

Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Family Resource Center Differential Response Steering Committee
February 13, 2013 Meeting Minutes
Approved May 8, 2013 (with revisions in red)

Videoconference Locations

Nevada Division of Child and Family Services – Conference Room, 6171 W Charleston, Bldg. 8, Las Vegas
Nevada Mental Health and Disability Services – 4126 Technology Way, 2nd floor, Carson City
Teleconferenced for Elko and other locations: 1-888-363-4635

Attendees

Via Phone: None

Carson City:

Joyce Buckingham, Ron Wood FRC
Karen Stoll, CCSD Friends FRC
Kristen Monibi, WCDSS
Otto Lynn, Washoe County Department of Social Services
Patrick White, Children’s Cabinet
Rosalynda Paez Carlton, WCSO – DR
Sally Dutton, DHHS, Grants Management Unit (GMU)
Suzanne Wright, DCFS - FPO
Tamie MacDonald, Lyon County Human Services
Wendy Pearce, FRC-DR, CCSD Friends FRC

Las Vegas:

Alicia Davisson, East Valley Family Services, Las Vegas Central and East
Alma Spears, Boys and Girls Clubs of Las Vegas, Las Vegas West
Andrea Michaels, HopeLink, Las Vegas South
Angela Phillips, Olive Crest, Las Vegas North
Annette Jordan, CCDFS
Debbie Croshaw, CCDFS
Toby Hyman and Gloria Sulhoff, DHHS/GMU

I. Call to Order and Announcements

Toby Hyman called the meeting to order at 9 am and took roll call of those present in Carson City and Las Vegas. There were no participants on the phone. She thanked everyone for their understanding and patience in rescheduling the DR meeting, which was necessary due to a scheduling conflict with the GMU. She mentioned there were some people who could not attend the rescheduled date and announced the next meeting date, May 8 at 9 am, would be returning to the regular meeting schedule of the first Wednesday of the second month of the quarter.

II. Public comment

None

III. Approve Minutes from November 7, 2012

There being no comments or changes to the minutes, Toby called for a motion to approve.

- Sally Dutton moved to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2012 meeting. Alicia Davisson seconded the motion and it carried unopposed.

IV. Program Updates

Program Report

Toby briefly reviewed the DR Program Report that was distributed to the committee members. It showed that through December 31, 2012, the number of families served since the program began totaled 4,957. She pointed out an error on the report under “total number of families served by DR from 7/1/07-12/31/12.” It should read from 2/28/07-12/31/12. She will make that correction and send out a revised report.

Toby commented that the sixth anniversary of Differential Response will be at the end of February, and the trend over the past several years is the number of cases returned to CPS has gone down substantially. On behalf of everyone in DR, she thanked everyone for the work they do with the families and she appreciates how much time and energy is expended to go the extra mile, and do whatever can be done to keep these families engaged; often, even locating the families is a challenge.

Program Service Updates

Ron Wood: Joyce reported things are going well. She has some relatively new DR workers, but they have been well trained and are doing well.

Lyon County: Tamie reported that there has been a lot of shifting around since Erin left several months ago and they have a new DR staff person, Tonya Anderson. We are developing a supervisor position to help supervise some of the programs Tamie oversees, including DR. Sally said someone else is going to sit in with Tonya’s training. Toby asked for Tonya’s resume.

Churchill County: Wendy reported that she is very thankful that “No Child Left Behind” has an office in Fallon now. We’ve had a whole lot of special needs cases up there and have gotten 14 new cases in the last two weeks. There are also numerous educational neglect cases, sometimes 3 a day. She has asked them to be proactive in sending out letters. If the letters can be sent after five absences, they can step in earlier and work to get the children back in school. Once a student has accrued 25 unexcused absences, there is not that much that can be done.

Toby asked Wendy and Karen about their meeting with the school district, which was held last week. The meeting was with school principals, the District Attorney’s office, and DCFS. Part of the problem is that each school is following a different procedure. Some are not sending letters about school absences, only making phone calls. It was good to have everybody in the same room so the issue could be addressed. They now are working on standardizing procedures among all the schools. Toby congratulated them on making changes to the system.

DCFS, Family Programs Office: Suzanne reported that there were no updates.

WCDSS: Otto reported that there were no updates.

Children’s Cabinet: Patrick reported that the program is running smoothly, all caseloads are steady and have picked up since the holidays. All case managers are handling around 15 cases. They are also seeing plenty of educational neglect.

Otto said WCDSS doesn’t accept educational neglect reports until they’ve been through the monitoring program, but Children’s Cabinet will. **Otto clarified that educational neglect cases first go through a 20-**

day monitoring by the school district, then they are reported to Washoe County Social Services, and then they go to DR. He also explained the 20 day monitoring is a mini-contract with the family and students to monitor improvement. If there is no improvement, it goes to SARB (Student Attendance Review Board.) There are several levels to SARB, SARB1, SARB2, and Elementary SARB, where the children are not cited due to their young age. SARB 2 is a citation for truancy and starts in the juvenile system.

Joyce works with individual schools to make sure letters are sent to the parents after a certain number of absences. Someone else in Carson lost their truancy officer, and the school district decided to dis-enroll kids after (x) absences.

Rosalynnda – WCSD DR. They have been very busy, and are seeing an increase in domestic violence and mental health issues. Medicaid changed a lot of rules which puts a strain on a lot of kids that need help. Rosalynnda said they know when truancy letters go out and what they say, because she has access to the school website, so when parents tell them they haven't received the letters we can let them know the letters went out; however, we know that the kids don't always give the letter to their parents. And some parents aren't aware that their kids aren't in school. We have some new school police officers, and we discovered that they do not know about the DR program. They have been telling people that DR does not have authority to enter homes, so Rosalynnda has asked to give a presentation to the school police to educate them on the DR program. This only occurred last week, so the meeting has not yet happened.

Rosalynnda also commented that ever since the Sandy Hook incident, all of the campuses are locked down. It's a real disadvantage; we're locked out and it's put a strain on the FRCs. A staff person has to physically leave and unlock the gate to let people in, and again to let people out, because the gate must be locked at all times.

Kristin – WCDSS. They have been having a hard time with the online students and those who have been dis-enrolled. There's no oversight; sixteen-year-olds are not turning in assignments or following a reengagement plan, which leads to them being so far behind at age 17. Toby agreed that is a real challenge, and there is quite a bit going on in Clark County with that, too. At the East DR meeting yesterday she learned that Debbie, from online schooling, is making reports to CPS. Churchill schools also have no follow up on the online students. Otto stated that the State's home school law is written very strongly for that purpose, but something changed a few years ago.

Angela – DR North. DR is pretty full; her two workers have been at 20 cases each for over a week. One of my workers was out all week so I've been going out on home visits, trying to keep everything moving. One of the challenges we've had, and Toby's been working with us, is the schools not letting us see the students even though we have a signed release from the parents. Toby announced she has a new, improved form that was approved by the attorney at the Clark County School District, so now DR staff will have a telephone number the school personnel can call if they question whether a DR staff can see a child. Angela added that the schools do not want to give us attendance records even though they have the forms filled out by the parents. Piggy backing on what some of the others have been saying, we've seen more and more 14 year olds with parole officers. I find it just as challenging to try to get them to want to do anything in school, now at 14, as with the older ones. You see the difference in society compared to a few years ago; it is so hard to get them motivated even though they're still young.

Andrea – DR South: HopeLink has received 17 cases this month. We received nine educational neglect cases last weekend and they just keep rolling in. We had a very interesting case last week where the judge in truancy court made the referral to CPS, probably hoping it would go to CPS, and they referred it to DR. The DR worker went to court in the morning and explained the whole DR program and made sure that the judge understood what we really could do, but not anything beyond that. The DR worker is working with this family and hopefully the child will continue going to truancy court and going to school; the mother is involved. Otherwise we're doing okay, hopefully will be closing out some of our successes so we can keep taking new reports.

Alma – DR West. We're good, pretty steady. I don't think we get to a point where the two DR staff have 20 consistently, but that's because they close them out as soon as they're ready to be closed out. Right now we have 32 combined. We do have a lot of educational neglect cases. I actually met with Pam Duncan one of the truancy officers and she echoed our pain about the schools waiting to report to us so she is now reporting herself, so it doesn't get to the point where the students have been absent for so many days.

Alicia – DR Central and DR East: In addition to educational neglect, we've had a rash of medical neglect issues lately. They always present a different challenge for each family, but luckily we've been able to take care of them and we have the resources to help, in most instances. Pahrump has been getting busy since January 1; we now have 10 cases in Pahrump. Toby commented, for those who may not be aware, that August 1, 2012 the half-time DR position out of the FRC in Pahrump moved to EVFS, so they now have a half time DR staff person going to Pahrump. She believes that one of the reasons it is now so steady at 10 is because Michael Cason, the CPS Manager/Supervisor in Pahrump, has really embraced DR and is using it. Cynthia Watson-Catha has left EVFS so Eboni Manor is the person who's going out to Pahrump and being kept very busy.

Debbie from CCDFS: Child protection consultants are here this week and we hope to implement their new model over the next two years. We're looking at the intake unit and hope to have that fully operational by June. So you will see reports that look different coming your way, with more information. She confirmed with Otto that they are already using the new model; Otto stated that they have been trained on it and reports are more detailed than in the past. Debbie expected the implementation to be complete around the first of March.

Annette from CCDFS: Asked the group about a situation she's been seeing in UNITY. There will be an initial DR report, and then another report comes in and DFS notices that a DR case is open. She sometimes sees instances where the workers have kept DR and CPS cases open simultaneously, and asked why the case wasn't given back. Alma cited an example of a case Tomarco currently has where somewhere in the middle of the DR case, a new report is made and it goes into investigation, so DR closes out our portion and CPS stays with the investigation. Most of the time the CPS worker will ask us not to close the DR program because CPS is not going to do anything except close the investigation. Toby added she's also hearing this at the site specific meetings; CPS says since DR can provide more services, they ask us to stay in because they're going to close out the investigation part.

Sometimes we'll get two DR reports or two children in the same family will have two separate reports. Toby asked whether that was going on in the north, in Washoe County or the Rurals.

Patrick: Our staff are pulled out if it feels like there needs to be another report made. In practice what we've done is report that back to CPS and say there's either another issue or something beyond our scope so we haven't kept it open to DR.

Toby: But that's when your worker goes out. But what if there's another report made by somebody else?

Patrick: if there's another report made by somebody else there's usually two things that will happen. Kristen will say a new report came in, here's the allegation, depending on the allegation, we'll say to add it to the existing report, we'll keep it open and we'll contact the family and tell them another report was made. Or, if it gets to the level where we feel there is a safety issue, Kristen will assign it to an investigator.

Before ending her report, Annette wanted to ensure that DR is not put in the position to do any type of investigating. If there's something that warrants CPS, or the DR worker makes a call to CPS, she wants to be sure they don't feel that they are being asked to do anything that they shouldn't. Toby confirmed that the response from the four directors in Clark County was negative. Alma mentioned that when she's had to call in a new report, she closes her part out.

V. Washoe County & DCFS Rural MOUs

Toby spoke with Otto prior to the day's meeting to follow up on the status of the MOUs for Washoe County and the Rurals. There are still challenges with the rural MOU; Toby is not receiving responses to her emails to Betsy. She asked Suzanne if there was any way she could assist; Suzanne suggested if Toby is still having trouble getting responses from Betsy, to alert her with an email.

VI. Update on Safety Assessment

Toby stated that Washoe and the Rurals have changed their safety assessment, but the project is still on hold until Clark County completes implementation of their changes. Debbie from CCDFS stated that they had a meeting scheduled for the following day to talk about the strategic plan and rolling it out to certain geographical areas. She said that when the document changes, it can't be done for just specific geographical zones; when it launches it will be distributed to everyone.

VII. DR Procedural Manual

At the last DR meeting, Alicia suggested that we divide up the procedural manual into responsibilities segment, but first we will bring everybody together. After the initial conference call we will divide up into our sections. Toby thanked everyone for their patience and said she would be emailing a scheduling survey that afternoon to coordinate a first meeting.

VIII. UNITY Issues

Some of the southern NV DR programs reported that they have had challenges with their VPN accounts and there have been times when they have been unable to log onto UNITY. The staff call the Help Desk and they are able to help.

IX. Quality Assurance Review Process for DR

Sally reported that she and Toby conferred and decided that Toby would take the lead on the DR User Manual and she would take the lead on the Quality Assurance document. Toby added that Debbie Croshaw, Otto and Annette will also be involved with the QA document. Because Sally is in the final stretch of her master's degree program in social work, with a graduation date of May 16, they would like

to put the quality assurance review process for DR on hold until then so she will have the time to devote to the project.

Debbie from CCDFS objected to the postponement; she stated that they have failed part of their CSFR because of DR, and to lose money because of that is a real concern. She suggested that Sally and Toby switch projects so the department won't have to wait. Toby agreed to get started on that. Debbie added that she and Toby have already had some conversations about QA, and has shared some of the things that are being done at CCDFS.

In response to a question regarding QA, Toby explained that it relates to case notes, quality assurance, and communications, everything to do with the program, to make sure that the policies and procedures are being followed. They really go hand in hand with the DR User Manual. Otto agreed and commented that his concern about moving ahead of the policies is there's no policy to base them on, and suggested maybe they should they both be done together. Annette thought the manual should be developed first, and as progress is made on the manual, start on quality assurance to give us our tool. You definitely don't want the manual after the QA. Toby indicated they would get that going, and reviewed the names of those who agreed to work on the project – Annette, Otto, Kristen, Debbie, Suzanne and Jan Fragale. Toby will send out a meeting request for both the program user manual and the quality assurance document. She noted that there may be a few people sharing both responsibilities, but we will be meeting simultaneously on that, because they do go hand in hand.

X. Public Comment

None

XI. Announcements and Adjournment

Toby thanked everybody for turning in the NCFAS-G evaluations for the National Family Preservation Network. The evaluations were forwarded to Priscilla Martens, Director, who was very excited to receive them. Toby commented that when she reviewed the evaluations to verify the information was there, she had such a wonderful feeling when she read the parents' comments about the great job the DR staff has done to help and support the families; the time that they spent, the resources they provided, and as one of the parents said, "for letting me know that there are still people in the world who care about us." Everyone will get a copy of the report when it is released.

Toby also mentioned the GMU has published a Request for Applications which includes a new funding area – food security. Other program areas include child abuse prevention, family support, respite, health access, and independent living. The applications are due March 4, 2013.

There were no other announcements. Toby reminded everyone that the next meeting is May 8 at 9:00 am and adjourned the meeting at 10:14 am.