



CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

ANNUAL REPORT

for calendar year

2007

submitted by

Nevada Statewide Citizen Review Panel
Northern Citizens Advisory Committee

and

Southern Citizens Advisory Committee

to

The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
PANEL ACTIVITIES	5
STATEWIDE PANEL	5
NORTHERN CAC	6
SOUTHERN CAC	7
2007 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
STATEWIDE PANEL	9
NORTHERN CAC	11
SOUTHERN CAC	11
FOLLOW-UP ON 2006 CRP RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
MEETING DATES AND ACTIVITIES	16
APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF THE NEVADA CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL	18
FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS.....	18
STATE REQUIREMENTS	18
STATEWIDE CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL.....	19
NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CACs.....	21
APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF THE STATE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.....	23
CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAMS	25
SUBSTITUTE CARE – FOSTER CARE	28
APPENDIX C: PANEL MEMBERS	31
STATEWIDE CRP MEMBERS	31
ADVISORY STAFF	31
NORTHERN CAC MEMBERS	32
SOUTHERN CAC MEMBERS	32

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Statewide Nevada Citizen Review Panel (CRP) was established in 1999 under Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 432B.396 and has federally mandated responsibilities under Title I, Section 106, of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Panel has the following primary mission:

To ensure the protection and safety of children through an evaluation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan by examining State and local agencies' policies and procedures and specific cases where appropriate.

The Statewide Panel consists of members appointed by the Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), whose designee also serves on the Panel. The group includes representation from community-based organizations and professionals with backgrounds related to child protective services (CPS), child advocacy, children's mental health, and foster parenting.

The Statewide Panel works toward fulfilling the following three primary goals:

1. Reviews the State's implementation of previous CRP recommendations.
2. Participates in ongoing Quality Improvement (QI) case reviews.
3. Considers and implements new areas of subject review within the CAPTA Assurances, Section 106.

In essence, the Statewide Panel's work consists of the review of internal policies and procedures within the CPS system, accomplished mainly through individual CPS case reviews. Each year, the Statewide Panel's findings are summarized in an Annual Report (this document) submitted to the federal government as part of the CAPTA requirements.

In response to meeting the federal requirement for three CRPs based on a Basic State Grant funding increase for Nevada, both the Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) were invited into the CRP process in 2006, which included a formal invitation letter from the DCFS Administrator and a special meeting with staff to provide a logistical overview. Approval to join as a CRP was given by the Northern CAC in late 2006, and by the Southern CAC in early 2007. These groups have begun to examine specific areas of focus defined for CRPs by CAPTA, and to develop system improvement recommendations for inclusion in the Annual Report.

Primary Panel goals for 2007 included the following:

1. Continue to review CPS cases as part of the DCFS QI system.
2. Follow up on 2006 CRP recommendations.
3. Integrate policy and procedure review into common areas of focus examined in conjunction with the CJA Task Force.
4. Review the CAPTA state plan.

5. Integrate recommendations for system change by the Northern and Southern CACs, which now serve as Nevada's second and third CRPs.

During 2007, the Statewide Panel members continued to serve as regular, external stakeholders in quarterly case reviews implemented as part of the DCFS Quality Improvement (QI) system. Statewide Panel recommendations for 2007 focus on CPS staff training and practices, improving the DCFS QI case review process, and expansion into other areas of review outlined in the CAPTA assurances. The Statewide Panel received responses from DCFS based on its 2006 recommendations, which are summarized in this report.

Northern CAC recommendations for 2007 focus on CPS caseworker unit restructuring, family involvement in the child welfare system, and differential response. Southern CAC recommendations for 2007 focus on increased funding for child welfare services, policy and procedure redesign, and CPS caseworker training.

PANEL ACTIVITIES

Statewide Panel

The DCFS Quality Improvement (QI) system evaluates the quality of services and improvements within programs administered by DCFS, encompassing six major processes:

1. **Measuring Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) outcomes:** DCFS has implemented a web-based information management system called Solution for Online Activity Reporting (SOAR), which reports on required CFSR measures including safety, permanency, and wellbeing. Data for the SOAR system is downloaded from the existing Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). SOAR enables users to view how the child welfare system in Nevada compares with national standards. This helps to support improvements in case management practice.
2. **Supervisory review:** A review instrument is used to monitor CPS case workers' performance. Quarterly reviews are conducted by CPS supervisors and include examining one case per worker, per quarter, to ensure compliance with CFSR outcomes and the QI feedback loop. The supervisory reviews are intended to serve as an educational framework to help improve case workers overall job performance while enhancing supervisor/worker relationships.
3. **Case review process:** Statewide QI review teams conduct on-site case reviews in the three primary service areas (north, south, rural) on a quarterly basis, with one review in each area every nine months. The instrument used for these reviews is an abbreviated version of the federal CFSR instrument, developed in conjunction with the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. QI review teams include State and County staff along with external stakeholders, and are facilitated by the Family Programs Office (FPO) QI Specialist.
4. **Communication plan:** QI information and reports are sent to child welfare agency directors so each area is continually informed of system progress in relation to national standards.
5. **Feedback loop to the DCFS Decision-Making Group:** A Policy Approval Review Team (PART), comprised of mid-level managers, reviews data reports, discusses policy change, and makes recommendations to the DCFS Decision-Making Group (DMG) for practice improvement and better outcomes. The DMG, comprised of DCFS administrators and County directors, was established as part of the CFSR process and includes representatives from Washoe County, Clark County, and the DCFS rural regions.
6. **Oversight of QI system:** The DMG has accountability for oversight of the PIP process and federal reporting. Operation of the QI system is the responsibility of the Statewide QI Committee, mandated as part of the PIP, which has the following roles and responsibilities:

- Adoption of the QI process.
- Creation and ongoing revision of QI instruments.
- Input on systemic changes.
- Participation in data cleanup and reporting groups.
- Creating bylaws for the team's governance.

The Statewide Panel is directly involved in the QI system and its members serve as external stakeholders in the regional case review process described under item three. Panel members are also invited to participate in the Statewide QI Committee activities described under item six. Panel members took part in the first QI system case reviews in late 2005, and 2007 was the second full year of its inclusion in the QI process.

The Statewide Panel's recommendations for 2007 were developed as a result of participation in the QI system case review process, and focus on CPS staff training and practices, improving the DCFS QI case review process, and expansion into other areas of review outlined in the CAPTA assurances.

Northern CAC

The Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) has what is currently called a Social Services Advisory Board, which serves as the Northern CAC. In addition to child welfare, the Advisory Board is responsible for reviewing certain licensing functions and social services functions such as a healthcare assistance program for indigent persons and cash assistance. Based on this, the Advisory Board includes representatives for older adult populations and agencies serving the poor. The Advisory Board currently meets about twice per year, with a focus on reviewing the WCDSS Annual Report and outcomes within a given year. Additionally, the Advisory Board meets when Washoe County Department budgets are reviewed, in order to discuss related programmatic changes and enhancements.

The Advisory Board dates back quite a number of years and is somewhat outdated in terms of its current structure. WCDSS is working to implement some changes in order to modernize the Advisory Board and make it more current with the WCDSS focus on child welfare. The Advisory Board needs to be restructured in order to more effectively address new developments in child welfare and changes in the structure of WCDSS. Restructuring will include changes and additions to membership. Transforming the Advisory Board is a somewhat lengthy process, which began in 2007 by drafting changes to the County ordinance that authorizes the work of the Advisory Board. The draft ordinance is currently under review by the Washoe County District Attorney (DA)'s Office, and will then go to the Washoe County Board of Commissioners for review and approval.

Southern CAC¹

The Southern CAC is authorized by Clark County Ordinance 2766 pursuant to NRS 244.1945. The Southern CAC provides community oversight of and support to the Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) with the goal of monitoring accountability and fidelity of CCDFS programs and services designed to encourage healthy, safe, and permanent environments for children and families in Clark County.

Seventeen members of the Southern CAC are appointed by the Clark County Board of Commissioners in the following representation categories:

- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- Family Division of District Court
- Children's Mental Health
- Domestic Violence Service Agencies
- Foster and Adoptive Parents
- Nevada Health Care Financing and Policy Agency
- Local Housing Agency
- Local Juvenile Probation Services
- Parent Advocates
- Former Participants in the Child Welfare System
- Private Providers of Mental Health Care
- Clark County School District
- Substance Abuse Service Agencies
- Youth with Foster Care Experiences
- General Public
- Child Welfare Advocates

In 2007, the Southern CAC elected a new Chair and worked to revitalize its membership by shifting the CAC's role from a monitoring group to a more participatory group. During the past year, in collaboration with CCDFS, the CAC identified specific initiatives that the Committee co-sponsored and led in project planning and implementation, as follows:

- In 2006 – 2007, the Southern CAC and CCDFS completed a comprehensive service array needs assessment designed to assess service capacity and the needs of CCDFS children and families. The CCDFS Service Array Needs Assessment was a nine-month project that involved developing a child and family data profile of Clark County and survey assessments with over 100 community stakeholders, 600 caseworkers, and 90 clients. A final report will be issued in December 2007 that will include a qualitative and quantitative analysis of Clark County's service capacity, as well as funding recommendations to meet the service needs of DFS client population.
- The CAC is actively involved in overseeing the implementation of the CCDFS Safe Futures Plan, which encompasses the agency's strategic initiatives for overall system

¹ Harris, J. and Bevacqua, J. (2007). *Clark County Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) 2006-2007 Briefing*. Las Vegas: Clark County CAC.

- reform. Committee feedback and monitoring of the CCDFS Safe Futures Plan provides an accountability mechanism for reporting to Clark County citizens.
- The CAC is also a partner in the implementation of CCDFS Systems of Care federal grant. The Systems of Care grant is principally focused on assisting CCDFS with building an infrastructure to support kinship caregivers. The CAC established a subcommittee to ensure active participation in grant implementation and has been involved in all strategic planning activities of the grant.

For 2007 – 2008, the Southern CAC voted to co-sponsor and lead the two strategic initiatives: 1) CCDFS policy and procedure redesign; 2) child maltreatment public education campaign.

2007 Recommendations

Statewide Panel

CPS Staff Training and Practices

Recommendation 1: The Statewide Panel would like to receive ongoing updates from DCFS regarding core areas of needed improvement, which are regularly identified through the QI case review process:

1. CPS staff training needs to include and/or reinforce consistent, statewide definitions of the standard elements of child welfare practice.
2. CPS staff training needs to improve caseworkers' understanding of the safety and risk assessment tool and statewide consistency in its use.
3. CPS staff training needs to reinforce the importance of data entry and case documentation so that the contents of case files are consistent and complete.
4. CPS practices need to incorporate appropriate actions to promote safety, permanency, and wellbeing that are individualized based on the child and family's needs.

Discussion: The Statewide Panel does not believe it is necessary to individually reiterate these specific recommendations, which have been made in prior Annual Reports. Rather, the Statewide Panel recognizes that these are core areas for practice improvement that will continue to need attention as Nevada maintains its rapid population growth, and both State- and County-based child welfare agencies strive to expand their workforce and train new caseworkers. These needed improvements have been identified repeatedly across the last two years of the Statewide Panel's participation in the QI case review process, and therefore merit an ongoing monitoring approach.

QI Case Review Process

Recommendation 2: The Statewide Panel recommends that a random sample of cases from all rural regional offices should be pulled for quarterly QI case reviews when the process is rotated to the rural region.

Discussion: The Panel recognizes that when sample cases are taken from different rural areas across an extended period of time through the QI process, this does not enable same-agency comparisons for improvement in a timely manner. For example, an individual rural site chosen during a certain point in the QI rotation might not be scheduled for review again for up to two years, making progress at the specific location difficult to assess. A proposed solution is to randomly select cases from all rural areas and complete case reviews in a single sample group that covers the entire region. This would ensure more representative sampling from the rural

counties as a whole, rather than from individual regional offices. This, in turn, would result in the ability to evaluate generalized improvements over a reasonable time period, which is currently done in Washoe and Clark because these areas are reviewed at least annually.

Recommendation 3: The Panel believes that an over-sampling of cases should always be done for quarterly scheduled QI case reviews.

Discussion: This is a re-recommendation from the prior year. The Panel understands that over-sampling is currently optional and may or may not be done during QI case reviews. The Panel believes that an over-sampling of cases should always be done to ensure that the allotted reviewers' time is used fully during quarterly reviews. During the December, 2007, QI case reviews, a Panel member who attended the reviews was turned away because the initial 12 cases were completed early and no over-sampling of cases were made available for review. Per the response provided by DCFS to this recommendation in 2006, "This recommendation was incorporated by the state. Currently an over-sampling of 4-6 cases is pulled in preparation for each review." This is apparently not being done and the Panel would like to see the available sample size increased, as indicated last year.

Expansion Into Other Areas of Review

Recommendation 4: The Statewide Panel is prepared to expand into other areas of review outlined in the CAPTA assurances now that the QI review process has become well-established.

Discussion: The Statewide Panel has participated in the DCFS QI process for two full years, and is prepared to begin addressing other relevant areas of review per the Governor's Assurances in CAPTA Section 106. Initial suggestions for 2008 include the following:

- Implementation of the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) including safety and risk assessments and timeliness of investigations.
- Training and implementation for the Child and Family Team approach.
- Involvement of biological parents in the child welfare process, with the goal of increased reunification.
- Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) timeframe for reunification.
- Expansion of the QI process to focus on training, mentoring, practice development, and increased accountability for change.

Northern CAC

Recommendation 1: The Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) should continue to explore a Division reorganization which integrates the “paired team” unit structure.

Discussion: This structure encourages continuity for children and families involved in the child welfare system by ensuring the same unit and supervisor manage a family through the life of the case. This is beneficial because the transition of a family from the investigative worker to the permanency worker occurs sooner and is seamless since the case remains under the direction of a single supervisor.

Recommendation 2: The Department should expand efforts to provide a “family group conference” experience for all families that enter into the child welfare service delivery system.

Discussion: In addition to the Child and Family Team approach currently implemented by WCDSS, the family group conference is an opportunity to bring extended family members and close family friends to the table to assist the family in developing plans that will keep their children safe. Utilizing the family to develop such a plan creates a sense of ownership of the plan for the family rather than having the agency staff propose the terms. Implementation of such a program should result in fewer out-of-home placements and more timely reunifications.

Recommendation 3: The Statewide Citizen Review Panel should work closely with the State and the evaluators to determine the effectiveness of the recently launched differential response program in Washoe County.

Discussion: If determined feasible, the differential response program will provide families with the least intrusive level of intervention by a community based entity. Early intervention with families on a voluntary basis should result in a decline in child abuse and neglect in Washoe County and enable the CPS staff to focus attention on serious cases of abuse and neglect.

Southern CAC

Recommendation 1: Both the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and the Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) should work with community stakeholders to advocate for additional funding for child welfare services at both the State and County levels.

Discussion: As noted above, the Southern CAC and CCDFS completed a comprehensive service array needs assessment designed to assess service capacity and the needs of CCDFS children and families. Based on the outcomes of the service array assessment, Clark County is deficient in almost every service area. The concern is that families cannot be referred to needed services because there is no staff and/or programs to provide them. All of the Southern CAC members are very concerned about funding for more staff, especially given the current budget crises and findings that baseline services needed to assist children and families are not sufficient now, and

may be less in the coming years. The Southern CAC would also like to note that the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) requires that services must be provided in order to prevent removal of children from their homes and placement into substitute care.

Recommendation 2: The Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) should overhaul its internal system of policy and procedure development so that current, consistent, and clear policies and procedures are available in writing and/or electronically to both staff and stakeholders for review.

Discussion: The Southern CAC recognizes that this project is underway and a contractor has been selected to assist with a policy and procedure redesign. The current Southern CAC chair is serving on the Executive Steering Committee for this project. The Southern CAC would like to be specific about objectives that outdated policies and procedures are updated, implemented consistently across the Department, and made clear to both staff and stakeholders. Regarding implementation, the Southern CAC is particularly concerned that there are practices put in place which are directly associated with relevant policies and procedures.

Recommendation 3: Adequate training needs to be provided to Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) caseworkers prior to child protective services (CPS) practice and case assignment, and needs to include meaningful follow-through with accountability, appropriate supervision, and additional training opportunities.

Discussion: The Southern CAC acknowledges that CCDFS has now implemented a 45-day training program for new staff prior to actual case assignment. However, this was not being done previously and needs to be consistently implemented with all future new staff. Additionally, the Southern CAC would like to see training aligned with staff supervision, coaching, and mentoring. Of equal importance is the need for additional training opportunities to be provided to staff in order to effectively adopt and implement new policies and procedures as they are developed, such as the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA).

Follow-Up on 2006 CRP Recommendations

Follow-up on the 2006 Panel recommendations was based on formal responses from the DCFS Administrator, as follows:

CPS Staff Training

Recommendation 1: CPS staff training needs to include and/or reinforce consistent, statewide definitions of the standard elements of child welfare practice.

DCFS Response: This recommendation was originally incorporated by the State during the implementation of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that resulted from the Federal Child and Family Service Reviews in 2004. In 2005 and again in 2006 approximately 15 statewide policies and practice guidelines each year were created to assist in standardizing practice in the child welfare field. Definitions are embedded in the applicable policy as a way to reinforce, clarify and bring uniformity to child welfare practices in the state of Nevada. In addition a work group has been created to specifically address various definitions, their uniformity and their compatibility with the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC).

Technical assistance was requested and granted by National Resource Center for Child Protective Services in developing statewide CPS investigation protocol, which has been implemented in all three jurisdictions. On-going collaboration between the jurisdictions and the state DCFS office continue in efforts to clarify and adopt uniform terminology.

Recommendation 2: CPS staff training needs to improve caseworkers' understanding of the safety and risk assessment tool and statewide consistency in its use.

DCFS Response: In consultation with the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services and collaboration with each jurisdiction in Nevada, considerable time has been spent over the past year around modifying and improving the states approach to safety intervention. Research about existing, validated tools that assess safety and risk was done, and as a result, a statistically validated risk assessment instrument was identified for use in Nevada.

The Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) is a methodical, investigative process for interacting with a family for the purpose of identifying negative factors or conditions that are known to contribute to the likelihood of maltreatment, as well as determine the strengths and/or protective capacities that can help mitigate risk and safety threats. The assessment process results in a conclusion regarding the existence of present or impending danger. The NIA will be used for all investigations or assessments when a report is assigned to staff.

Assessments of safety and risk will be completed, pursuant to Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 432B.185, and considered as a part of each significant decision made in a child welfare

case. Those decisions include provision of child welfare services for the child, from intake through case closure. The policy and practice guidelines for the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), Safety Assessment, and the Risk Assessment have been written and tentatively approved by the Decision Making Group (comprised by Administrators from the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, Clark County Department of Family Services, and Washoe County Department of Social Services).

The new instruments were field tested by a selected group of supervisors and line staff during March 2007 as part of the pilot project to review the revised policies, procedures and instruments in all jurisdictions before statewide implementation. Supervisors and staff were trained on the pilot project protocol in February 2007 by the Nevada Partnership for Training (University of Nevada, Reno and Las Vegas). The project field tested the tools in all three jurisdictions on a total of 38 randomly selected cases. The results of the pilot were discussed and evaluated on April 16, 2007. The Safety/ Risk Assessment workgroup is beginning the final stage of analyzing the feedback and plans to address any remaining questions about the tools, prior to implementation statewide.

Recommendation 3: CPS staff training needs to reinforce the importance of data entry and case documentation so that the contents of case files are consistent and complete.

DCFS Response: This recommendation was originally incorporated by the State during the implementation of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that resulted from the Federal Child and Family Service Reviews in 2004. New policies on documentation were developed using the same statewide collaborative process noted above. Supervisory oversight and responsibility (i.e. supervisor signature) were added in policy at key points in the investigation/case review process. The Documentation Protocol training was delivered to 590 CPS caseworkers during the months of August through September 2006.

The Quality Improvement Unit conducts quarterly case reviews for all three jurisdictions. During these reviews documentation in the chart is cross referenced with data in UNITY, the statewide reporting system. Results of the review are then provided to each jurisdiction. As an example, the March 2007 Clark County Reviews resulted in a 21.5% increase in documentation compliance and a 35.7% increase in supervisory oversight that was documented in case files from the previous year.

The Quality Improvement Unit (QI) is working closely with the Information Management Systems (IMS) to assess the feasibility of obtaining caseworker specific data entry and documentation reports which can be forwarded to front line supervisors to address outstanding issues with individual caseworkers who have on-going challenges in this area.

Both UNITY and the Documentation Protocol training will be mandatory beginner level training for all new child welfare caseworkers under the new proposed three tiered training plan. Additionally when caseworker specific UNITY/documentation reports are available, caseworkers who continue to struggle with this policy requirement could be rescheduled at any point during their tenure to attend a refresher training on Documentation Protocol.

Lastly, the proposed Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) tool will standardize the way CPS investigations are handled and require a Closing/Transfer summary to be completed in the Unity system prior to accepting a transfer or closing of the case command. This change should result in more thorough investigations statewide which clearly document the caseworker's rationale for either transferring or closing the case.

CPS Practices

Recommendation 4: CPS practices need to incorporate appropriate actions to promote safety, permanency, and wellbeing that are individualized based on the child and family's needs.

DCFS Response: This recommendation has been incorporated by the state and has been addressed in several ways. First, three new tools; the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), the Safety Assessment and the Risk Assessment have been piloted in all three jurisdictions. Policies and procedures have been written for each tool specifying when and how they are to be used. The NIA is expected to bring uniformity to how investigations are done statewide and the information gathered for the tool should result in more individualized case plans that are tailored to each family's unique situation. The Risk Assessment is a statistically validated tool that was recommended for use in Nevada by the Federal oversight agency. The NIA/Safety and Risk Assessment workgroup is in the final stage of revising policy and clarifying questions which resulted from the pilot project.

CRP Involvement in QI Case Reviews

Recommendation 5: The Panel believes that an over-sampling of cases should always be done for quarterly scheduled QI case reviews.

DCFS Response: This recommendation was incorporated by the state. Currently an over-sampling of 4-6 cases is pulled in preparation for each review. The recent addition of QI staff have enabled the state to step-up their QI efforts in the area of child welfare. More analysis can be done and more targeted reviews of specific caseworker practices will likely occur in the future.

Ongoing CRP Expansion for 2007

Recommendation 6: An existing rural oversight group should be invited to serve as a fourth CRP for Nevada.

DCFS Response: The state is in the process of enlisting an entity in the rural jurisdiction to serve as a CRP.

Meeting Dates and Activities

During 2007, the Panel members participated in all four quarterly QI case review sessions, and met four times to conduct regular business.

<i>Meeting/Activity Date</i>	<i>Topics</i>
February 7, 2007 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) • Overview CRP mandate in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) • Update on DCFS Program Improvement Plan (PIP) • Update on CAPTA Corrective Action Plan • Update on Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force activities • Presentation on DCFS statewide training initiative
March 26 – 29, 2007 <i>On-site Case Reviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel participation in Clark County CPS case reviews
June 25 – 28, 2007 <i>On-site Case Reviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel participation in Washoe County case reviews
July 11, 2007 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss DCFS response to CRP 2006 recommendations • DCFS legislative outcomes • Update on CAPTA Corrective Action Plan • Update on activities of Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) • CRP recommendations from recent Quality Improvement case reviews for 2007 Annual Report • Update on Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force activities
October 1 – 4, 2007 <i>On-site Case Reviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel participation in Fallon CPS case reviews
November 6, 2007 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on activities of Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) • CRP recommendations from recent Quality Improvement case reviews for 2007 Annual Report • Update on Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force activities • Membership update • CRP workplan for 2008
December 3 – 6, 2007 <i>On-site Case Reviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel participation in Clark County CPS case reviews

<i>Meeting/Activity Date</i>	<i>Topics</i>
December 11, 2007 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview: Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA)• Review and finalize 2007 Annual Report• CRP workplan for 2008

APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF THE NEVADA CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

Federal Requirements

As outlined in Public Law 104-235, Title I, Section 106, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) provides for a state grant program for the support and improvement of state child protective services (CPS) systems. This law sets forth a variety of eligibility requirements, including the establishment of citizen review panels. The purpose of the panels is “to provide new opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring that states are meeting their goals of protecting children from abuse and neglect.”

The citizen review panel system within a given state must meet certain operational requirements and meet a scope of responsibilities within the function of the panel. These are outlined as follows:

Scope of Responsibilities

Each citizen review panel is required to review the compliance of State and local CPS agencies in the fulfillment of their responsibilities with respect to the following:

- Work in accordance with the CAPTA State Plan.
- Examine State and local policies and procedures.
- Review specific cases, when appropriate.
- Review other criteria the panel determines important to the protection of children, including the following:
 1. Review of the extent to which the State CPS system is coordinated with the Title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance programs.
 2. Review of child fatalities and near fatalities.

State Requirements

As part of the CAPTA requirements, states are required to codify citizen review panels through state law. In Nevada, this was completed with the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 158 during the 1999 legislative session. The relevant text of AB 158 was incorporated into Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) under Chapter 432B.396. This law reads as follows:

The Division of Child and Family Services shall:

1. Establish a panel comprised of volunteer members to evaluate the extent to which agencies which provide protective services are effectively discharging their responsibilities for the protection of children.
2. Adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of subsection 1 which must include, without limitation, the imposition of appropriate restrictions on the disclosure of information obtained by the panel and civil sanctions for the violation of those restrictions.

During 2001, NRS 432B.396 was amended as a result of AB 248 to establish civil sanctions for violations of confidentiality on the part of citizen review panel members. This amendment includes additional language highlighted in subsection two as follows:

1. Establish a panel comprised of volunteer members to evaluate the extent to which agencies which provide protective services are effectively discharging their responsibilities for the protection of children.
2. Adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of subsection 1 which must include, without limitation, the imposition of appropriate restrictions on the disclosure of information obtained by the panel and civil sanctions for the violation of those restrictions. **The civil sanctions may provide for the imposition in appropriate cases of a civil penalty of not more than \$500. The Division may bring an action to recover any civil penalty imposed and shall deposit any money recovered with the State Treasurer for credit to the State General Fund.**

Statewide Citizen Review Panel

The Statewide Nevada Citizen Review Panel (CRP) operates with the following mission:

To ensure the protection and safety of children through an evaluation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan by examining State and local agencies' policies and procedures and specific cases where appropriate.

Prior to 2004, the Statewide Panel consisted of a maximum of 12 members appointed by the Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), who also serves on the Statewide Panel. The group included representation from a variety of State and County agencies, community organizations, and professional backgrounds. Membership categories for the Statewide Panel are not federally mandated. However, they were originally based on the membership categories mandated under CAPTA for the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. The CJA Task Force functions in a complementary manner with the CRP, and therefore the membership was mirrored accordingly.

Recently, both the Statewide Panel and DCFS Administration have placed more emphasis on recruiting community members who are not directly affiliated with the child welfare service system, but still have a professional interest in the wellbeing of children. This includes recruitment from sectors including school districts, child care providers, nonprofit advocacy and service organizations, and professional medicine. As a result, Statewide Panel members from State and County agencies were asked to begin serving in an advisory capacity to the group. This change was made in 2003 prior to the beginning of the case record review process initiated by the Panel, so that members representing other disciplines would be able to provide more objective feedback on cases reviewed at that State and County level.

During 2004, the Statewide Panel underwent a major structural change and was reorganized as a subcommittee of the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. This was done for two primary reasons: 1) To increase the effectiveness of the Panel's work by joining with a larger advisory group whose work is most directly related to that of the Panel; and 2) to meet the requirements of new statewide advisory board restructuring done by the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) in order to reduce the amount of staff time and resources expended on the business completed by such groups. Prior to this restructuring, DCFS had a considerable number of advisory groups and other statewide committees, and it has become necessary to increase efficiency in the area of stakeholder contribution to the work of the Division.

Concurrent with this change, membership on the Statewide Panel has decreased as a result of member turnover. Some new members will be recruited to offset this turnover, and the participation of existing CJA Task Force members in the work of the Panel subcommittee will be encouraged in order to draw on the expertise of current members of the Task Force.

The Statewide Panel works toward fulfilling the following three primary goals:

1. Reviews the State's implementation of previous CRP recommendations.
2. Participates in ongoing Quality Improvement (QI) case reviews.
3. Considers and implements new areas of subject review within the CAPTA Assurances, Section 106.

In essence, the Statewide Panel's work consists of the review of internal policies and procedures within the CPS system, accomplished through individual CPS case reviews. Each year, the Statewide Panel's findings are summarized in an Annual Report (this document) submitted to the federal government as part of the CAPTA requirements.

During 2006, the Panel began undertaking expansion from one to three groups in order to come into compliance with the CAPTA CRP mandate based on the State's increased grant funding level. The CJA Task Force recommended that the existing Statewide CRP recruit the Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) to participate as new CRPs. Formal invitations were extended to these groups, with follow-up education about the purpose of the CRP process in Nevada and direct staff support to complete their inclusion. The Northern CAC has formally agreed to participate. Final approval for the Southern CAC is pending for January, 2007. Both groups are expected to become active in 2007 and contribute system improvement recommendations in the Annual Report.

Northern and Southern CACs

Background: Required Expansion of Nevada Citizen Review Panels

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) requires each state that receives the Basic State Child Abuse and Neglect State Grant in excess of \$200,000 to have a minimum of three citizen review panels. Nevada began receiving more than this amount in 2006 through grant adjustments, and will probably continue to receive more than this amount in the future. Therefore, it was necessary that Nevada expand the number of citizen review panels to three in order to come into compliance with the federal requirements. According to CAPTA, Section 106, citizen review panels may function as part of other committees already in existence.

Existing CRP: Statewide Citizen Review Panel

Nevada's existing group, the Statewide Citizen Review Panel (CRP), has been established since 1999. It is federally mandated under CAPTA Section 106, and organized under Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 432B.396. The Statewide CRP is currently focused on the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and the Quality Improvement (QI) process.

The Statewide CRP is focused on how well Nevada's child welfare agencies are performing their duties to protect children, through a review of the QI system that monitors the statewide implementation of the PIP policies and procedures at the case work level. The Statewide CRP has previously reviewed the DCFS child welfare data collection system, Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY), and its importance in tracking QI activities outlined in the PIP. The Statewide CRP also participates in case reviews to observe the implementation of policy and practice at the case work level, and to make recommendations for systemic improvements. The Statewide CRP will maintain these duties and areas of focus as part of its continuing function under CAPTA and NRS requirements.

New CRPs Formed Through the Northern and Southern Child Welfare Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs)

The Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force is federally mandated under CAPTA Sections 106 and 107, and focuses on front-end child protection and/or prosecution activities. The CJA Task Force met in December, 2005, to review and approve a proposal from DCFS for the expansion of CRPs in 2006. Upon review, the Task Force recommended that DCFS invite the existing Northern and Southern Child Welfare Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) to serve as the second and third CRPs. The CACs currently operate at the County government level in Washoe and Clark Counties.

During the first half of 2006, staff conducted preliminary discussions with the Chairs of these two groups, and a formal letter was issued by the DCFS Administrator in May, 2006, inviting each of the CACs to serve as CRPs. A meeting was held between staff and the CAC Chairs in August, 2006, to formalize the plan for inclusion of the Northern and Southern CACs in Nevada's CRP process. Approval to join as a CRP was given by the Northern CAC in late 2006, and by the Southern CAC in early 2007.

Each of the CACs has re-focused some of its goals and workplans to begin developing recommendations for system change that can be incorporated into the statewide CRP process. Both CACs currently review areas of focus mandated for CRPs through CAPTA, which is a primary reason the CJA Task Force recommended their inclusion. Because the CACs are more closely tied to the CPS agencies in the north and south, which are the state's two largest population centers, they are ideally positioned to provide additional recommendations for system improvement in Washoe and Clark Counties. The Statewide CRP will maintain its broader focus, continuing to examine CPS across the entire state, while the CACs will be able to provide a deeper look at the CPS system through their respective ties to the County child welfare agencies. This will present new opportunities to make recommendations for more locally-focused system change that will rise up to the State level. This will also increase State and regional collaboration so that necessary changes can be actively addressed.

APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF THE STATE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Prior to 2001, the child welfare system in Nevada was bifurcated between State and County agencies as a result of State law. Under Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 432B.325, the law required that counties in which the “population is 100,000 or more shall provide protective services for the children in that county and pay the cost of all those services.” In Nevada there are two counties that meet this criterion: Washoe County in northern Nevada and Clark County in southern Nevada. As a result, there are three separate agencies that provide child welfare and child protective services (CPS):

1. State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
2. Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)
3. Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)

These agencies work together through the CPS Statewide Managers Team, also known as the Nevada Child Protection and Permanency Planning Team. This team collaborates on pertinent law, regulation, and policy issues necessary to maintain statewide consistency for investigative and casework practices. The CPS Statewide Managers Team assists with the development and oversight of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Basic State Grant.

The child protection agencies conduct child abuse investigations and may take children into protective custody and place them in licensed foster homes. Bifurcation occurred when the County child protection agencies transferred long term or other foster care or potential adoption cases to the State via DCFS. Children were transferred from their initial CPS placement in the County to the State agency’s licensed foster care home. The transfer included changes in social workers, court process, and service delivery systems.

However, during 2001, the Nevada State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 1 of the 17th Special Session, which provides for the integration of State and local child welfare services. This bill was intended to end the practice of transferring cases from the Counties to the State, thereby reducing the number of changes in placement for a child in protective custody. Integration means that the two larger Counties will incorporate the previously separate child welfare functions of foster care and adoptions into one continuous system of child protection. The following are directives of AB 1:

- Transfers certain duties of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), under the Department of Human Resources (DHR), to agencies of Washoe and Clark Counties.
- Establishes a Legislative Committee on Children, Youth, and Families to oversee the system transition.
- Makes appropriations to fund the transition between State and County agencies.

The implementation of this transition was completed in 2004. WCDSS began implementation in April, 2002, and completed its transition in January, 2003. CCDFS began implementation in

October, 2003, and completed its transition in October, 2004. DCFS remains responsible for supervising and administering child protective and child welfare services in the remaining 15 rural counties. The integration of child welfare services in the two urban counties is intended to accomplish the following:

- Begin to eliminate the inefficiencies of the current system by reducing the number of placements of children in foster homes.
- Decrease the length of time that children remain in out-of-home care and ensure that children are placed in permanent homes as soon as possible.
- Establish rates for foster care reimbursement at a level that enables a provider of foster care to care for a child adequately. Rates should be standardized within each county and structured in a manner that avoids any unnecessary interruptions in foster home placements because of changing levels of reimbursements.
- Establish as a priority the fairness to employees affected by the integration of the child welfare system.
- Establish that DCFS and counties whose population is 100,000 or more have a shared fiscal responsibility for the costs of providing child welfare services, must be committed to ensuring through negotiation in good faith future maintenance of their efforts in providing these services, and must equitably share future costs for providing these services.
- Establish that integration of the child welfare system in Nevada will allow the placement of children in a child welfare system that is adequately funded and structured to avoid unnecessary interruptions in placement and will ensure that permanency is achieved for children in accordance with federal and state laws.

Subsequent to the integration of child welfare services within Washoe and Clark Counties, DCFS has moved into a new supervisory role for county-administered child protective and child welfare services. Supervision within the larger counties is being accomplished in a number of ways, including the development of a Decision-Making Group (DMG) comprised of the DCFS Administrator, DCFS Deputy Administrators, and the Counties' Child Welfare Agency Directors. This group was originally formed to address the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which include the determination that Nevada lacks standardized statewide policies.

Historically, each of the state's three regional service areas (north, south, and rural) operated independently and were allowed to develop and implement region-based policies. Additionally, during the integration process, Nevada had not previously clarified the roles of the State and Counties, and so the State has not been viewed as the accountable supervisory authority for child welfare service delivery.

Based on this, a collaborative Policy Development and Approval Process was established under the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which responded to the CFSR. Collaborative Policy Teams have been established and are comprised of representatives from each regional service area, along with select internal and external stakeholders as needed. Each Policy Team may include subject matter experts, consumers, managers, supervisors, trainers, and community

partners. The role of the Policy Team members is to conduct research, provide content expertise, and develop draft policies that are provided to the DMG for final policy approval.

The Policy Teams are assigned specific activities in order to provide structure for the policy development process. Specific activities of the teams typically include the following:

- Review existing policies and procedures, comparing them to applicable federal regulations, Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), and Nevada Administrative Codes (NAC); identify how the policies can be standardized and reflective of nationally recognized best practices.
- Develop new policies and where appropriate and include practice guidelines (field guides or practice manuals) to accompany each new policy developed. Streamlining documentation will be analyzed with each new policy developed.
- Present each new policy to the Decision-Making Group for approval. The Decision-Making Group will review all drafts submitted by the Policy Teams and will make recommendations for revision, or finalize and approve each new policy. The Decision-Making Group will provide oversight for the direction and implementation of the approved policies, and relevant procedures and practice guidelines linked to new policies.
- The Decision-Making Group will direct the Policy Teams to respond to any policy refinement needs discovered through the continuous quality assurance and improvement process.

Stakeholder involvement in policy development has also been promoted as part of the four plan strategies developed through the PIP and the new DCFS five-year plan, including: 1) Safety strategies, 2) engagement strategies, 3) case planning and management strategies, and 4) collaboration strategies. The fourth strategy was added in order to promote collaborative involvement in implementing changes within the first three areas. This includes collaboration with internal and external stakeholders across all program areas in the development of statewide policies, in order to improve safety, permanency, and wellbeing outcomes for children in Nevada.

Child Death Review Teams

The State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) established the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force in 1994, based on a federal mandate through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Statewide Child Death Review (CDR) Subcommittee, operating as part of the CJA Task Force, was formed as a partnership of professionals, organizations, and agencies in order to coordinate the statewide activities of child welfare agencies involved in the review of child death. Prior to 2003, the Statewide CDR Subcommittee engaged in several core activities:

- Reviewing cases of child fatalities to gain a better understanding of the causes of child death

- Identifying patterns of abuse, neglect, and other causal factors of child death that may respond to intervention
- Data collection and trends analysis surrounding child death
- Reviewing laws, policies, and practices
- Addressing statewide staff training needs
- Addressing public awareness and education needs

The primary goal of the Statewide CDR Subcommittee was to prevent future child maltreatment and deaths in Nevada by making recommendations for law, policy, and practice changes; staff training; and public education based on data from child death reviews.

While the Statewide CDR Team reviewed select cases of child death statewide in order to meet its goals, six regional CDR teams are required to review local child deaths throughout the State of Nevada as follows:

1. Clark County Team
2. Washoe County Team
3. District 1 – North (Elko Team): covers Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, and White Pine Counties
4. District 2 – West (Carson City Team): covers Carson City, Douglas, and Storey Counties
5. District 3 – East (Fallon Team): covers Churchill, Lyon, Mineral, and Pershing Counties.
6. District 4 – South (Pahrump Team): covers Esmeralda and Nye Counties

The purpose, organization, and functions of the regional CDR teams are mandated by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) Chapter 432B, sections 403 through 407. Each of the teams reviews all child deaths within their region with the exception of the Clark County Team, which reviews State-mandated cases along with a selection of additional cases because of high caseload. Clark County accounts for approximately 71% of the state's population, and it is not feasible for the Clark County Team to review all child deaths in the area.

Regional CDR teams currently operate in the following manner:

- All autopsy reports sent for review from the coroner's office in the north are sent to WCDSS where they are disseminated to the appropriate regional CDR team. Likewise in the south, all autopsy reports sent for review from the coroner's office are sent to CCDFS where they are disseminated to the appropriate CDR team.
- Each CDR team meets to discuss these reports and each has a set of review forms that they keep for determinations by the team.
- At the end of the calendar year, data is processed and an annual report is generated.

Although there are some variations, the death review process is similar within each county. The general model tends to follow a six-step process, outlined as follows:

1. The coroner identifies the modes of death prior to any analysis or involvement by a Child Death Review Team. The coroner lists one of four modes of death on the death certificate: 1) accidental, 2) homicidal, 3) natural, or 4) undetermined.
2. The health district or a county health office forwards all child death information to the coroner, who then forwards it to the CDR team Coordinator. This is done the first of every month in counties where a death has occurred. In other counties, it occurs only on an as-needed basis.
3. The Coordinator sends out notification to all team members listing the children who will be reviewed at the next meeting.
4. Team members review each case from the perspective of their representative agencies or professional backgrounds to determine the necessity of further review.
5. The team meets on a monthly basis, or as needed, to discuss the facts surrounding the death and the involvement of various agencies. It then draws conclusions from these facts to assist responsible parties to take necessary actions. Verbal exchange of information at team meetings is informal and confidential. No minutes are kept. Data on number, type of cases, and recommendations are logged. Notes on protocol and policy issues are also recorded.
6. The team's review may be cursory or in-depth, depending upon the available information and the perceived need and basis of several risk factors including drug ingestion, undetermined cause of death, head trauma, malnutrition, bathtub drowning, suffocation, fractures, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), blunt force trauma, homicide, child abuse, neglect, burns, sexual abuse, gunshot wounds, stillborn or fetal death that may be drug related, and poisoning.

During 2002, the Statewide CDR Subcommittee developed recommendations for new laws relating to child death review. A primary goal was to give the six regional teams a mechanism to channel recommendations to appropriate agencies and maximize community resources so that future child deaths can be prevented.

These efforts resulted in a bill draft request supported by State Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie, who sponsored Assembly Bill (AB) 381 during the 2003 Nevada State Legislature. This landmark legislation was passed by the Legislature and allows for the implementation of significant changes in the child death review process. This legislation creates a clear purpose for the regional teams to review child death and make recommendations for the improvement of laws, policies, and practices; support the safety of children; and prevent future deaths. Other provisions of the legislation establish the confidentiality of information obtained and reviewed by the regional teams, including protection from disclosure, subpoena, discovery, and introduction into evidence for civil or criminal proceedings.

Additionally, this bill established two statewide oversight committees: 1) the Administrative Team and 2) the Executive Committee to Review the Death of Children. The Administrative Team reviews reports and recommendations from the regional CDR teams and makes decisions regarding the recommendations for improvements to laws, policies, and practices. The Administrative Team also makes recommendations about funding for improvements, initiatives, and public education requiring expenditures.

The Executive Committee, in turn, makes decisions about the funding recommendations from the Administrative Team. Additionally, per NRS, the Executive Committee adopts statewide protocols for the review of the death of children; designates the members of the Administrative Team; oversees training and development for the regional CDR teams; and compiles and distributes a statewide annual report, which includes statistics and recommendations for regulatory and policy changes. Funding for the work of the Committee was also established as a result of AB 381, and is derived from a \$1 fee collected from death certificates issued by the State. The funds are intended to be used for prevention efforts and training of the regional CDR teams.

In essence, the Administrative Team and the Executive Committee have taken over the functions of the original Statewide CDR Team, and now work together to prevent future child deaths in Nevada.

Substitute Care – Foster Care

The authority for the substitute care program is delegated to the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 432.020, which establishes the Division's responsibility to support and maintain children placed in its custody, and NRS 432.032, which provides authority to adopt program regulations. NRS 432B.180 establishes the duties of DCFS including the requirement to plan, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of child welfare services provided throughout the State. NRS 432B.190 requires the Division to adopt regulations for the provision of child welfare services, including the following:

- Protection of the legal rights of parents and children.
- Emergency shelter for a child.
- The prevention, identification, and correction of abuse or neglect of a child in residential institutions.
- Evaluating the development and contents of plans submitted for approval under NRS 432B.395, which pertains to efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of children from their homes, and to facilitate a safe return to homes where removal is necessary.

Substitute care is a family-focused service that provides for the temporary care of children in need of protection. Its services are aimed at changing behaviors in parents that have resulted in child maltreatment leading to out-of-home placement. The Division returns children who have been removed and may be safely restored to their families through the provision of services to the child and family. When reunification is not possible, the Division seeks alternative permanency options which best suit the child's needs. Specifically, the Division provides assessment and comprehensive case management services that support the child, the parents, and the caregivers.

The continuum of out-of-home care services includes emergency shelter care, foster family care (including placements with relatives), group home care, therapeutic foster care, respite care, residential treatment care both in and out of state, and independent living services. The Division

emphasizes the safety and wellbeing of children, recognizes the family as the fundamental foundation of child rearing, and acknowledges the importance of a comprehensive, community-based, child-centered, family-focused, and culturally competent teamwork approach.

The Division believes families offer children and young adults opportunities for permanency and family relationships that are intended to last a lifetime. Permanency affords the stability and security that children must have for building competency and self-reliance and for maximizing their cultural and spiritual growth. The Division supports collaborative efforts in every community to help assure permanence in the lives of all children.

DCFS began major child welfare reform in 1992 with the commitment to move from a protective authority to a family-centered approach in casework. The first phase was the adoption of a training series for social workers that incorporates the philosophy and principles of family-centered practice in the four major casework areas:

1. Child protective services (CPS)
2. Adoption
3. Foster care
4. Child welfare

In 1994, the second phase of this initiative included the creation of the Foster Care Statewide Steering Committee to address professionalization, training, and retention of foster caregivers. The goal was to improve the quality of foster care by means of a family-centered approach with foster caregivers. The yearlong efforts of this task force and its three subcommittees resulted in a number of improvements within foster care. These included the following:

- Implementation of a 36-hour pre-service foster parent training curriculum
- Involvement of foster care providers in case planning
- Promotion of the development of a Foster Parent Bill of Rights

To continue the efforts of this initiative and to address the quality of care standards required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), DCFS formed a Quality of Care Standards (QCS) Statewide Task Force. The Task Force reviewed current standards and suggested additional standards to improve services and practices. The QCS Task Force was composed of child welfare managers, supervisors, social workers, specialists, foster care providers, and representatives from County social services. The Task Force represented Nevada's three geographic regions: north, south, and rural. Five areas were addressed by the Task Force:

1. Foster care licensing
2. Training
3. Retention and support
4. Quality of care for foster children
5. Professionalization of foster caregivers

After an initial review and recommendation report was developed, the QCS Task Force membership was dissolved into other groups that continue to evaluate the five areas outlined

above and to recommend ways to improve the delivery of services and quality of care for children in foster care.

Specific to the training implemented by the Task Force, Nevada adopted a 36-hour pre-service training curriculum in 1997, which is required of all potential foster and adoptive families. The training is designed to provide families with knowledge and skills that can greatly contribute to their success. Some families will decide that foster care and/or adoption is not for them, while others will begin to gain an understanding of the role of their family and how additional children can enhance their family life.

The northern and southern regions have trainers on staff who provide the 36-hour pre-service training. The rural region contracts out to a local provider to recruit and train foster homes, using the same pre-service curriculum. This is an established curriculum developed by the Institute for Human Services in Columbus, Ohio, which is widely considered to be state-of-the-art training.

Beginning in 2002, since the implementation of the integration of child welfare services in Washoe and Clark Counties, the training now varies by region in terms of hours required and curriculum content, ranging from approximately 22 to 36 hours. However, since only eight hours are required by law, the regional training requirements significantly exceed the minimum established requirements.

APPENDIX C: PANEL MEMBERS

Statewide CRP Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Appell, Annette	University of Nevada, Las Vegas – School of Law	Children’s Attorney – southern region
Freese, Maggie	Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)	Mental Health – southern region
Legier, Barbara	Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)	Designated Representative for Division Administrator – statewide, DCFS Central Office
Moorehead, Larry	Foster Parent	Foster Parent – northern region

Advisory Staff

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Crumrine, Betsey	DCFS – Family Programs Office	Social Services – statewide, DCFS Central Office
Marsh, Jeanne	Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)	Child Protective Services – Northern Region
Morton, Tom	Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)	Child Protective Services – Southern Region
Walker, Marji	DCFS – Family Programs Office	Social Services – statewide, DCFS Central Office

Northern CAC Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Armstrong, Deborah	Safe Embrace	Social Work
Capello, Mike <i>Chair</i>	Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)	CPS
Fralick, Lori	Reno Police Department	Victims of Domestic Violence
Piechocki, Kelsey	United Way	Indigents in the Community at Large
Sanderfer, Michael	-	Senior Citizens
VACANT	-	Indigents in the Community at Large
VACANT	-	Children and Youth

Southern CAC Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Bevacqua, Jennifer	Olive Crest	Private Providers of Mental Health Services
Biggerstaff, Jan	Clark County School District (CCSD) Board of Trustees	Child Welfare Advocate
Bragg, Lien	Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)	Child Welfare
Brooks, Chris	-	Youth with Foster Care Experience
Coleman, LaTrece	-	Local Housing Agency
Harris, Jacqueline <i>Chair</i>	Bridge Counseling Associates	Substance Abuse Services Agencies
Lankford, Phil	Clark County Foster Parent Association	Foster and Adoptive Parents
Maxfield, Kathey	-	General Public
Merrifield, Patty	DCFS	Children's Mental Health Services

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Miller, Patty	Nevada Division of Health Care Financing and Policy	Nevada Medicaid
Morton, Tom	Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)	Child Welfare
Muscari, Carolyn	Safe House	Domestic Violence Service Agencies
Parks, Sheila S.	CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocates – CASA
Reese, Fritz	Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services	Local Juvenile Probation Services
Serno, Susie	Clark County School District (CCSD)	Local School District
Sullivan, Frank	Clark County Family Court	Family Division of District Court
Westrom, Hilary	Children’s Advocacy Alliance/Ritter Charitable Trust	Child Welfare Advocate
VACANT	-	Parent Advocates
VACANT	-	Participant in the Child Welfare System