

Nebraska Children's Commission – Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee

Ninth Meeting
April 17, 2015
1:00PM-3:00PM
Airport Country Inn & Suites,
1310 West Bond Circle, Lincoln, NE 68521

Call to Order

Peg Harriott called the meeting to order at 1:14pm and noted that the Open Meetings Act information was posted in the room as required by state law.

Roll Call

Subcommittee Members present: Peg Harriott, Corrie Edwards, Susan Henrie, Bobby Loud, Jackie Meyer, David Newell, and Lana Temple-Plotz.

Ex-Officio Members present: Jeanne Brandner and Nanette Simmons

Subcommittee Member(s) absent: Leigh Esau, Jodi Hitchler, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, Ryan Suhr.

Ex-Officio Members absent: Michele Anderson, Tony Green, and Karen Knapp.

Also attending: Bethany Allen, Jodi Allen, Lindy Bryceson, and Joselyn Luedtke.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by David Newell to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Bobby Loud. Voting yes: Peg Harriott, Corrie Edwards, Susan Henrie, Bobby Loud, Jackie Meyer, David Newell, and Lana Temple-Plotz. Voting no: none. Leigh Esau, Jodi Hitchler, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, and Ryan Suhr were absent. None abstained. Motion carried.

Approval of the May 16, 2014 Minutes

A motion was made by Lana Temple-Plotz to approve the May 16, 2014 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Corrie Edwards. Voting yes: Peg Harriott, Corrie Edwards, Susan Henrie, Bobby Loud, Jackie Meyer, and Lana Temple-Plotz. Voting no: none. Leigh Esau, Jodi Hitchler, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, and Ryan Suhr were absent. David Newell abstained. Motion carried.

Chair's Report

Peg Harriott gave a brief Chair's report. She discussed the open membership slots on the Committee. The open slots are: a representative of a child welfare agency that contracts directly with foster parents from the South Eastern Service Area, a representative of an advocacy organization, the singular focus of which is issues impacting children, a representative from a foster and adoptive parent association, and a foster parent who contracts directly with the Department of Health and Human Services. Peg noted that they are accepting applications for these positions. She also discussed the need for a co-chair who sits on the Nebraska Children Commission. The next report legislatively required from the Committee will be due July of 2016 to the Children's Commission, and there may need to be a recommendation of a rate increase. In July of 2015, reports from DHHS, NFC, and Probation are due to the Committee.

Foster Care Rate Implementation Update from Various Viewpoints

DHHS

Nanette Simmons provided the Committee with an update on the Foster Care Rate Implementation from DHHS. She noted that after the roll out of the new rates and tool, DHHS held a mass training of staff and has continued to provide training. DHHS has collaborated with the Nebraska Children's Home Society, Nebraska Families Collaborative, and Right Turn to provide trainings on the CANS tool. She noted that DHHS continues to make improvements, including updating the tickler system for renewals. DHHS has implemented quality assurance compliance checks to ensure that the rates are implemented properly and evaluations are completed in an accurate and timely manner.

Nebraska Families Collaborative

David Newell provided an update on the Foster Care Rate Implementation from NFC. He noted that there were both strengths and barriers for the NCR. NFC has created a higher level of care, called "Professional Foster Care" which includes higher expectations of both the foster care agency and foster parent. Youth at this level of care have included youth at risk of out of state placement, youth returning from highly structured out of state placement, youth with very high medical needs, youth identified as DD but not receiving DD funding, Youth with extensive history of disruption due to their behavioral and/or emotional needs. NFC recommends that the definitions and categories within the NCR tool be reviewed to clarify overlapping items scored in multiple areas, addressing transportation, and consider adding an additional level of care.

Probation

Jeanne Brandner provided the group with an update on the Foster Care Rate Implementation from Probation. She noted Probation was not required by legislation to use the foster care rates. Probation has adopted the rates. Due to the population of youth served by Probation, the rates are on average for older and higher risk youth than the average in the child welfare population. Probation also has a much smaller number of youths in foster care. Jeanne noted that Probation has a different assessment process, and utilizes the YLS. She does note that Probation is working on recruiting foster homes for probation youth. Corrie Edwards noted that her agency's experience working with Probation has been smooth.

Foster Parent Input

Bobby Loud provided an update on the Foster Care Rate Implementation from Foster Parents. He shared that there have been some issues with collaborativeness, special placement pilots, and transportation. He asked about the retention rate in homes based on levels of payment. David Newell and Nanette Simmons stated that they would look at placement stability rates in relation

to levels of payment. Bobby shared that the policies regarding pre-assessment rates should be made clear to the workers, so the child is not experiencing multiple pre-assessments rates.

Foster Care Agency

Corrie Edwards noted that transportation is a continuing issue for her agency. Sometimes children in homes have different school schedules or appointments that make are difficult to coordinate, and it is unclear who holds the responsibility for rescheduling. Transportation is an issue, whether the children are served by DHHS or Probation. Susan Henrie noted that there were some challenges in collaboratively completing the NCR. There is also concern about the CANS being shared with the foster families. Her agency does not allow for additional pay for homes accepting sibling strips. She noted that her agency had 5% of children at the “intensive” level of care. The staff has found that the tool helps hold foster parents accountable for the care expected of them. She noted that staff is receiving limited information on referrals, and is generally not receiving safety assessments on the families, making it difficult to determine history and necessary information for the youth. Jackie Meyer noted that her staff has reported that caseworkers are not working in collaboration with the agency to fill out the NCR.

Foster Care Rate Planning for the Annual Report

Lana Temple-Plotz led a discussion of the items needed for the annual report. This information is available from the Level of Care Workgroup meeting minutes from April 1, 2012. The report is to be submitted by DHHS, Probation and NFC and with summary data and outline the role and effectiveness of the NCR. Information should include an analysis of the NCR tool, including total number of tools completed, percent in each category, and intersection between the frequency of review and score. Additional information required in the report includes an analysis of the assessment process to include the answers to the following questions: 1) Does the CANS gather the necessary information to identify the needs of the child and the resources needed as identified in the eight domains of the NCR? 2) Does the DSM provide adequate information to identify the needs of the child as they relate to the eight domains of the NCR? 3) Is the CANS needed given the information provided by the SDM? 4) Does the NCR adequately identify the skills and responsibilities of the foster parent(s)? 5) Does the NCR adequately ensure that the child’s needs are being met? 6) Does the NCR meet the needs of DHHS, Probation, and NFC; 7) Does the NCR meet the needs of Child Placing Agencies? 8) How does the NCR impact subsidies? 9) Do the current rates work and are they reasonable? The report should also include the lessons learned, trends identified, and recommendations for future consideration. Lana noted that some additional information was identified in the meeting, including placement stability by payment level. Jeanne Brandner noted that because Probation does not utilize the NCR, Probation’s report will not contain much of this information.

The Committee also discussed the need to create a survey to receive feedback from foster parents and agencies. Lana Temple-Plotz, Lynn Castrianno, Jodi Allen, and Bobby Loud will work to create 5 or less questions for foster parents and agencies to get feedback on the rates. The questions will be separate from the report.

Workgroup for Group Home Rate Recommendations

Peg informed the group that DHHS has requested that the Nebraska Children’s Commission review and make recommendations on rates for Group Home Care and Emergency Shelter Care. The Commission has assigned that task to the Foster Care Rate Committee. She provided a list of Group Home Providers. Jeanne Brandner will examine the list to determine if any of

Probation's providers are missing from the list. The Committee discussed the make-up of the Committee and noted that the Co-Chairs would be Cindy Rudolph and Doug Kreifels. Corrie Edwards asked to be included on the sub-committee. She, at the request of Probation, is looking into providing group home services.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Review of Assignments/Action Plan

Peg led a discussion of assignments. DHHS, NFC, and Probation will submit reports to the Committee in July. Lana Temple-Plotz clarified that in addition to the items in the April 1, 2014, Level of Care Workgroup minutes, reports should include placement stability by payment level. Jeanne Brandner asked the Committee what items Probation should submit on its report to the Committee. The Committee requested information on barriers to placement and experiences with providers. Both DHHS and NFC agreed to make sure their workers are not mis-using the pre-assessment rate on children who are already known and have an established rate.

New Business

No new business.

Next Meeting Date

Peg noted that the next meeting would likely be in July to review the reports and survey information. A meeting could occur earlier if the Group Home Sub-Committee is ready with recommendations or needs input for this body.

Adjourn

Jackie Meyer made a motion to adjourn. Bobby Loud seconded the motion. The Committee adjourned at 3:05 p.m.