

**Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)**

**September 8, 2020 Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Persons Present:**

Wilma Brier  
Laura Brown  
Kathleen Dunn  
Angela English  
Kay Farley

George Gabel  
Marci McCoy-Roth  
Stacey McNeely  
Sarah Stanton

**Welcome**

Marci McCoy-Roth called the meeting to order. She welcomed the participants and recognized the new members to their first meeting.

**Review and Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the June 9, 2020 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Sarah Stanton made a motion to approve the minutes. Stacey McNeely seconded the motion, which was approved.

**DHS Update**

Angela English provided the agency update.

**Child Welfare Report**

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>June 2020</i>	<i>July 2020</i>
Calls to Screening	654	807
New Alternative Response (A/R) Investigations	21	54
New Information and Referrals (I/R) Investigations	42	37
New Non-CFS [previously New Requests from Other Agencies (ROAs)]	47	53
Children/Youth in Out of Home (OOH) Care	432	438
Families Receiving In-Home Services	101	97
Resource Homes	218	212
Resource Home Applications	3	2
Resource Homes Closed	4	4

Referrals to screening were down considerably beginning in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the numbers are now on the increase. School teachers make the highest number of referrals.

**Agency Response to the Pandemic**

The social workers continue to work from home. They are now doing face-to-face visits with the children. The visits are mostly outside. The agency will need to consider how to handle the visits when the weather gets colder.

Staff have adjusted well to the new normal. Most staff have been given iPads and iPhones for use with the new Child Juvenile Adult Management System (CJAMS). A few of the new staff are awaiting delivery

of the new equipment. As a workaround, those workers can use their personal cellphones with a VPN access code until the equipment arrives.

Over the last few months, the agency has reviewed and amended policy and procedures to accommodate the restrictions brought about by the pandemic and to ensure safety for staff, children, and families.

Face shields, face masks, and hand wipes have been provided to all staff. The agency also has masks to give to children if they do not have them. Some workers have been exposed to persons with the COVID-19 virus and a couple of social workers have contracted the virus. Those staff are reported to be fine now.

A question was asked about whether the agency has a policy related to testing children for the COVID-19 virus. Children are tested if it is believed that the child has been exposed to the virus or they have participated in a high-risk activity (e.g., running away). Runaways are a particular problem as it is difficult to find placements for them after they return.

The agency continues to try to recruit and license new resource homes.

Aging-out youth have been another challenge during the pandemic. It is difficult for them to find jobs and new housing. The state has extended benefits to these youth on a month by month basis since May 2020. There is no word yet regarding whether benefits will be provided in September. The agency is keeping in touch with these youth and trying to connect them with people who can be a resource to them in case the benefits are not extended.

The agency is facilitating visits between children and their families. Like the monthly home visits, the family visits are held outside.

Virtual court hearings are now being scheduled. Two new judges have rotated onto the child welfare docket – Judges Ronald Rubin and Michael McAuliffe.

A question was asked about whether there is or will be training for teachers to help them recognize potential abuse and neglect now that their contact with students is in the virtual environment. The agency is having some conversations about this possibility and looking into it.

The agency is also looking at student attendance in the virtual environment. They are hearing about problems with connectivity and some parents not being able to help their children with their lessons.

### CJAMS Update

Staff seem to like the new system. It is more intuitive than CHESSE was. It is also easier to quickly get a sense of the case looking at CJAMS screens.

Staff received training but, not every detail was covered. Staff are helping each other. Videos of the training sessions are available for refreshers and as a resource.

Some of the guardianship cases did not get transferred to CJAMS. The state programmers are working to get these cases added to CJAMS.

### **Administrative**

#### Meeting Frequency

The Panel members discussed whether to continue with quarterly meetings or return to monthly meetings. The consensus was to have monthly meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month.

### Election of Panel Chair

The Panel members also discussed the term and election of the Panel Chair. The consensus was for the term of office to be two years and to also elect a Vice Chair, who could transition into the Chair position when the Panel Chair's term ends. Marci McCoy-Roth agreed to serve as Panel Chair for another year. Election of a Vice Chair will be considered at a future meeting.

### October Forum

A flyer regarding the Forum was distributed prior to the meeting.

George Gable and Kay Farley reported on the status of the AODAAC/MHAC/MCCRP October Forum, which is scheduled for October 1, 2020. MCCRP joined with Montgomery County's Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council (AODAAC) and Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) last year for the first time to plan a community educational session. All three groups deal with the same families. The event is usually held in the spring, but due to the pandemic the event will be virtual this year. As a virtual meeting may make participation easier, the planners are hoping the event will draw a larger audience than 80-90 people that attended last year. The target audience is very broad and includes families, professionals, volunteers, and providers. Panel members were encouraged to share the flyer with others.

### Committee Projects for 2020-2021

Discussion of projects for 2020-2021 will be a major topic for the next MCCRP meeting.

The project topics for 2019-2020 were as follows.

- Foster parent recruitment
- Mental health/addiction
- Transition/mentoring

Ms. McCoy Roth asked for potential topics from the agency. Two issues were mentioned.

- Foster parent recruitment and retention
- Housing for aging-out youth

### Other Business

Mr. Gabel advised that an international conference sponsored by the Kempe Center will be held in October in Colorado. Interested persons can participate in the conference virtually. The topic of the conference is the future and reinvention of the child welfare system. Anyone interested in more information on the conference should contact him.

The meeting adjourned.

**Next Meeting: October 13, 2020**