

**Level of Care Workgroup
Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2013
2:30 - 5:00**

Present:

Workgroup Members: Lana Temple-Plotz (chair), Jackie Meyer, Karen Knapp, Barb Nissen, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Jenna Davenport, Michele Anderson, Susan Henrie, Jodi Allen (representing Sara Goscha)

Leesa Sorensen, Nebraska Children's Commission

Absent:

Ryan Suhr, Ronda Newman (representing Dave Newell)

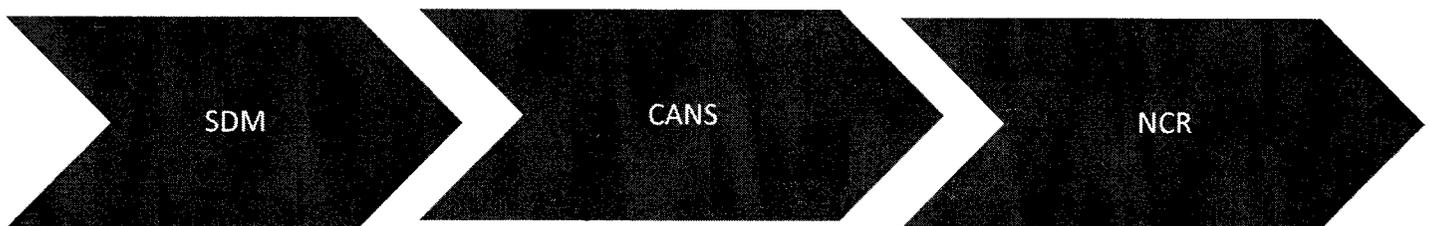
Minutes:

The group reviewed the goals of the workgroup including:

1. Finalize Nebraska Caregiver Responsibilities (NCR) tool
2. Determine scoring system for NCR including any "weighting" of categories/levels
3. Determine rates for each category/level

The group discussed the work of DHHS and NFC thus far and reviewed the NCR tools currently being piloted by both groups. The tools are very similar. DHHS has not yet tried to score the NCR and NFC has begun implementing a scoring system which includes weighting three categories (Medical/physical/health & wellbeing, supervision/structure/behavioral & emotional, and support/nurturance/wellbeing). The workgroup does not yet have data from DHHS or NFC on how the NCR compares to their current tool (DHHS utilizes the FC Pay Checklist and NFC utilizes a tool they developed called the Foster Care Rate Evaluation).

The group discussed the work yet to be done (by the Rate Committee) beyond finalizing the NCR, determining scoring and rates. This includes integrating Structured Decision Making (SDM) with the Child and Adolescent Strengths and Needs (CANS) and using the information from the CANS to inform the responsibilities of the foster parent as outlined in the NCR.



The group discussed the recommendation of the prior LOC subcommittee to integrate a "pre-assessment" period which is the time from the date of initial placement to the completion of the NCR. In cases where children and youth are entering care for the first time, this time is important because the child is new to the system and therefore their needs and the responsibilities required of the foster parent will be unknown until such time as the NCR can be completed.

The group agreed that a 30 day "pre-assessment" time frame would be adequate and discussed how foster parents would be paid during that first 30 days. Options discussed included paying the minimum or base rate, paying a "flat rate", or paying the base plus a %. Pros and Cons for each option were reviewed:

Base Rate as Pre-Assessment Rate -

Pros

More cost effective for HHS/NFC
Eliminate 'pay cut' for minimum kids
Less rates overall to manage
No surprises

Cons

High needs child: FP is not compensated during that 30 days
Some FP's may say no or not want any kids until they've been assessed
Disruption
First 30 days is a high cost time

Flat Rate as Pre-Assessment Rate (~\$30) -

Pros

ESA families will be used to this as NFC has a flat pre-assessment rate
Logistically this may be easier
Pay could increase from this rate if child is more difficult
Incentivize the unknown - paying a FP a bit more at the beginning for the unknown

Cons

Costs are different based on age
Pay could decrease
How might this compare to the current emergency foster care rate?

Base Rate plus a % of base (~25%) -

Pros

May be a good incentive to "try" a teen but may not
May be a good incentive for hard to place youth but may not

Cons

Logistically difficult - adding several more rates
Compared to what's paid for EFC it would be a decrease at every level
Will families keep kids once rate goes down?

The group discussed the current levels used by both DHHS and NFC and agreed that maintaining three levels was appropriate as it fits with the NCR tool. The group discussed renaming the levels to reflect parenting responsibilities of the foster parent.

1. Essential Parenting - currently defined as level/tier 1 by HHS and minimum by NFC
2. Enhanced Parenting - currently defined as level/tier 2 by HHS and moderate by NFC
3. Intensive Parenting - currently defined as level/tier 3 by HHS and intensive by NFC

The group discussed the current tasks of the workgroup and the timeline needed to complete these tasks. Given the work yet to be done, the work group proposes the following timeline:

Task	Detail	Time Needed
Rate determination	finalize tool, scoring, pay to foster parents and agencies	60 days
Information sharing	Provide the above information to the larger committee, DHHS and CPA's for review and input	45 days
Refine Tool	Tweak and refine the tool based on feedback	30 days
Rollout the new tool and process to foster parents, DHHS, CPA's, NFC	develop the training for the tool, CANS, and SDM and how they all connect, conduct the training sessions to all stakeholders, training of trainers, etc	120 days
		Total Estimate: 8 1/2 months

Consensus was Reached on the Following:

1. 30 day Pre-Assessment Period
 - a. exceptions include children/youth currently in care and infants coming from the hospital - both should be assessed prior to placement in the foster home
2. Pre-Assessment rate should be higher than the base rate for this time period
3. Pre-Assessment should take the place of Emergency Foster Care
4. Complete SDM and the CANS prior to or during that first 30 days and use the information to inform the NCR.
5. Maintain the 3 levels we currently have but rename to reflect parenting responsibilities of the foster parent (essential, enhanced, and intensive).
6. Extend the timeline for development of the tool and include information sharing and rollout in the timeline
7. Communication and training for DHHS, Child Placing Agencies (CPA's), and foster parents is crucial to ensuring the rollout goes well. Continuous quality improvement measures both internal to the department and external through the rate committee are also important.

Next Meeting:

December 16, 2013 1:30 - 4:30
 Nebraska Children's Home Society
 4700 Valley Road
 Lincoln, NE

Respectfully submitted by Lana Temple-Plotz