



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

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July 31, 2017

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair
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From: Judge Michael Nash (Ret.)
Executive Director

PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

In the final report of the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BRCCP), entitled *The Road to Safety for Our Children*, one of the key recommendations was to “establish an entity to oversee one unified child protection system.” On June 10, 2014, your Board adopted the recommendations contained within the BRCCP final report and took action to establish the Office of Child Protection (OCP) as a separate entity that would report directly to the Board and be located within the Executive Office. The OCP submitted updates on its progress to your Board on August 1 and December 9, 2016, and on April 26, 2017; this is a follow-up on its progress to date.

Countywide Prevention Plan

- Worked with County and community partners to develop a Countywide prevention plan that expands and links together existing community networks and that supports earlier access to a range of services and supports, especially home visitation and early care and education programs
 - ◇ The plan, *Paving the Road to Safety for Our Children: A Prevention Plan for Los Angeles County*, was submitted to your Board on June 30, 2017.
 - ◇ Implementation of the plan is now underway.
- Working with Department of Public Health (DPH), Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (CSPPP), First 5 LA, Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Public Library, Probation Department, Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Children’s Data Network, and the LA County Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium on developing a plan for expanding home visitation services available to vulnerable families

- ✧ A progress report on these efforts was submitted to your Board on June 21, 2017
- ✧ Established a partnership with DPH to provide that department with a grant of \$600,000 in FY 2017–18 to develop a plan for expanding its home visitation services, leveraging additional federal and state funding for home visitation, strengthening partnerships with existing community home visitation providers, and enhancing the coordination across all providers of home visitation services countywide
- Participated in the development of a countywide plan for providing services and supports to children and families through a trauma-informed care lens
 - ✧ The plan, *Trauma and Resiliency: A Systems Change Approach*, was released on July 11, 2017.

Structured Decision Making® (SDM)/Predictive Analytics Review

- Submitted a report to your Board on May 4, 2017, in response to the September 20, 2016, Board Motion on examining the strengths and weaknesses of SDM, Project AURA, and the use of predictive analytics for child safety and welfare
- Currently working with DCFS to implement the recommendations outlined in the report

Public Health Nurses (PHN) Consolidation into the Department of Public Health (DPH)

- Worked with DCFS, DPH, SEIU 721, and PHNs to consolidate the current PHNs under DPH, which occurred on July 1, 2017
 - ✧ Working with partners to determine the best use of PHNs in child welfare moving forward; we anticipate a follow-up report on this determination will be submitted to your Board by October 2017
- The Children's Data Network's evaluation of the effectiveness of the children's social worker/PHN joint visit pilot is underway.

Electronic Data-Sharing Efforts

- Working with DCFS, the Chief Information Office (CIO), and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) on the production of an electronic portal that would facilitate the electronic sharing of information relevant to an investigation of child abuse or neglect across 7 county departments and DCFS, based upon an MOU that the OCP finalized with the participating departments, County Counsel, and the Chief Executive Office
 - ✧ Board Letter approved on May 2, 2017, allocating the funding needed for completing Phase I of this electronic portal.

- ✧ System designing began on June 20, 2017; it is anticipated that Phase I of the system will be completed this fall.
- As a follow-up to the Legal Hackathon held on April 24, 2017, working with County Counsel on developing a written communication for departmental staff of the various agencies included in the data-sharing protocol that outlines what information can be shared on common DCFS and Probation clients across County departments

Increasing the Use of Relative Placements

- Continuing to monitor the progress of the Family Finding pilot project launched in the Santa Fe Springs and Glendora DCFS offices in November 2016 that prioritizes placing children coming into foster care with relatives
 - ✧ Preliminary results from a six-month review of the data show that youth at the two offices were placed with relatives over 80% and 70% of the time, respectively
 - ✧ An amended six-month report highlighting the pilot project results will be released by DCFS this week
 - ✧ The expansion of the pilot project to two additional DCFS offices is currently being planned; details of this expansion will be announced this week

Addressing Psychotropic Medication Use in Child Welfare

- Worked with the Juvenile Court, DMH, DCFS, Probation, and multiple stakeholders to revise and develop new forms and protocols that went into effect in April 2017 for approving and monitoring the use of psychotropic medication for youth in out-of-home care, which includes more comprehensive information about their histories, behavior, alternative treatments, and/or other services received
 - ✧ Meeting with stakeholders to monitor the implementation of these developed protocols, timelines for completion of the authorization process, follow-up medical/psychiatric appointments, and the appropriate consideration of alternatives to psychotropic medications
- Began discussions on determining how best to prepare transition-age youth (TAY) to make medical decisions for themselves once they leave care

Education Coordinating Council (ECC) Efforts

- Continued to partner with DCFS, Los Angeles County school districts, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to develop processes and policies for implementing the foster youth school-stability provisions included in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- ✧ ECC/DCFS/LACOE/Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) developed a transportation pilot to keep foster youth in their schools of origin; its beginning stages launched in May 2017. The pilot is intended to be a “bridge solution” and learning opportunity while long-term transportation agreements between DCFS and the districts are drafted and finalized.
- ✧ An MOU outlining funding and roles/responsibilities for the pilot has been developed and is under final review by DCFS, LACOE, and LAUSD.
- ✧ LACOE initiated a procurement process to identify a vendor for safely transporting youth across school districts; this service will be available near the start of the 2017–18 school year.
- ✧ LACOE hired two full-time transportation coordinators and began training its staff on the processes and procedures for transporting foster youth to their schools of origin.
- ✧ LACOE developed an electronic notification feature within its Education Passport System (EPS) that can alert school districts when children are removed from their homes or change placement and may need transportation to their schools of origin; it is currently developing processes for DCFS staff to receive these notifications as well.
- ✧ The ESSA Transportation Workgroup, which includes multiple public and private stakeholders, continues to develop a sample transportation plan that will serve as a template for long-term interagency agreements between DCFS and the County’s 80 school districts. The sample plan will include clear written procedures to govern how transportation for children to remain in their schools of origin will be arranged, provided, and funded for their duration in foster care. It is anticipated that the Sample Transportation Plan will be completed by August 2017.

The workgroup is also creating a guidance document intended to support DCFS and school districts under Title 1 to understand their minimum obligations under the law, as well as some recommended best practices under ESSA. It is anticipated that the Guidance Document will be completed by August 2017.

- Continued to lead a multi-departmental TAY Workgroup focused on implementing a comprehensive Integrated Service Delivery Model for promoting self-sufficiency. Recent activities include:
 - ✧ Reviewing the Core Practice Model and Child and Family Teaming trainings and determining how these practices/trainings could be enhanced to encourage youth and families to have more departments and others with resources attending their team meetings and being involved in their transition process
 - ✧ Developing a single transition plan for TAY preparing to exit the system

- ✧ Exploring the process of making the transition plan more interactive and completing it electronically to reduce duplicative services, better identify barriers to services across departments, and facilitate a unified teaming approach to helping youth reach self-sufficiency
- Convened an early care and education (ECE) workgroup focused on filling existing spaces in ECE programs that are available to system-involved youth but are not currently filled by them
 - ✧ Beginning the work of mapping the ECE process from both the receiving and the referral ends, charting identified gaps, exploring what additional data is needed, and examining assumptions that may not be accurate
- Worked with the Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services (LANES) Board and County Counsel to explore options for providing access to DCFS, for care-coordination purposes, to information included in the County's local Health Information Exchange system, LANES, that was developed for entities that provide health care to County residents who are receiving Medi-Cal or who are uninsured

Transitional Shelter Care (TSC) Pilot

- Continuing to monitor the implementation of a teaming-model pilot for working with older hard-to-place youth (i.e., overstays and chronic repeaters) in Transitional Shelter Care, increasing the pilot's focus to address their specific concerns
 - ✧ A new pilot project has been developed that involves the Juvenile Court in an oversight role over these efforts by holding expedited court hearings that are also designed to encourage youth to work proactively with DCFS to assist in their placement efforts. Commencement of this new portion of the pilot project is awaiting final approval from the Court.

County Medical HUBs

- Continuing to convene meetings with DCFS, DMH, DHS, and DPH to discuss how to ensure the most effective and efficient use of the County Medical HUBs
 - ✧ Working with partners on how to ensure that all detained children receive their initial comprehensive medical examinations within the 30 days required by County policy
 - ✧ Working with DCFS to develop a method for tracking efforts to comply with this policy

Evaluation of LGBTQ Services Provided to Youth by the County

- As a follow-up to the report submitted to your Board on March 28, 2017, CSPPP held a convening on June 16, 2017, with approximately 70 stakeholders, including foundations and their grantees, County department directors, interviewees for the report, and interested providers, to brainstorm strategies for informing the work of participating providers using an LGBTQ lens and putting the report recommendations into practice

In summary, the OCP is working hard to accomplish its goals, as are the relevant County departments and a host of key community partners. We look forward to reporting further progress in our next quarterly update. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (213) 893-1152, or via email at mnash@ocp.lacounty.gov, or your staff may contact Carrie Miller at (213) 893-0862, or via email at cmiller@ocp.lacounty.gov.

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