

Nebraska Children's Commission – Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee

Second Meeting
November 15, 2013
1:00PM-4:00PM
Airport Country Inn and Suites, Platte Room
1301 West Bond Circle, Lincoln, NE 68521

Call to Order

Peg Harriott called the meeting to order at 1:00pm 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, Jena Davenport, Corrie Edwards, Leigh Esau (2:34pm), Shannon-Jo Hamilton, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, David Newell, Barb Nissen (2:05pm), Katie McLeese Stephenson, Ryan Suhr, and Lana Temple-Plotz.

Ex-Officio Members present: Michele Anderson, Lindy Bryceson, Sara Goscha, Karen Knapp, and Richard Pope.

Subcommittee Member(s) absent: Bobby Loud, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, and Bev Stutzman.

Ex-Officio Members absent: Thomas Pristow and Debbie Silverman.

Also attending: Bethany Connor and Leesa Sorensen.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by David Newell to approve the agenda with one revision to add the approval of the October 18, 2013 minutes after the approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Katie McLeese Stephenson. Voting yes: Peg Harriott, Jena Davenport, Corrie Edwards, Shannon-Jo Hamilton, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, David Newell, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Ryan Suhr, and Lana Temple-Plotz. Voting no: none. Leigh Esau, Bobby Loud, Sherry Moore, Barb Nissen, Alana Pearson, and Bev Stutzman were absent. Motion carried.

Approval of October 18, 2013 Minutes

A motion was made by Jackie Meyer to approve the October 18, 2013 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Corrie Edwards. Voting yes: Peg Harriott, Jena Davenport, Corrie

Edwards, Shannon-Jo Hamilton, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Ryan Suhr, and Lana Temple-Plotz. Voting no: none. David Newell abstained. Leigh Esau, Bobby Loud, Sherry Moore, Barb Nissen, Alana Pearson, and Bev Stutzman were absent. Motion carried.

Chair’s Report

Peg Harriott welcomed committee members and started the meeting discussion by building consensus on the use of terminology during the foster care reimbursement rate meeting. Peg just reminded members to be sure that everyone is using terminology consistently when having discussions as sometimes concerns are raised, but it is because terminology is being used differently. The committee had a brief discussion of terminology and created the following charts for reference purposes:

Today	Foster Care Rate Structure	Tomorrow
\$32.00 \$50.00 \$69.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Parent Base Pay • Pay for Level of Care • Other Foster Agency Support Functions/Services 	<u>USDA Rate</u> \$20.00 \$23.00 \$25.00 Plus: Level of Care Categories and payment for Agency support/services

<u>Federal</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance – Foster Parent Payment • Allowable Administrative (e.g. Training) • Non-Allowable Administrative

The committee also had a brief discussion on the committee’s responsibility to recommend the level of care (LOC) categories related to the draft LOC assessment.

Peg also reviewed the information that was handed out at the first meeting related to the work of the previous Foster Care Reimbursement Rate committee that was created under LB820. All members of the committee were provided with copies of the Level of Care Assessment Subcommittees Final Report and the LB820 Final Legislative Report regarding Foster Care Reimbursement Rates and Level of Care Assessment Tools that were each submitted to the

Legislature in 2012. Committee members were reminded to review that information if they had not already done so.

DHHS Update and Level of Care Assessment

Sara Goscha reported that agency providers have been working together on foster care pay going forward until the new rates are implemented. She reported that there was consensus that there would be two payments per child – one for maintenance payments and one for supportive payments. Sara indicated that DHHS is working on contract language that she can bring in writing to the next meeting.

Sara noted that Jodie Allen has been helping with the Level of Care Pilot Project assessments. Sara noted that many of the foster homes were being assessed at a Level 1 based on the pilot project. Sara gave some preliminary information on the LOC assessments that have been done to date. Sara indicated that a written report was available, but that she had forgotten to bring the report to the meeting. Sara indicated that she would bring a DHHS written report to the December 9 meeting with information on the outcome of the pilot project. A comment was made that assessments were to be completed with the foster parents and not just completed by a DHHS worker. DHHS staff indicated that they were not sure that all DHHS workers were completing the assessments with foster parents and agencies. Lindy Bryceson suggested that DHHS would go back and make sure that to the extent possible there was consistency in the way the assessments were being filled out and that foster parents were involved in the process. It was suggested that a survey of the parents involved in the cases may be helpful to determine how many foster parents were consulted regarding the completion of the LOC assessments.

A question was raised regarding the availability of information on the comparison between the current FC Pay Rate and the new rates that may exist under the LOC assessment structure. DHHS indicated that it is not an easily cross-walked process. Although the comparison of rates cannot be easily done, it was noted that foster parents will need to be prepared for the fact that foster care rates will decrease as a child's needs change under the new LOC assessment process. It was noted that there needs to be educational materials provided at the front end regarding this culture change and helping people understand that the rates will be different. DHHS noted that under the current system behaviors are sometimes added to enhance the current rate. The new system should eliminate this practice.

A suggestion was made that a survey for foster parents and DHHS workers might be helpful to help enhance the process of completing LOC assessments.

The committee also had a discussion on the need to be careful when moving to the LOC assessment payment process to implement with a hold harmless time. Comments were made that more research needs to be done on how other states implemented the tool and how they assessed the Level 2 and Level 3 needs. There was also some discussion on the need to be careful in the implementation phase so that foster families are not negatively impacted by a reduction in pay which could result in an even greater loss of available foster homes. Comments were made about the importance of the perception of parents that the new process is not further eroding the amounts families receive to support foster children.

A suggestion was made that the Level of Care Assessment workgroup was not completely finished with their work and that additional meeting time was needed to address implementation issues that could not be handled in the short time allowed for the original committees work. Specific areas identified included scoring of the assessment, weighting of the areas and actual dollar amounts. Lana Temple-Plotz was asked to lead a workgroup to finish the original LOC work. Jodi Allen, Michele Anderson, Jena Davenport, Susan Henrie, Karen Knapp, Jackie Meyer, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Barb Nissen, and Ryan Suhr volunteered to participate on the subcommittee.

It was suggested that the committee consider recommending an incremental approach to implementation so that no detrimental impacts are created. A suggestion was made that the first step would be to raise the base rate. It was also suggested that the committee may not have all recommendations ready at the start of the next legislative session and that it may be a good idea to recommend that a place holder bill be issued for any additional legislative changes that may be needed.

Administrative Rate Recommendation

The committee returned to the discussion that started during the Chair's Report. The committee briefly reviewed the April 10, 2013 letter to Senator Annette Dubas from the Foster Family-based Treatment Association (FFTA). It was also noted that the committee was given a copy of *Family Foster Care Reimbursement Rates in the U.S.* that would be discussed at the next meeting.

Review of Assignments/Action Plan

The next steps the committee needs to take were reviewed:

- Finalize the Level of Care assessment work through the work group process;
- Need to create reasonable rates for Level 1 to Level 3+ - Level of Care Assessments ;
- Need standard definitions of terminology;
- Need a determination of what the state wants to purchase in regard to foster care support functions from agencies;
- Need a reasonable way to handle mileage issues that address both urban and rural needs;
- Need to stabilize the foster care system; and
 - Establish homes that can take high needs children
 - Reduce the amount of time to find placements
- Need to finalize work on the Administrative Rate issue
 - DHHS to provide definitions from Feds of allowable and non allowable

Public Comment

There were no public attendees that wished to make comments.

New Business

None.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2013 from 1:00p.m. to 4:00p.m. The committee will also review 2014 meeting dates at the next meeting.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Ryan Suhr to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Katie McLeese Stephenson. The meeting adjourned at 3:50p.m.