

Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)

October 1, 2019 Meeting

Minutes

Persons Present:

Jenn Carson
Ronna Cook
Angela English
Kay Farley
George Gabel
Pam Littlewood

Stacey McNeely
Marci Roth
Sarah Stanton
Jane Steinberg
Lawrence Washington

Welcome

Marci Roth called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reminded MCCRP members to complete the Contact form in Google Docs. In follow-up to questions that arose at the September meeting, Marci contacted Lisa Merkin. Lisa provided the following answers.

- Whether the Panel should formally follow Parliamentary procedures - Parliamentary procedures should be followed when a formal vote is needed.
- Who is responsible for handling Public Notices – Lisa handles this for the Panel and posts the notices on the website.
- Whether minutes need to be posted on the website – Meeting minutes do not need to be posted on the website, but should be maintained so they are available for anyone that might request them. Past and future minutes will be posted in Google Docs.

Child Welfare Report

Angela English provided the CRP data as of September 1, 2019.

	Jul 2019	Aug 2019	TOTALS
Screening Calls	772	765	1537
New A/R Investigations	42	28	70
New I/R Investigations	80	79	159
New ROAs	69	64	133
Children/Youth in OOH Care	415	415	Avg = 415
Families Receiving In-Home Svcs	92	90	Avg = 91
Resource Homes	185	189	Avg = 187
Resource Home Applications	1	6	7

A question was raised regarding the agency's expectations when they review the statistics.

- The agency hopes to see decreased in the number of children in out-of-home care and increases in resource homes. Angela indicated that it has been years since the number of children in out-of-home care has been above 420 children.
- The agency also uses the statistics to determine staff allocations and assignments. The agency continues to have a number of vacancies so look at the statistics to see where staff are needed the most.
- The statistics also provide the Panel with a picture of the operations, informs us on potential issues that may need attention/study, and may help to identify where the Panel may be of help.

The Panel discussed how best to use the data.

- It was suggested that it would be helpful to have a history to show trends, e.g. June 2018 and June 2019 comparison.
- Additionally, it might be helpful to have comparison data from other counties or statewide data to see how Montgomery County compares to others.
- It was also suggested that graphs and/or pie charts might be a way to emphasize the data trends and comparisons.

Marci did remind the Panel that these statistics are considered confidential agency information, should be used for internal use only, and not shared with others.

The staff vacancies, in part, have been driven by a large number of retirements. One of the vacancies continues to be a Spanish speaking recruiter. Marci suggested that the Panel should continue to keep an eye on the vacancy rate.

A question was raised about START, the new substance abuse program, which was scheduled for implementation on October 1, 2019. It was reported that implementation has been delayed. The salary level for staff offered by the state was not adequate to recruit qualified staff in Montgomery County. The salary level has been increased and recruitment of staff can proceed. The old substance abuse program terminated on September 30, 2019 when the grant ran out. It was noted that the START program has a narrower focus than the prior program.

There are changes in staffing and programming at the Social Services Administration (SSA), the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) that will impact local programs. Rebecca Gaston recently announced that she is leaving her position as the Executive Director of SSA to take a position in Oregon. Additionally, DHS is rolling out implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Substance abuse was one of the Panel's areas of study last year. A question was raised on whether the Panel has a responsibility to raise a concern about the termination of the prior substance abuse program and/or the delayed implementation of the START program. Has Lisa was looking for alternate funding to cover the costs of the prior program. The Panel needs to follow-up to see whether alternate funding is available. One option would be for the Panel could write a letter to the County Council expressing concern and support for new funding. The letter could possibly be a joint letter with the Montgomery County Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council (AODAAC). The Montgomery County County Council's Human Services Committee has a public meeting on October 10, 2019 with related advisory councils and citizen review panels. Perhaps a request could be made for a private meeting with the Human Services Committee to raise concerns. Marci will talk with Lisa on how the Panel can be of the

most help. The Panel issued a substance abuse report a couple of years ago that may be helpful. George and Marci will try to locate a copy of the report.

Priorities for 2019 – 2020 Year

At the Panel's September meeting, discussion began on potential priorities for the 2019 - 2020 year. The ideas discussed fell into three main categories.

- Transitioning of youth out of foster care and mentoring
- Operations and recruiting
- Prevention of substance abuse, mental health, and suicide

In the past, the Panel has established a subcommittee for each priority to look at current agency policies and practices, identify problems and areas needing change, look at jurisdictions that have more effective policies and practices, and make recommendations for improvements. The LGBTQ project a couple of years ago was a successful effort and can serve as a model for new projects.

Ideally, the Panel priorities should be on topics that will be of interest to the agency and help them do their jobs. A couple of ideas that might be of interest to the agency were discussed.

- Different visualization of data to help with analysis
- Foster home recruitment and addressing the problem of insufficient day care payment rates

Marci suggested three action items to be completed before the November meeting.

- Lawrence volunteered to work on ideas for different visualization of data.
- Pam and George volunteered to work on the foster home recruitment issue. They will set up a meeting with recruitment staff to determine current policies and practices and to review any policy and procedure documentation.
- Marci will see about setting up a meeting to talk about concerns related to the START program.

Lawrence suggested that it would be helpful to get input from the agency on potential priorities. Prior to the November meeting, Angela will ask agency staff for their top 3 issues on which the Panel could be of help. Angela will also talk with Lisa about the recruitment issue.

At the September meeting, Jane was asked to identify potential speakers to educate the Panel on suicide prevention. Michael Shoenbaum, PhD. is very knowledgeable and an excellent speaker. He can tailor his presentation to whatever the Panel wants and would be available for the Panel's December meeting. The consensus was to invite Dr. Shoenbaum to speak and to open the session up to the agency staff. Tentatively, the meeting was scheduled for December 3rd at 5:30 PM. The earlier time will be easier for staff. Angela will check with Lisa on the invitation to staff and availability of a meeting room. The Panel also talked about the possibility of providing food for the attendees.

There was discussion about extending the meeting to two hours in the future. There was consensus that two hours was a good idea as one hour was not sufficient time for the meeting.

The meeting adjourned.

