



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

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April 26, 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, 2016, and December 9, 2016; this is a follow-up on its progress to date.

### **Staffing the OCP Office**

- Released a job bulletin in November to fill the vacant Project Director positions
- Hiring process is underway and ongoing

### **Countywide Prevention Plan**

- Worked with County and community partners to develop a draft Countywide prevention plan that expands and links together existing community networks, and supports earlier access to a range of services and supports, especially home visitation and early care and education programs
  - ◇ Held meetings with key County Department Directors to identify commitments for moving the prevention work forward
  - ◇ Met with the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, and LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment to discuss opportunities for supporting the implementation of the prevention plan and potential joint initiatives that may result from this work

- ✧ Final vetting of the plan is being completed with partners
- ✧ Draft plan will be shared with the Board in May, and is targeted for release in June
- 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 convening of over 90 home visitation providers was held in March 2017 to get their input into what is currently working well, and to identify barriers for coordination and expansion; Countywide trends were identified, including opportunities to expand the use of technology, improve referrals for prenatal clients, and maximize flexible funding streams
- Collaborating with CSPPP, Measure of America, DPH, DCFS, and other stakeholders to develop a "Portrait of Los Angeles County" to help capture a snapshot of our communities and inform policy needs around our most vulnerable families
  - ✧ Secured a \$125,000 grant from the Quality and Productivity Commission to hire a consultant to help the County implement the recommendations identified in the Portrait
- Moved forward a recommendation to be included in the Fiscal Year 2017–18 Final Changes Budget to reallocate \$784,000 from the Children's Special Investigation Unit to the OCP for activities that support the expansion of home visitation and other prevention efforts outlined in the Countywide prevention plan
  - ✧ Board Letter approved by the Board at its April 18, 2017, meeting
- Participating in Countywide trauma-informed care workgroup to develop a plan for providing services and supports to children and families through this lens; the plan is targeted for release in June 2017

### **Structured Decision Making® (SDM)/Predictive Analytics Review**

- Drafted a report 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
  - ✧ Interviewed key stakeholders, including representatives from DCFS, California Department of Social Services (CDSS), SEIU 721, National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), various data experts within the field, and other jurisdictions on the utilization of risk-assessment tools

- ✧ Conducted extensive review of reports, validations studies, research findings, and policies and procedures involving SDM and other risk-assessment tools
- ✧ Reviewed the last 5 years of DCFS death and critical incident reports to inform recommendations for system improvements
- ✧ Report is being released on May 4, 2017
- Will work with DCFS to implement the recommendations outlined in the report

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

- Continuing to work with DCFS, DPH, SEIU 721, and PHNs on consolidating current PHNs under DPH, and taking a global approach to determining the best use of PHNs in child welfare moving forward
  - ✧ In February 2017, held a meeting of over 125 representatives from DCFS, DPH, and SEIU 721 to update them on the consolidation status and to address their questions and concerns
  - ✧ Transfer of the DCFS PHN program items and budget is targeted for inclusion in the FY 2017–18 Final Changes Budget
- Executed contract with the Children’s Data Network to evaluate the effectiveness of the ongoing children’s social worker/PHN joint visit pilot
  - ✧ DCFS and DHS are currently compiling the data needed to complete the evaluation

### **Electronic Data-Sharing Efforts**

- Working with DCFS, the Chief Information Office (CIO), and 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 submitted for the May 2, 2017, Board Meeting that would allocate the funding needed for Phase I of this electronic portal
  - ✧ Phase I of the portal will include public safety data and is anticipated to be completed within 120 days of the start date
- Collaborated with the Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, CSPPP, DCFS, CEO, CIO, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, The Children’s Partnership, Think of Us, California Youth Connection, Scale Los Angeles, Fullscreen Media, and other stakeholders to plan an LA County Foster Youth Hackathon to be held on April 28–29, 2017

- Convened a Legal Hackathon on April 24, 2017, to address legal barriers for sharing information electronically across County departments and identify data-sharing opportunities for the purposes of care coordination
  - ✧ Participants included representatives from California Department of Social Services, County Counsel, advocacy organizations, County Departments, Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, and others
  - ✧ The group clarified the lack of legal barriers existing to sharing data across County departments in two key areas identified, and committed to continuing the discussion to address additional barriers and opportunities

### **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 for approving and monitoring the use of psychotropic medication for youth in out-of-home care that included more comprehensive information about their histories, behavior, alternative treatments, and/or other services received
  - ✧ Process added input from social workers and probation officers, Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), caregivers, public health nurses, Indian Tribes, parent and children's attorneys, and the youth themselves
  - ✧ Revised forms and protocols for Psychotropic Medication Authorization (PMA) and monitoring were implemented on April 15, 2017
  - ✧ Conducted training for CASAs on the revised forms and protocols
- Filed the six-month report to the State Auditor on February 23, 2017, on progress made toward addressing audit findings regarding the use of psychotropic medication with youth in care
- Meeting with stakeholders to determine what data should be collected on psychotropic medication use for youth in out-of-home care, and how best to capture and monitor these data on an ongoing basis

### **Increasing the Use of Relative Placements**

- Monitoring progress of the Family Finding pilot project that was launched in the Santa Fe Springs and Glendora DCFS offices in November 2016 that prioritizes placing children with relatives
  - ✧ Results continue to be positive for increasing the number of children being placed with relatives within these pilot offices
  - ✧ Preparing a six-month report on the results of the pilot project that will be released in May 2017

- ✧ CSPPP secured \$100,000 from The Ahmanson Foundation for the nonprofit research organization Child Trends to conduct the evaluation for this pilot project; the evaluation began in March 2017 and is underway

### **Education Coordinating Council (ECC) Efforts**

- Working with DCFS, LACOE, local school districts, various public-interest law firms, and foster youth community-based organizations to meet federal requirements from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  - ✧ Partnered with LACOE to convene a Transportation Workgroup to help develop and implement long-term plans for transporting foster youth to their schools of origin, in order to increase their school stability and educational outcomes
  - ✧ Submitted the Interim Report on School Stability for Youth in Foster Care on April 7, 2017; the next report will be submitted in July 2017
  - ✧ Assisted in the development of a joint protocol for school districts, DCFS, and Probation to use when determining whether foster youth should remain in their school of origin
  - ✧ Coordinated the development of a transportation pilot with DCFS, LACOE, and a local school district for keeping students in their schools of origin; this pilot is targeted to begin in May and continue through the end of December 2017
- Continued to convene the transition-age youth (TAY) workgroup, which includes DCFS, LACOE, Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), DMH, DPSS, DHS, DPH, Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families, and public-interest law firms to implement the revised Self-Sufficiency model and monitor its progress
  - ✧ Addressed policy barriers that limit the number of departments attending child-and-family team (CFT) meetings, discussed the need for a single transition plan across departments, and recommended modifying the training for CFT facilitators to engage youth on the importance of working with other departments and to help youth improve their self-sufficiency
  - ✧ Exploring options to utilize FosterEd's (an initiative of the National Center for Youth Law) electronic case management concept to facilitate communication and coordination for TAY foster youth
- Created an early care and education (ECE) workgroup focused on increasing the number of foster youth enrolled in ECE programs and enhancing an electronic referral system for ECE programs, for starters, by adding a feedback loop for following up on enrollments into these programs
- Worked with LANES (the Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services, a health information exchange [HIE] designed to allow health providers and their patients

to access and securely share vital medical information in real time, across institutional boundaries, in order to inform care and treatment) to determine what would be needed, legally and technologically, to use LANES to share medical information on youth in foster care with others on their care teams

- ✧ Working with representatives at the State and County Counsel to determine how best to move forward with sharing data between DCFS and LANES

### **Transitional Shelter Care (TSC) Pilot**

- Continuing to monitor 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

### **County Medical HUBs**

- Convened a meeting with DCFS, DMH, DHS, and DPH to discuss how to ensure the most effective and efficient use of the County Medical HUBs
- ✧ Currently 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

### **Evaluation of LGBTQ Services Provided to Youth by the County**

- Submitted a report in response to an October 6, 2015, Board Motion on identifying each County department serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, and review existing demographic data collection, intake, service planning, and case-review processes to identify culturally competent improvements to the provision of services and the collection of information on sexual orientation and gender identity
- ✧ Final report was submitted to the Board on March 24, 2017
- Worked with CSPPP to hold a follow-up meeting with philanthropic funders and other interested foundations to explore opportunities for supporting the implementation of the recommendations identified
- Met with the LGBTQ Center to discuss the report's findings and get its recommendations for future actions that would address LGBTQ issues within the County
- CSPPP is scheduling a convening in June 2017 with over 100 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 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](mailto:mnash@ocp.lacounty.gov), or your staff may contact Carrie Miller at (213) 893-0862, or via email at [cmiller@ocp.lacounty.gov](mailto:cmiller@ocp.lacounty.gov).

MN:CDM:eih

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