

## **Nebraska Children's Commission – Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee**

Third Meeting  
December 9, 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, Shannon-Jo Hamilton, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Bev Stutzman, Ryan Suhr, and Lana Temple-Plotz.

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

Subcommittee Member(s) absent: Bobby Loud, David Newell, and Barb Nissen.

Ex-Officio Members absent: None.

Also attending: Anna Eickholt, Liz Hruska, and Leesa Sorensen.

### **Approval of Agenda**

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

### **Approval of November 15, 2013 Minutes**

A motion was made by Lana Temple-Plotz to approve the November 15, 2013 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Katie McLeese Stephenson. Voting yes: Peg Harriott, Jena Davenport, Corrie Edwards, Leigh Esau, Shannon-Jo Hamilton, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, Sherry Moore, Alana Pearson, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Bev Stutzman, and Lana

Temple-Plotz. Voting no: none. Bobby Loud, David Newell, Barb Nissen, and Ryan Suhr were absent. Motion carried.

### **Chair's Report**

Peg Harriott provided the committee with a copy of the November 19, 2013, Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee report that was presented to the Nebraska Children's Commission. Peg reminded everyone that the committee was responsible for making recommendations, including about appropriations, for the implementation of the new rates and level of care assessments. Peg noted that Liz Hruska was on the agenda for the meeting to provide committee members with information on the funding that had already been appropriated by the Legislature.

Peg also provided committee members with a handout of proposed 2014 meeting dates for the committee. A proposal was made to have the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee meet the first Tuesday of the month. This meeting timing allows more time for preparation of reports prior to the Nebraska Children's Commission meetings.

### **Legislative Update**

Anna Eickholt, Legislative Aide to Senator Dubas, provided a brief legislative update. Anna noted that Senator Dubas was aware of the progress that was being made on the Level of Care Assessment work and the additional work that was needed on rates. Anna noted that it was likely that a placeholder bill would be introduced during the legislative session to accommodate any legislative or appropriation needs that were identified. Anna acknowledged that the LR209 group was aware that greater details may not be ready by the February 1, 2014, reporting deadline.

### **Public Comment**

There were no public attendees that wished to make comments.

### **Base Rate Implementation**

Thomas Pristow noted that DHHS has reviewed the budget and has determined that there are sufficient funds available in the budget to implement the July 1, 2014 rate and the corresponding level of care assessment rates. Rich Pope also noted that Probation is waiting to see what everyone else does with the July 1 rate, but he believes they would be implementing the rate and that Probation has funding in the budget to do so. Ellen Brokofsky and Kerry Winterer will be meeting to discuss the need to transfer additional funds from DHHS to Probation for this purpose. Liz Hruska confirmed that DHHS was appropriated funds to cover the \$3.10 increase and for the July 1 rates to be implemented for an estimated 1,500 children in foster care. Liz noted that the budgetary needs may change based on the number of youth in need of foster care. Liz also noted that DHHS was required to transfer funds to Probation to cover foster care for the youth that moved from OJS to Probation. It was also noted that budget needs may change even

if the number of youth in care reduces, if the youth in care have greater needs as determined by the level of care assessments. It was also noted that a plan for implementation, including communicating to foster families, must be created to help families know how the new rates may impact them.

### **Standardized Level of Care Work Group Report**

Sara Goscha verbally provided information to the committee on the Level of Care Assessment pilot. DHHS staff indicated that an effort has been made to go back and make sure that assessments were properly completed with the foster families and foster agencies, as appropriate. DHHS will continue to monitor the pilot process to make sure there is fidelity to the model.

Lana Temple-Plotz provided committee members with a copy of the meeting minutes from the first Level of Care Workgroup meeting that was held on December 3, 2013. At the December 3 meeting, the workgroup discussed the work yet to be done on the Nebraska Caregiver Responsibilities (NCR) tool. The workgroup members shared information on the seven areas that the workgroup reached consensus about, during the first meeting. Committee members were asked to indicate their general agreement or disagreement with the seven areas. The full committee also reached consensus in support of items 1 through 5 as noted in the December 3 minutes. No vote was taken on item 6, but the committee did agree to work to coordinate efforts on training so there is a consistent message presented to foster parents and other impacted parties. No vote was taken on item 7 as the item will be impacted by April 1 contracts with DHHS and therefore is out of the scope of the committee. The committee also indicated support of the workgroups efforts to change the names of the three levels of care to “Essential Parenting, Enhanced Parenting, and Intensive Parenting”.

### **Recommendations to Children’s Commission regarding Foster Parent Rates**

Peg Harriott provided copies of a December 6, 2013, letter from David Newell on behalf of the Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC) regarding recommendations for the Foster Care Rate Committee. In addition to the recommendations from NFC, the committee discussed what recommendations needed to be made to the Nebraska Children’s Commission. The committee discussed the need to inform the Commission that DHHS does not foresee a need for additional appropriations for the new foster care rates and level of care assessments. The committee also suggested providing information to the Commission about the need for additional analysis on: the pilot results; the Level of Care assessment tool; and the work being done by DHHS and an outside provider association to define the expectations for agency supported foster care services.

### **New Business**

None.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2014 from 1:00p.m. to 4:00p.m.

**Adjourn**

A motion was made by Jackie Meyers to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Katie McLeese Stephenson. The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.