Action Step: Full Document Dissemination –

- Page will talk with DCS for dissemination date.
- Continue to Share to various partners:
 - i. DCS – Cooper
 - ii. COE's – Ebert
 - iii. TCCY – McGee
- *Outcomes:* Received by DCS, COE's, CAC's, posted on a referenced website, getting it to TDMHSAS - Ask for any feedback from these initial groups.

Strategic Planning Objective 2: Develop a DCS document regarding Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (CSBP) that outlines appropriate language, types of assessment and interventions.

- i. Committee member Jacque Page reports that they have accomplished a few things with DCS that have been disseminated to DCS workers.

- ii. Page continues to support "Start with Language" - Children with Sexual Behavior Problems. Can have by next meeting some information gathered for why language is used in the way it is for this population.

· *Action Step:* Seeman recommends all review at the ATSA document.