

***SAFELY HOME, FAMILIES FIRST***

**Regional Service Council Minutes**

**Region #16 Meeting**

**Date:** October 26, 2017

**Time:** 12:00 Noon

**Location of Meeting:** Vincennes University, Ft. Branch, Indiana

**Meeting Chair:** Regional Manager Melanie Reising

**Meeting Secretary:** LaJean Gentry

**Call to Order:** 12:00 Noon CDT

**Roll Call:** Quorum 3 of 12 Voting Members Present

**Voting Members Present**

Melanie Flory  
Chissa Madison (Proxy for Shirley Starks)  
Lori Reinhart (Proxy for Aaron Simpson)

**Phone Present**

**Absent with Regret**

**Absent**

Judge Brett Niemeier  
Judge Joseph Verkamp  
Judge Robert R. Aylsworth  
Dirk Carnahan  
Libby Treado  
Sarah Gough  
Aaron Simpson  
Sue Knopf  
Margaret Angel  
Trisha Howard

**Others in Attendance**

Gwen Girten  
Tammy Anderson  
Nick Miller  
Natalie Kassenbrock  
Samantha Freeman  
Brooke Wayne  
Gena Turner  
Debbie Dailey  
Laura Wathen  
Tara Kilps  
Gini Combs  
Jackie Foley  
Katie Vanvleet  
Mendy Martin  
Ramona Wilzbacher  
Rick Carlson  
Jan Dotson  
  
Sidney Hardgrave

## **Welcome**

Regional Manager Melanie Flory welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introductions were made.

### **Approval of minutes from last meeting on July 27, 2017:**

As read   X  

As corrected \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes of the July 27, 2017 RSC meeting had previously been e-mailed. Chissa Madison made motion to approve the Minutes; Melanie Flory seconded that motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote of voting members present.

### **Program/Committee Reports:**

**Community Partners Report** – Natalie Kassenbrock – Natalie noted Community Partners reports continue to be posted to the website. Community Partners is currently serving 178 families in Region 16. In the month of August 88 family referrals were received. In comparison, during the month of August one year ago 53 referrals were received. In September 90 referrals were received compared to 85 referrals received in September last year. Comparing the last fiscal year, there have been 237 referrals since July 1<sup>st</sup> for families compared to 189 last year, showing there has definitely been an increase. Natalie related the success story of a family that made a self-referral to CP after speaking with DCS. The family had fled their home due to domestic violence and arrived in Evansville via Greyhound bus. The shelter they had planned to go to no longer had an opening when the family arrived. CP helped with emergency housing over the weekend, then to Ozanam, assisted the mother in finding stable employment, enrolling in classes at IVY Tech, moving into long-term housing, enrolling the children in Evansville schools, and hooking up with other community resources. The CP budget has been adjusted due to the 7.6% reduction this year. As of October 14<sup>th</sup> the budget is at 39.2% with the target being 33%.

### **Region 16 Data Management Reports:**

Melanie noted the increase in referrals is directly related to the numbers of cases and assessments and busy activity of Region 16. There are currently 1,851 cases in the region, which is considerably more than there has been in the past few years. In September, there were 674 assessments and those numbers continue to climb. Melanie noted Warrick, Posey and Pike Counties have really felt the increase recently. The region is at a reduction in staff simply because the numbers of cases received is rising faster than workers can be hired. The numbers of FCM's needed right now in Region 16 is 20, which in turn causes a hardship on the other FCM's and supervisors. Region 16 is working hard on recruitment, hiring, retention and closing of cases that have been opened over 1000 days, as well as having taken the 24 months figure down to 12 months. Counties are also looking at Informal Adjustments and the length of time of trial home visits and trying to do all of that while keeping in mind child safety, which has been challenging.

Melanie noted permanency outcomes will be discussed later and those numbers are pretty good with the number of children having achieved permanency within 24 months of the case opening is 87%. The state average is 77%. The numbers for children who have achieved permanency within 12 months is 93% for the region and 84% for the state. The region is focusing on streamlining processes and trying to get cases closed within the 12 to 24 months. That is not always possible, but when it can happen it does

help with numbers. Caseloads for permanency workers are running from 26 to 33 children. Assessments are running at 20 to 21 per worker.

**Practice Update:** Melanie noted Trina Russell, who was the peer coach and CFTM report out, has taken a different position within DCS and is now the Rapid Safety Manager. This is a new project partly funded through Casey. She will have a team of five FCM's, and they will develop a criteria for looking at cases, looking for safety issues and working with FCM's to increase services or to increase awareness of potential safety risks in those cases. She began those duties two weeks ago. This is all brand new and it is not yet known how the program will look or roll out. Trina and her team are located in the Vanderburgh County Office. Melanie would like to have Trina come and talk to RSC members about that project in the future.

**Foster Care:** -- Sam Freeman – Sam reported there are 315 foster homes throughout the region which includes relative and general foster homes. Up until September there were 264 inquiries for foster care. Approximately 75 to 80 homes have been licensed. Licensing remains a priority. Carol Brown is a new foster care FCM in Gibson County. Carol will soon be attending training on how to write home studies. Melanie noted there continues to be a need for foster homes and asked that anyone interested in FC be directed to Sam, noting there are situations where children have to be placed out of county away from families which makes it difficult for them and for reunification.

Two homes participate in the emergency program. These families receive a different per diem (higher rate) and sign a contract agreeing to be available in the middle of the night when no other foster homes are available. One of those homes was used for the first time last night. This program was implemented to give workers a week (child is supposed to be out of the emergency home within a week) to check out appropriate caregivers for a child so that a child can be moved to a less restrictive home. If that is not an option, they will then move to a regular foster home.

**PRT:** -- Lori Reinhart – Lori reported that PRT's for this year have been completed. During the past year 24 cases were staffed, and included cases where kids had been out of the home for a long period of time, possibly had a disrupted adoption or were kids placed in residential care for long periods in hopes to improve permanency for those kids. Dates for 2018 have been established with the first PRT occurring February 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at VU.

**Budget Report:** -- Debbie Dailey – Debbie noted that Natalie alluded to CP having a reduction of 7.6% and noted that as an agency the State Board of Accounts has asked DCS to reduce expenditures. The report Debbie provided does show the reduction in allocation for the region which is approximately 6%. Even with that reduction the region should be at 25% of the budget through September and is actually at 26%, only 1% above the target. Debbie also noted that Melanie had mentioned several things being done as a region and state that are being looked at to reduce costs and also to move children to safe and sustainable homes. Debbie noted with the December expenditure figures we will have a better idea of how we will end up for the year.

**Services and RFP's:** -- Gwen Girten – Gwen reported workgroups are in place to try to figure out how to use services smarter, as increased caseloads are no doubt impacting service providers as well with their caseloads as a lot more referrals are being made as DCS gets more cases. They are also looking at ways to streamline things for case managers in Kid Traks to make it easier for them to see what they are referring (which probably won't look any different on the provider end); ways to be more efficient as to

how services are provided and making sure that we are more clear and specific in outlining what we are wanting from providers when working with families which will also help providers. Trainings will be occurring in the next quarter and into the new year. There is no news with regard to the RFP process. They are also looking at modernizing that on our side, so there are no open RFP's at this time.

### **Unfinished Business**

No unfinished business noted.

### **New Business/Program Updates/Announcements**

Melanie noted it is time to work on the Biennial Plan noting in the plan developed two years ago four goals had been identified after examining data, looking at surveys and looking at services. That Biennial Plan runs through June of 2018. The Public Hearing for the next Biennial Plan was held on 10/18/17 to take public testimony. The next step in the process is to look at the goals we have now for tweaking and how those should look. Additional goals can be added or the current goals can be thrown out and start over, although not recommended. The new plan will start after June of 2018. Melanie noted she had met with Local Office Directors regarding the current goals and noted she will share the thoughts that came from that meeting as to where it is felt the region is now compared to two years ago and how the region would like to move forward with these goals. Melanie noted she would also like any input from RSC members present today for changes to these goals, additional goals, thoughts or additional action steps.

1. Preventive Services – This goal was mostly about community awareness and making sure the community is aware of what prevention services are out there. Action steps were to develop a resource guide of available county prevention services. Lori Reinhart was the lead on that group. Some of the steps for this goal have been finished, but there is not yet something that can be presented as a formal resource guide or something that can be given to someone saying these are our community prevention services. It is felt by the LOD's and Melanie that there continues to be a need for this to use for assessments in instances where a case may not be opened or when a case is closed to give families for information they can use if they need it. The region would like to continue to work on this goal. Lori noted she has connected with someone in each county and has been able to get county specific services but is wanting to compile that information into one region wide guide for housing, utilities and so on. Natalie noted Community Partners may be able to assist with that as well, and it was noted that Mike Singleton is part of that workgroup. Gwen noted there is a project being funded through the Lutheran Network or Lutheran Foundation that is being contributed to by the Systems of Care (which is also supposed to keep it up to date) which will be a state wide resource so that a person can enter their location and resources will pop up. The SOC coordinators are the ones who are supposed to keep that up to date as needed. At the present it is only available in NE Indiana and has not yet rolled out across the state.
2. Repeat Maltreatment – The goal was to reduce the percentage of repeat maltreatment from 8.7% to 6.5% by June of 2018. We are very close to that goal at 6.8 or 6.9%. One of the things discussed two years ago was identifying the correct services for families during the assessment and the case so that when the case is ready for closure the family has been provided what they need (underlying needs identified and met). Part of that is what Gwen discussed earlier in

identifying and tailoring services to the family's needs—how do FCM's know what services are out there. It is felt that FCM's don't have a clear understanding of what the service standards are, don't necessarily know the best way to make referrals, and their skills in writing those referrals could use some enhancement. The region would like to keep this goal and focus on those things: the continuous assessment of family needs, and specifically for FCM's and supervisors, and once service needs are identified, what are the best services and what are the best referrals that can be made to meet those needs. Gwen noted they don't want incompatible services or conflicting referrals such as having Homebuilder's and another home based referral going out at the same time, or to make a FCT referral and in-home therapy for the family at the same time. The idea is when the FCM goes in to do this referral, the system would pop up and tell the FCM that so they aren't able to make referrals for two things which are considered incompatible. Jan asked if the goal would remain at 6.5% or would that number change. Melanie noted that number might change since the region is close to the goal and could possibly be brought down. It was suggested to bring it down one more point to 5.5%. Melanie noted there are many new FCM's and supervisors and that this goal needs to continue. The other part of that goal is continuing with Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM's).

3. Permanency for Children in Care – This goes along with identifying services that are the best match for children to address their trauma and improving their emotional and social well-being within the first 90 days of the case so that we can close the case within the 24 month period. This looks at service mapping, the transition process we have, and ongoing assessment of family and children's needs. Again, it is felt some progress has been made on this goal with numbers being pretty good compared to those statewide, but it is still felt there are things that can be done that go back to the types of services and Region 16 would like to keep this goal too.
4. Substance Use – Substance use disorder treatment was a goal set in relation to assessments being completed. The goal was that by June 75% of DCS adults with an open case due to substance use issues would have a substance use disorder assessment completed within five business days. Melanie noted she is not sure that this is happening. She noted work is being done with the Samaritan Center on some things and it is hoped improvements can be made on this. Melanie noted it is still felt that the urgency of getting these types of services to our families is not quite there yet and would like to keep that goal as well.

Melanie asked if there were any other questions in relation to the goals. Gini asked if there was an infrastructure within the region that will assist with attaining this last goal or resources to do the assessments. Melanie noted she was not sure about that noting it was kind of like a Catch 22. Samaritan Center was used as an example. They want to hire more people to do this but they want referrals in order to hire more people. Which comes first -- someone has to take the leap of faith that says if you build it we will come kind of thing. There are things happening; Samaritan Center has been asked to come to the offices to do the releases and initial paperwork so that part is done. They are looking at asking them to come to the first CFTM so that there is a connection right away. There are some things in the works but it is all very loose right now. Melanie noted it is known it is an issue and we want to tighten it up, but the infrastructure is not completed yet. Gini stated there are a lot of new treatment options in town, and they will obviously have to do an assessment prior to treatment.

Melanie asked if there were any other goals members would like to see worked on or needs that were seen that could be added. Gini noted that all of the goals were very appropriate, especially number 4,

and asked if the percentage of substance abuse involvement in relation to the percentage of families in caseloads was known. A specific figure is not known at this time and it is not known if there is any way to pull that information at this time, but would be very good information to have. Lori estimated that for Gibson that figure would be 80%. Melanie noted stats available would be more of those about infants born drug exposed, noting it would be good information to have.

Melanie passed out workgroup sign-up sheets for those present to sign up to work with specific work groups. Those who want to know if they are already on a list can get with Melanie. Workgroup meetings will probably be held in November, then the plan will be written, and the plan then has to be approved by RSC in January. Melanie noted the lead person is listed on each sign-up sheet, and then that person will contact workgroup members once meeting dates have been chosen. The meetings will probably be held at VU as it is the most central location available.

Gwen asked Natalie if they were still involved in the crib program and she responded that they were and had just gotten some more cribs recently.

Laura Wathen with Youth First noted they are providing two strengthening 3 to 5 programs and one is a partnership with CMOE, which is awesome because the kids get to play in CMOE for an hour while the parents are in the parenting classes, then they come back together for the family session. Laura noted they are keeping their families because everyone is having such a great time noting they sometimes struggle with people dropping out, but in this one they are able to keep them. Another partnership is with Head Start in Boonville and offering that program there as well.

**Next Meeting Date, Location and Time:** As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 25, 2018, at 12:00 noon CST at the VU campus in Ft. Branch, IN.

Signatures:

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ (Secretary's initials) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Regional Service Council    Region 16 Motion Chart****Date: October 26, 2017****Chair: Regional Manager Melanie Flory**

Motion	Discussion	Action	Person Responsible
1. Approve July 27, 2017 RSC Minutes	None	Adopted	Motion by Chissa Madison Seconded by Melanie Flory All voting members present.
2.	None	Adopted –	Motion by Seconded by All voting members present.
3.		Adopted –	

Vote count must be recorded in the minutes.