

Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)

February 9, 2021 Meeting

Minutes

Persons Present:

Wilma Brier	Kay Farley
Laura Brown, Technical Advisor	Marci McCoy-Roth, 2020-2021 Chair
Kathleen Dunn	Stacey McNeely
Angela English, DSS Liaison	Sarah Stanton

Guests: Sarah Lewis and Charrone Randall, DSS

Welcome

Marci McCoy-Roth called the meeting to order.

Review and Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the January 13, 2021 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. One typographical error was identified. Wilma Brier made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. Sarah Stanton seconded the motion, which was approved.

Agency Report

Angela English provided the December 2020 data.

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Aug. 2020</i>	<i>Sept. 2020</i>	<i>Oct. 2020</i>	<i>Nov. 2020</i>	<i>Dec. 2020</i>
Assessment					
Calls to Screening Unit	783	909	1,014	802	804
New Alternative Response (A/R) Investigations	44	68	77	56	54
New Information and Referrals (I/R) Investigations	42	56	69	67	61
New Non-CFS [previously New Requests from Other Agencies (ROAs)]	72	47	62	48	52
In-Home					
Families Receiving In-Home Services	95	101	105	115	111
Out of Home					
New Out of Home (OOH) Placements (Entries)	9	12	12	9	9
Children Who Left Care (Exits)	11	13	6	18	16
Children/Youth in Out of Home (OOH) Care	436	435	441	437	428
Children in Foster Care	268	261	265	261	255
Children Placed with Relatives	107	114	115	112	110
Families Receiving In-Home Services	95	101	105	115	111
Voluntary Placement Agreements @ EOM	9	7	7	10	6

Voluntary Placement Agreement Requests	7	6	1	4	7
Resource Homes	213	206	208	207	199
Average Length of Stay for Children in Care (months)	29	29	29	29.6	30

Ms. English called attention to the reduced number of Resource Homes in December 2020. The closures were all related to the COVID pandemic. Foster parents are uncomfortable with the risk that family visits present for exposure to COVID. When the current children left their care, the foster parents closed their homes. It is possible that some of the foster parents will return after the pandemic is under control. The agency policy allows foster homes that closed in good standing to reopen within three years without going through the complete application process again. Foster parents statewide have been raising concern about the risks that family visits present for exposure to COVID.

Ms. English advised that the agency is waiting to hear from the State as to how the new Chaffee funds will be distributed to support older youth during the COVID pandemic.

With regards to CJAMS implementation, the agency is experiencing delays in securing credentials for new social workers. As a result, supervisors are entering case data for the new social workers until they are credentialed.

Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families

Sarah Lewis and Charrone Randall provided an update on agency activities in the Resource Home Unit. New staff has been added to the Resource Home Unit, but some vacancies remain. With the added staff, the agency is able to complete home studies within 120 days. The Resource Home Unit established a committee to look at policies and streamlining procedures for the three types of home studies – 1) restricted, 2) custody and guardianship, and 3) adoption. The Resource Home Unit has been working to improve coordination between the home workers and the child workers and to improve communication with the foster parents. The home workers and the child workers are meeting jointly with the foster parents to talk about collaboration and their individual roles and responsibilities. This has proven to be beneficial for all.

The Resource Home Unit developed a strategic plan for recruitment in FY 2020 but has not been able to spend the funds as planned due to the COVID pandemic. The State has not requested an FY 2021 strategic plan yet.

Social workers have access to a new dashboard that gives them real-time access to student grades. Older youth are not faring well during the pandemic and their grades have suffered. The agency is trying to secure tutors to assist these youth.

With regard to training for prospective foster parents, more people have been able to attend the virtual classes as they are more convenient. The increased attendance to virtual meetings is also true of the support group meetings.

Laura Brown suggested that one way that MCCRP members could help with recruitment is to post outreach messages on each member’s respective neighborhood listserv. The agency is already posting on some neighborhood listservs.

Action Item: Ms. English will inquire about the existing postings so efforts are not duplicated and provide text/brochures that MCCRP members can use for individual postings.

2021 Spring Forum

Kay Farley and Ms. Brown have been participating on the Spring Forum Planning Committee. The virtual event will be held on May 6th using the Zoom platform. The theme for the 2021 forum is *Confronting Barriers to Addiction and Mental Health Services: Equity, Isolation, and Digital Divide*. There will be three speakers, one for each of the subtopics - equity, isolation, and the digital divide. Suggestions for potential speakers are welcome. The next Planning Committee conference call will be on February 23rd and will focus on finalizing the speakers and discussion of the county expert Q & A panel and possible resource rooms.

Strategic Planning for the Citizen Review Panel

Following the MCCRCP's January meeting, Ms. Farley contacted the Administrator of the Maryland Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) regarding the training of MCCRCP members. When there were citizen review panels statewide, CRBC did provide training. Over time, all but the panels in Montgomery County and Baltimore ceased to exist and the training stopped. CRBC is open to re-initiating training and will discuss options at its next Strategy Committee Meeting in March 2021. Ms. Farley will participate in that meeting and report back to the MCCRCP on the options.

Ms. Stanton walked through the sources of information she used in preparing the overview of roles and responsibilities of the MCCRCP for the January 2021 meeting.

- Montgomery County website - <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs/boardscomm/boardscommmain.html#>
- Montgomery County Code Section 27-49A - https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/humanrights/Resources/Files/Chapter%2027_CountyCode.pdf
- Maryland Code §5-539.2 - <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/2018/family-law/title-5/subtitle-5/part-iv/section-5-539.2/>
- Federal Statute, *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act* (42 USC 4106a) - [https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:42%20section:5106a%20edition:prelim\)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:42%20section:5106a%20edition:prelim))

One possible activity for the MCCRCP is to review the implementation of policies and advise the agency. The current Maryland Child Welfare Policy Directives can be found at <https://dhs.maryland.gov/child-protective-services/>.

Action Item: Ms. English will consult with Lisa Merkin on policies the MCCRCP might review. Potential policies will be discussed at the next meeting. Additionally, Ms. McCoy-Roth will post a sharable Google document that MCCRCP members can edit.

The meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: March 9, 2021