December 9, 2016

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair
    Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
    Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
    Supervisor Janice Hahn
    Supervisor Kathryn Barger

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 an update on its progress to your Board on August 1, 2016; this is a follow-up on its progress to date.

Staffing the OCP Office and Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships
- Hired an office secretary who began on October 11, 2016
- Released a job bulletin on November to fill the vacant Project Director positions
- Hired a Center Associate Director who began on December 1, 2016

OCP Strategic Plan
- Submitted the finalized Countywide Child Protection Strategic Plan: 2016–2021 to your Board on October 20, 2016
- This plan was developed from information gathered through a series of Countywide convenings and targeted focus groups that included over 500 participants—department staff, advocates, commissioners, community stakeholders, philanthropy, and others (focus groups included foster youth still in care and those who have transitioned out of the system, relative caregivers, foster parents, and DCFS line staff). It was then vetted with your Board, department heads from 16 County departments, and a number of key stakeholders, including First 5 LA, the Juvenile Court, Southern California Grantmakers, the Community Coalition,
California Youth Connection, the County Commission for Children and Families, Children’s Law Center of California, Public Counsel, Alliance for Children’s Rights, and others.

Countywide Prevention Plan
- Working with County and community partners to develop a Countywide prevention plan that expands and links existing community networks and supports earlier access to a range of services and supports, especially home visitation and early care and education programs
  - A rough draft of the plan is in progress.
- Holding meetings with key County Department Directors to identify commitments for moving the prevention work forward
- Working with Department of Public Health (DPH), First 5 LA, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Los Angeles County Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium on developing a plan for expanding the home visitation services available to vulnerable families
- Collaborating with the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (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
- Participating in a Countywide trauma-informed care workgroup to develop a plan for providing services and supports to children and families through this lens

Structured Decision Making (SDM)/Predictive Analytics Review
- Working on a report in response to the September 20, 2016, Board Motion on examining the strengths and weaknesses of SDM and Project AURA, and the use of predictive analytics for child safety and welfare
- Interviewing key stakeholders, including representatives from DCFS, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), SEIU 721, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), and various data experts in the field and in other jurisdictions on the utilization of risk assessment tools
- Conducting an extensive review of reports, validations studies, research findings, and policies and procedures involving SDM and other risk assessment tools
- This report will be submitted to your Board by February 17, 2017.

Review of DCFS Death and Critical Incident Reports
- Continuing to review the last 5 years of DCFS death and critical incident reports to inform recommendations for system improvements

Public Health Nurses (PHN) Consolidation into the Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Working 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 the child welfare system moving forward
Completed the roles and responsibilities portion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DCFS and DPH
• Working on revising current policies and procedures for the consolidated PHNs
• The consolidation is targeted to be completed by June 30, 2017.
• Finalizing a contract with an independent contractor to evaluate the effectiveness of the ongoing children's social worker/PHN joint visit pilot

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 investigations 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
• Working with the Administration for Children and Families on releasing a clarification on the authority and expectation for localities to share child welfare data electronically
• Collaborating with the Pritzker Foundation, CSPPP, DCFS, CEO, CIO, the Chronicle for Social Change, and other stakeholders to plan an L.A. County Foster Youth Hackathon to be held in April 2017
• Participating in planning meetings with the Stewards of Change, First 5 LA, and other partners for a Southern California Open DataFest Conference focusing on data-sharing among early care and education and behavioral health providers to be held in March 2017

Addressing Psychotropic Medication Use in Child Welfare
• Working with the Juvenile Court, DMH, and multiple stakeholders to enhance the psychotropic medication process by ensuring that Judges are getting the best information possible to make informed decisions on medication requests, and, when medications are approved, making sure appropriate oversight is in place through training and other means
  • Phased in new Statewide forms
  • The deadline for DMH credentialing of prescribing psychiatrists was set for December 1, 2016.
  • Formalized and documented PMA authorization procedures for the Dependency and Delinquency Courts
• In conjunction with DCFS, DMH, Probation, CIO, and the Juvenile Court, finalized user stories to be submitted to CDSS in December 2016 to help shape the design of a State-developed electronic psychotropic medication authorization system (ePMA) that will be connected to the newly developed Child Welfare System-New System (CWS-NS)
• Worked with Rutgers University to secure a grant for providing technical assistance to DCFS to better understand Medi-Cal claims data; this has the potential to be part of a larger national study on psychotropic medication use for foster youth (PCORI study)
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- Submitted a 60-day report to the State Auditor on October 20, 2016, in response to audit findings regarding the use of psychotropic medication with youth in care
- Compiling the 6-month report to the State Auditor on progress made toward addressing those findings

Increasing the Use of Relative Placements
- Collaborated with DCFS and Probation in developing the report filed in response to your Board’s Family Finding Motion approved on May 31, 2016
- Launched the resulting Family Finding pilot project in Santa Fe Springs and Glendora DCFS offices in November 2016

Education Coordinating Council (ECC) Efforts
- Submitted the revised Self-Sufficiency Plan for improving outcomes for Transition-Age Youth exiting the foster care system to your Board on September 28, 2016
  - Established a TAY workgroup with County department representatives and community stakeholders to implement the revised Self-Sufficiency model and monitor its progress
- Brokered a partnership among Probation, LACOE, and youth advocates to provide education rights and trauma-informed care training both to youth residing in, and to the employees of, the Juvenile Probation Halls and Camps, as well as to school-based deputy probation officers and those working with group homes
- Contributed to the development of the Alliance for Children’s Rights’ Foster Youth Education Toolkit that the ECC endorsed at its October 19, 2016, meeting
  - Probation has agreed to place the toolkits in each of its Probation Hall and Camp libraries
  - LACOE has distributed the toolkit to all 81 L.A. County school districts
- Coordinating across the Juvenile Court, DCFS, and local school districts and colleges to implement the Foster:Ed model (beginning in a single school district) to help prepare foster youth for college
- Working to facilitate 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 by adding, for a start, a feedback loop for following up on enrollments into these programs
- Contributed ideas to clarifications needed on existing legislation regarding sharing educational information for youth in child welfare that was signed by California’s Attorney General on September 1, 2016

Transitional Shelter Care (TSC) Pilot
- Continuing to monitor the implementation of a teaming-model pilot for working with hard-to-place youth (overstays and chronic repeaters) in Transitional Shelter Care
  - Results are extremely positive, as the number of hard-to-place youth has significantly decreased since the launch of this pilot; this is due in part to the pilot, and in part to changes in DCFS practices.
Multi-Departmental Cross-Training Convening
- Held a multi-departmental conference in partnership with the University Consortium (UCCF), DCFS, DMH, Probation, DPH, and the Health Agency to cross-train departmental staff on DCFS’s and DMH’s Shared Core Practice Model, and on resources available within each participating department
- Focusing on the countywide rollout of the Core Practice Model

Evaluation of LGBTQ Services Provided to Youth by the County
- Expanded the ongoing evaluation of the LGBTQ services currently provided by County departments to youth
- A full report should be completed in December 2016.
- CSPPP held a briefing among funders and County department representatives to raise the additional funding needed to complete the expanded evaluation.
- Funders expressed interest in holding a follow-up meeting once the report is released to explore how they can support the implementation of the recommendations identified.

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Steering Committee
- Attending steering committee meetings
- Participating in meetings to draft the Safe Youth Zone protocol
- Incorporated CSEC discussions into TSC and ECC meetings

Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Committee
- Attending ongoing committee meetings with County departments, Alliance for Children’s Rights, Public Counsel, and others

OCP Presentations
- Presentations since the last update include those made at:
  - Alliance for Strong Families and Communities National Conference
  - Los Angeles County Commission on Children and Families
  - First 5 LA Board
  - LA Partnership
  - Joint funders and departmental leadership briefing
  - Probation Oversight Commission
  - Southern California Grantmakers
  - League of Women Voters
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Community Coalition Town Hall
  - National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Annual Conference
  - PBS SoCal to Foster Change Community Conversation
  - Multi-Departmental Conference, Integration of Care
  - SHIELDS for Families’ Consumer Advisory Board
  - California Juvenile Court Institute
  - EDGY Conference (Embracing the Diversity of LGBTQ Youth and Families)
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.

MN:CDM:ei

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   Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
   Alternate Public Defender
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