



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 383
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 893-2010

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
SHEILA KUEHL
JANICE HAHN
KATHYRN BARGER

JUDGE MICHAEL NASH (RET.)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 30, 2020

REVISED

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

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), [The Road to Safety for Our Children](#),¹ two key recommendations were to “establish an entity to oversee one unified child protection system,” and for it to create a strategic plan for the work it will focus on. On June 10, 2014, the Board adopted the recommendations contained within that BRCCP final report and took action to establish the Office of Child Protection (OCP) as a separate entity reporting directly to the Board and located within the Executive Office. In October 2016, the OCP submitted to the Board its Countywide Child Protection Strategic Plan, which categorizes the work across five goal areas: prevention, safety, permanency, well-being, and cross-cutting approaches. It has submitted quarterly updates on its progress since August 1, 2016; this is a report on its progress since the last update submitted on January 31, 2020.

GOAL 1: PREVENTION *Provide children and families with the upfront supports and services they need to prevent them from entering the child welfare system and/or limit their involvement with the system once they are known to it.*

Countywide Prevention Plan

- Partnering with First 5 LA, the Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development to lead activities across the six action areas outlined in the plan
 - ✧ Networking the Networks Working with First 5 LA, DPH, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), the Prevention and Aftercare networks (P&As), the Children’s Data Network, and the Policy

¹ [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Reports and Communication/OCP Background/Blue Ribbon Commission Final Report \(04-18-2014\).pdf.pdf?ver=2018-10-24-083549-867](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Reports%20and%20Communication/OCP%20Background/Blue%20Ribbon%20Commission%20Final%20Report%20(04-18-2014).pdf.pdf?ver=2018-10-24-083549-867)

Roundtable for Child Care and Development to identify strategies for enhancing connections and coordination across existing prevention networks

- The CEO and CIO are collaborating with the OCP, County departments, and stakeholders to create an enhanced Information, Referral and Connection (IR&C) system for the County. This is an opportunity for a more efficient approach to meeting the service information and referral needs of County departments, as well as those of specialized populations such as transition-age youth (TAY). This new approach leverages existing CIO platforms/ resources with current information and referral services to create the new countywide IR&C system. Efforts to date include:
 - Convened several key departments in January 2020 to gather business needs and inform a scope of work for implementing the countywide IR&C system and an information hub specifically for TAY. The CEO's consultants, KH Consulting Group, have summarized their findings and recommendations in reports to the CEO.
 - The CEO, CIO, DCFS, and OCP are developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to create this system, anticipated for release this summer. The first phase of the system will include the creation of the TAY Hub.
 - After the TAY Hub is rolled out, other portals for specific populations—such as an OCP prevention hub—can be created using the same platform. In addition, County departments with call centers, for example, will be phased in to conduct business on the County's central IR&C platform.
 - Shared key resources through the P&As and other networks related to family well-being resources and nonprofit organizational resilience in the wake of COVID-19. These included financial supports and webinars developed by the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), domestic violence and family resources developed by DPH and First 5 LA, Federal stimulus and CalFresh-related resources, and organizational resources being offered through Southern California Grantmakers and others.
- ✧ Prevention and Aftercare Network Capacity Working with the P&As to help reach families that could benefit from support as early as possible, and to expand the networks' capacity to serve more families
- Worked closely with multiple partners to identify additional funding to expand the current capacity of the P&As and to ensure, in particular, that they are able to serve families at risk of entering the child welfare system. While significant collective support exists for this, the current budget climate is making this increasingly difficult. Efforts will continue until all avenues have been exhausted.

- ✧ Home Visitation Working with DPH, First 5 LA, DMH, DCFS, the Probation Department, the Department of Health Services (DHS), the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), the Children's Data Network, the Center for Strategic Partnerships, the Los Angeles Best Babies Network (LABBN), and the LA County Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium (Consortium) to support the availability of home-visitation services for vulnerable families
 - Since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, First 5 LA, DPH, DCFS, and LABBN have been working with local and national home-visiting programs to develop and operationalize resources and guidance to address COVID-19 challenges, including telehealth delivery options, virtual home-visiting webinars, connecting clients to free or discounted telecommunication devices, and launching online COVID-19 resource guides. Through these efforts, the home-visiting systems have been able to maintain services through telehealth connections and to distribute crucial information and resources to families in support of emotional and physical health and financial well-being. They have also been able to assist clients in transitioning to caring for young children (ages birth to 5) and homeschooled children under shelter-at-home conditions, as well as to provide a lifeline of connection during family isolation.
 - The OCP and DPH also hosted a Home Visiting Leadership Group meeting focused on identifying pressing issues among home-visiting programs and families arising from the pandemic and developing action steps to address them. Key issues identified and addressed included:
 - Providing home-visiting services in line with COVID-19 precautions. How to quickly set up virtual visitation services and train staff accordingly, navigating Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance, and addressing the needs of clients lacking internet access.
 - Supply distribution. A great number of organizations and private donors have come forward with supplies and cash donations to supplement County resources, but distributing them is challenging because many clients are without the means to reach distribution centers. Delivery procedures in line with recommended precautions are needed.
 - Other quarantine support for families. Agencies noted that more clients are scoring higher on the General Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) scale, and that many struggle with insecurities around shelter, domestic violence, health, employment, and other crisis-management areas. Partners shared resources and identified solutions regarding these challenges.
- ✧ Early Care and Education (ECE) Working with the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development, First 5 LA, the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, DCFS, DPH, the Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families, DMH, the Child Care Planning Committee, the Alliance for Children's Rights, the Advancement Project, the Southern California Chapter of the California Association for the Education of Young Children, the P&A networks, the Los Angeles

County Office of Education (LACOE), the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and others to create a roadmap for improving access to early care and education programs

- Formed a planning group to ensure that recommendations from *A Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis of the Los Angeles County Early Care and Education System*² are implemented. The planning group consists of representatives from the OCP, the County of Los Angeles Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE), the County of Los Angeles Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development, and First 5 LA. A draft implementation plan was developed in March identifying County departments and partners who would take the lead on actions steps within the plan, but progress on that plan has since been paused while the focus has shifted to supporting early care and education providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- An urgent need for child care for the essential workforce arose as schools closed because of COVID-19. Emergency child care for the health care and crisis-response workforce specifically was identified as a high priority by Los Angeles County health and emergency response leadership. In answer to this critical need, a Los Angeles County ECE Emergency Response Team was established—including DPH’s Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education, First 5 LA, DHS, the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, LACOE, the Greater Los Angeles Education Foundation, Child Care 360, the Center for Strategic Partnerships, and City of Los Angeles—to align Countywide efforts and resources, and maximize the leveraging of existing funding streams and infrastructure to meet these crucial workforce needs in a timely, safe, and responsible manner.

In record time, this group was able to re-establish the region’s ECE child care resource and referral network as a remotely operated system; set up a hotline for the essential workforce offering enhanced child care connections; develop a process for vetting and supporting new “pop-up” emergency/hospital sites so they may be integrated into the pool of options available to parents; and advocate for and establish a set of subsidized care options for low-income essential workers. New CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act funds in the amount of \$100 million are now anticipated from the state to support the supplies and voucher subsidies being offered through this effort, and philanthropic funds have been raised to cover these costs in the interim while Los Angeles County awaits the disbursement of these funds.

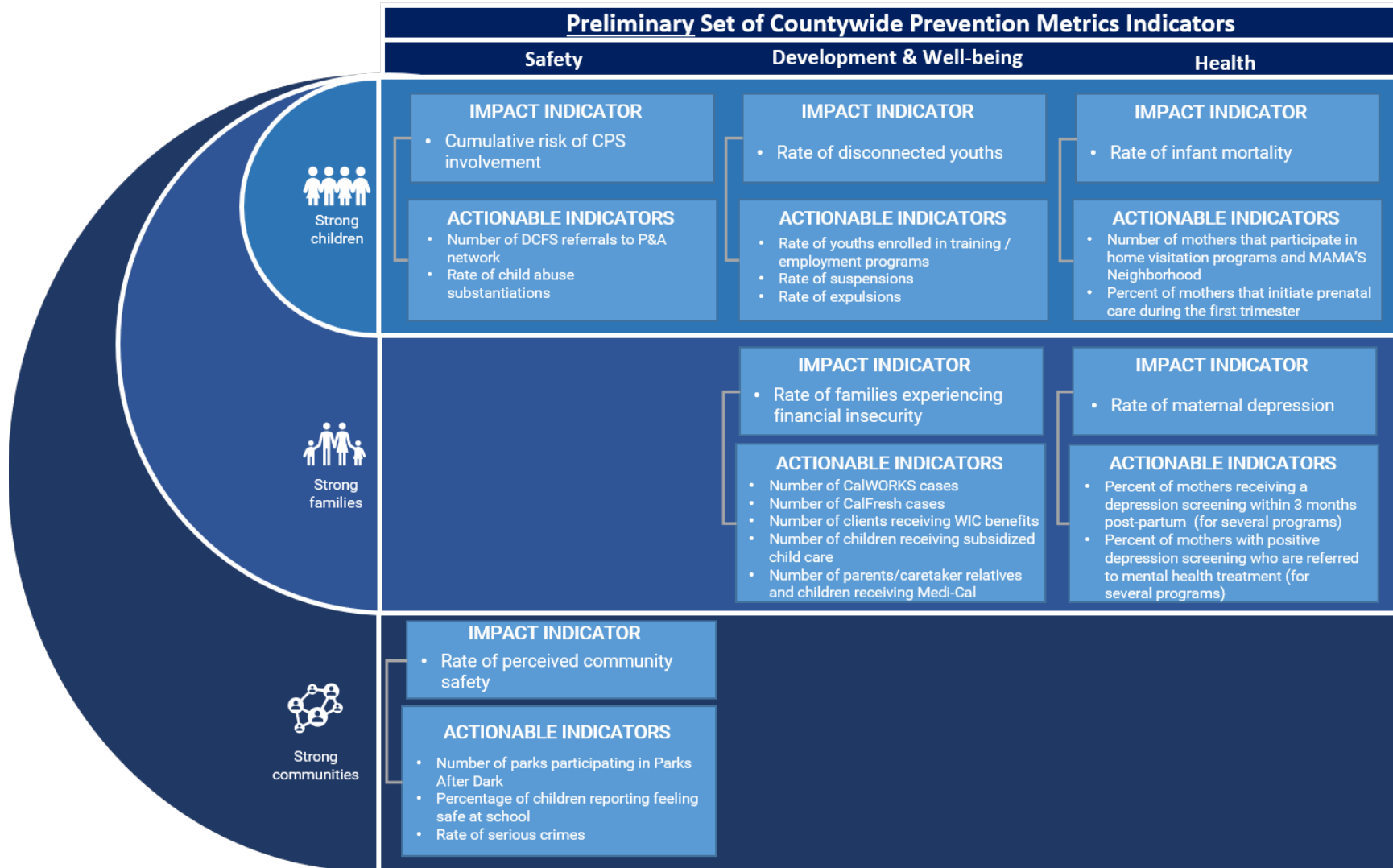
- State agency partners, too, requested help in connecting essential workers with reliable child care during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal was to build a searchable, web-based interface that would allow essential frontline workers across California to quickly find timely, accurate information about the

² [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Reports and Communication/Early Care and Education/Office of Child Protection \(OCP\) Submission of Early Care and Education Landscape Analysis \(12-04-19\).PDF?ver=2019-12-05-095200-747](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Reports%20and%20Communication/Early%20Care%20and%20Education/Office%20of%20Child%20Protection%20(OCP)%20Submission%20of%20Early%20Care%20and%20Education%20Landscape%20Analysis%20(12-04-19).PDF?ver=2019-12-05-095200-747)

availability of child care slots in their areas so they could continue working to help others. The Governor's Office, the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Resource and Referral Network (CCR&RN), local resource and referral (R&R) agencies, Open Lattice, the Children's Data Network at USC, and all 46,000+ child care providers across the state collaborated together in an extraordinary effort to launch the now live website: [MyChildCare.ca.gov](https://www.MyChildCare.ca.gov).

- ✧ Measuring Prevention Working with First 5 LA, DMH, DCFS, the Children's Data Network, the Chief Executive Office (CEO), the Chief Information Office (CIO), DPH, DHS, LACOE, and other data experts to develop a set of standardized measures of prevention to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention-plan implementation efforts
 - Finalizing with partners the data dashboards and stories for 6 impact indicators and 17 corresponding actionable indicators to be included in a preliminary Countywide Prevention Metrics report. The report, to be released in late spring/early summer 2020, will include the metrics shown in the chart on page 6.

- ✧ Other Prevention Efforts Related to COVID-19
 - DCBA has partnered with the Board of Supervisors, WDACS, and DPSS to develop resources for small businesses and consumers, including a webpage with housing-protection measures for renters and homeowners, and the phone-based Los Angeles County Disaster Help Center that supports small business owners seeking immediate assistance.
 - DMH has responded to the COVID-19 crisis with several prevention efforts targeted specifically toward children, youth, and their families affected by school closures.
 - DMH is working closely with LACOE to address the mental health needs and concerns of children and families throughout the County. DMH's newly established School Based Community Access Platform (SBCAP) Regional Team was formed to help create trauma-informed schools, increase access to needed services for the school community, and cultivate resilience in school communities. LACOE will triage referrals to the Regional Team, which will serve as a centralized referral system to link families to mental health services and address any access-to-care issues by providing oversight and technical assistance to DMH legal entities contracted to serve school communities. To address school staff needs, DMH is collaborating with LACOE to create online trainings and resources to use in providing distance learning and tele-mental health.



- The DMH-UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence at the University of California at Los Angeles has developed several trainings specifically to address the impact of COVID-19. Topics include managing stress and anxiety for parents and children/youth, and self-care.
- LAUSD has established a mental health support and information hotline to respond to the needs of children and families impacted by COVID-19. The clinical hotline is available Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Referrals are made to DMH's ACCESS Center for students experiencing crises who may need hospitalization. In addition to providing mental health support, LAUSD is working with other departments to obtain resources for housing, financial, and health-related matters.

GOAL 2: SAFETY *Minimize, if not eliminate, the risk that a child known to one or more entities in our system will be harmed.*

Systemic Assessment Report on the Tragic Death of Andrew M.

On September 24, 2019, the Board directed County Counsel to oversee the Office of Child Protection's investigation into the death of 19-year old Andrew M., a transgender youth in foster care who took his own life on September 4, and to report back with (1) an evaluation of the case and identification of any potential systemic issues, including but not limited to sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression; and (2) recommendations for strengthening or modifying relevant services. The [report](#)³ was filed on February 24, 2020.

The report concluded that the most likely primary factor in Andrew's decision to end his life was the rejection from his family resulting from his gender choice. In addition, the multiple social workers assigned to his case, plus the involvement of multiple service providers and programs, resulted in an uncoordinated approach to advancing Andrew's overall mental health and gender-specific concerns.

The report contained 13 recommendations, contributed to in part by the Los Angeles LGBTQ Center and Andrew's maternal aunt. Included among the recommendations was the creation of a unit of specially trained social workers to work with LGBTQ youth and their families as soon as they are identified, and, as Attachment 1 to that report, a comprehensive set of recommendations from the LGBTQ Center entitled *Systems Change Proposal for LGBTQ+ Youth in Care*.

³ <http://ocp.lacounty.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=jzWMX1AJUHc%3d&portalid=39>

Implementation of Anthony A. Report Recommendations

On August 10, 2018, the OCP, DCFS, the Health Agency, DHS, and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) filed a [joint response](#)⁴ to the Board's motion to review the case that included the death of 10-year-old Anthony Avalos. The report contained eight recommendations for systems improvements. A [six-month follow-up report](#)⁵ on efforts to implement these recommendations was submitted to the Board on February 14, 2019. Implementation efforts to date on the recommendations are below.

1) Reevaluate DCFS's Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM) process.

A revised draft VFM policy has been vetted through DCFS's stakeholder review process, Policy Review Committee, and two "meet and confer" meetings with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 721. A DCFS workgroup has been formed to develop an implementation plan for the rollout of the new policy, which will be released once the plan is completed. Two key steps for completing this plan are currently underway:

- Calculating data from the DCFS regional offices on the number of additional monthly visits needed to comply with the revised policy and the best approach for handling these
- Consulting with DCFS's Business Information Systems (BIS) unit to determine when modifications to the current automated tracking/alert system can be developed to include the additional visits required by the revised policy

These steps have been delayed because of the focus on the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the team is hoping to reconvene in May to discuss the progress made.

2) Improve the skills of staff interviewing children.

Dr. Thomas Lyon from the University of Southern California (USC) worked with DCFS and UCLA to develop a training video on different aspects of interviewing skills, and DCFS is also consulting with other forensic interviewing experts who might be able to serve as virtual trainers. The anticipated release of this video as an eLearning training requirement for social workers and their supervisors is June.

⁴ [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCF/PDF/Reports and Communication/Anthony A. Consolidated Report/OCF Coordinated Response to Anthony A Motion \(08-10-18\).pdf?ver=2018-10-24-073730-880](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCF/PDF/Reports%20and%20Communication/Anthony%20A.%20Consolidated%20Report/OCF%20Coordinated%20Response%20to%20Anthony%20A%20Motion%20(08-10-18).pdf?ver=2018-10-24-073730-880)

⁵ [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCF/PDF/Reports and Communication/Anthony A. Consolidated Report/OCF Coordinated Six-Month Follow-up to Anthony A Report Recommendations \(02-14-19\).pdf?ver=2019-02-15-154851-040](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCF/PDF/Reports%20and%20Communication/Anthony%20A.%20Consolidated%20Report/OCF%20Coordinated%20Six-Month%20Follow-up%20to%20Anthony%20A%20Report%20Recommendations%20(02-14-19).pdf?ver=2019-02-15-154851-040)

3) Retrain social workers on the proper use of Structured Decision Making® (SDM).

See “Risk Assessment and System Improvement Recommendation Implementation” on page 11 for a full description.

4) Increase collaboration between DCFS and law enforcement.

- The DCFS/LASD pilot to conduct joint investigations of alleged child abuse and neglect in the Antelope Valley is continuing. It will expand to the Santa Clarita office—whose catchment area is served by both LASD’s Santa Clarita Station and by LAPD’s Mission and Foothill stations—which began joint investigations with LASD in February 2020. However, because of COVID-19 concerns, the entire joint pilot program was put on hold in March.
- Work also continues on developing a comprehensive DCFS/law-enforcement protocol. The workgroup includes the OCP, DCFS, County Counsel, and representatives from LASD, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), the District Attorney, and other police agencies. The group has focused on identifying the roles of social workers and law-enforcement personnel in conducting joint investigations. The protocol will also include an easily understood section on the Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System (eSCARS) and its role in coordinating investigations by DCFS and law enforcement.

5) Improve the Medical Hub system.

See the “County Medical Hubs” section on page 21 for a full description.

6) Improve the investigation skills of social workers at the front end and beyond.

- The state finalized a new Core Academy training for supervising social workers, and a local rollout began on February 26, 2020, for the first cohort of 44 newly promoted supervising social workers. The training was scheduled to be completed on April 15 but was postponed in March as a result of to the COVID-19 pandemic. DCFS’s training section is working on moving this academy to a virtual training platform, anticipated to be released in June.
- DCFS hired a consultant to conduct a full review of its current training curriculum and processes, which began in December. The consultant will provide a report with findings and recommendations that is anticipated by June.
- DCFS has also expanded its Continuous Quality Improvement support, which now includes a total of 24 staff, 20 of whom are co-located across its regional offices to provide teaming and quality-improvement opportunities there and throughout various department-wide programs. Recent reviews include assessing regional operations to establish baseline data to inform the quality improvement process underway, and examining practices involving young

children ages birth to 5 whose families had 6 or more prior referrals to DCFS with at least one allegation of physical or sexual abuse. Data from these reviews is currently being analyzed.

7) Improve the capacity to assess needs and progress made throughout the span of the case.

DPH's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH-SAPC) unit, DMH, and DCFS have partnered to outstation substance-abuse counselors in DCFS regional offices to provide on-site support and connections to further substance-abuse supports for those parents or youth who need them. These counselors are also available to consult with social workers on cases involving substance-abuse issues and to offer guidance on how best to handle them.

- Substance-abuse counselors have been outstationed in 15 DCFS regional offices—Lancaster, Palmdale, Van Nuys, Santa Clarita, Chatsworth, Glendora, Pomona, Pasadena, Covina Annex, Metro North, West Los Angeles, Vermont Corridor, Compton East, El Monte, and Torrance. Additionally, counselors are now outstationed at a DPH office in SPA 7 to work with families served by the Belvedere and Santa Fe Springs offices.
 - DPH-SAPC reports that since the program launch on April 1, 2018, a total of 2,833 parents were referred by DCFS for substance-use screenings as a result of this program.
 - Of this number, 1,822 were screened for substance-use disorders; of the 1,584 with positive screens, 996 were admitted to treatment services within their communities.
 - Funding for the SUD-TIPS (Substance Use Disorder–Trauma-Informed Parent Support) program provided by DMH is slated to end on June 30, 2020. With no alternative funding source identified, DPH-SAPC is preparing to close the program by that date. The OCP and DCFS are exploring options for identifying additional funding to sustain the program.
- DPH's Domestic Violence (DV) Council partnered with DCFS to launch a DV-DCFS Committee in February. Work will include developing ideas for providing domestic-violence expertise to DCFS social workers seeking additional support in this area.

8) Reduce social worker caseloads.

On April 14, the Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles County Superior Court extended through May 12 his COVID-19–related General Order closing courtrooms for judicial business except for time-sensitive and “essential” functions. In the Dependency Court, this includes detention hearings and emergency items involving child safety (warrants, restraining orders, surgical authorizations, etc.). In addition,

Governor Newsom extended foster-care payments and eligibility to AB 12 youth in extended foster care who turn 21 during the pandemic.

This combination of new cases still being initiated and hearings to resolve pending cases being indefinitely postponed has increased caseloads for both social workers and the Dependency Court. The current (and growing) backlog is expected to reach 30,000 cases. Even once courts re-open, dispositional hearings will be delayed for 30 to 60 days, and other cases for up to 270 days—including adoptions waiting for finalization. The effects of these backlogs on children and families is devastating, with children and parents awaiting critical life decisions for family visitations, access to necessary supportive and rehabilitative services, and determinations of permanency including reunification, guardianship, and adoption.

DCFS is working with County Counsel, the Children's Law Center, and Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers to use the court's stipulation process to resolve as many cases as possible where all parties agree to the outcome. It is believed that this may generate a 20% decrease in the court's backlog.

Risk Assessment and System Improvement Recommendation Implementation

- Partnering with DCFS to implement the recommendations outlined by the OCP in its [report of May 2017](#)⁶
 - ✧ The National Council on Crime & Delinquency (NCCD) has begun to roll out a series of trainings on the use of Structured Decision Making® (SDM) in Los Angeles County. These trainings are specifically designed for our region and include policy and practice changes implemented as a result of the SDM fidelity review. Initial training focuses on the screening, removal, and case-opening decision process; later trainings will focus on reunification, permanency, and case-closing decisions.
 - ✧ DCFS regional administrators, assistant regional administrators, and supervisors began attending one-day “leadership and decision-making” trainings led by NCCD staff, which focused on sharing results from the recent fidelity review and ensuring that leadership understands both the policy changes that resulted from that review and how to facilitate case consultations with staff that integrate both proper SDM use and key elements of the DCFS core practice model.

Eight of the planned 20 leadership trainings were conducted before quarantine orders were issued related to COVID-19. This training is now being reconfigured into two half-day web-based modules that will be delivered by NCCD to DCFS leadership remotely. These sessions will be held in small to moderate-sized groups to allow DCFS managers and supervisors a chance to engage in

⁶ [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Reports and Communication/Safety and Risk Assessment/SDM and Predictive Analytics Report \(Risk Assessment Tools\) \(May 2017\).pdf?ver=2018-10-24-083910-100](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Reports%20and%20Communication/Safety%20and%20Risk%20Assessment/SDM%20and%20Predictive%20Analytics%20Report%20(Risk%20Assessment%20Tools)%20(May%202017).pdf?ver=2018-10-24-083910-100)

discussion and questions. These final 12 trainings will restart in May and are expected to be completed by the end of June.

- ✧ Prior to quarantine orders, NCCD and DCFS developed a plan to have all DCFS supervisors and children’s social workers attend a two-day “safety and risk” foundational training focused on best practices in safety assessment, safety planning, and risk assessment. This training was to be provided to more than 4,000 DCFS staff throughout 2020, necessitating approximately 80 sessions. NCCD was to lead approximately 20 of these and use those sessions to help the DCFS training unit develop the capacity/skills to facilitate the other 60 sessions.

This training is now being reconfigured into four half-day web-based modules that will be delivered remotely. These sessions will be held in moderate-sized groups (40 participants) to allow discussion and questions. This training will restart in June and is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2020.

- ✧ NCCD completed a review of how SDM is used in family reunification and case-closure casework, and this report was shared with the DCFS leadership and the DCFS SDM core team in February. It contained recommendations for policy changes and training for DCFS dependency investigations and continuing services. These trainings are targeted to begin in late 2020, after staff complete the safety and risk foundational trainings.

Use of Public Health Nurses (PHNs) in Child Welfare

- The Child Welfare PHN (CWPHN) Steering Committee continues to meet and address issues resulting from the consolidation of the child-welfare PHNs into DPH, and has begun working to implement some of the recommendations from the OCP’s report on the [*Best Use of PHNs in Child Welfare*](#)⁷ (December 2017).
 - ✧ DPH developed a daily tracking tool that helps to capture children’s medical conditions and any interventions performed by PHNs both during DCFS investigations and for children receiving family maintenance or reunification services from DCFS. After successfully piloting it, DPH implemented this tool Countywide in February.
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic, DPH trained all CWPHNs on responding to COVID-related issues and concerns affecting DCFS-involved children and families. In addition, a coronavirus warmline was put in place to provide social work staff with 24/7 access to PHN consultation.
 - For information on PHN access to the Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services (LANES), see the “Electronic Data-Sharing Efforts” section on page 13.

⁷ [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Reports and Communication/Public Health Nurses in Child Welfare/01 Fourth 90-Day Report Best Use of PHNs \(12-08-2017\).pdf.pdf?ver=2018-10-24-083842-860](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Reports%20and%20Communication/Public%20Health%20Nurses%20in%20Child%20Welfare/01%20Fourth%2090-Day%20Report%20Best%20Use%20of%20PHNs%20(12-08-2017).pdf.pdf?ver=2018-10-24-083842-860)

- For information on the continued administration of the Psychotropic Medication Youth Engagement Worksheet, see the “Addressing Psychotropic Medication Use in Child Welfare” section on page 23.

Electronic Data-Sharing Efforts

- Working with DCFS, the CIO, and County Counsel on a web-based portal to facilitate the electronic sharing of information relevant to investigations of child abuse or neglect across 7 County departments and DCFS, based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that the OCP finalized with participating departments, County Counsel, and the CEO
 - ✧ The Emergency Response Investigation Service (ERIS) is now being used by emergency-response workers in all DCFS offices. Data accessible in this initial phase of ERIS includes family members’ DCFS history and criminal-background information, which helps streamline DCFS investigations and placing children with relatives when a removal is necessary.
 - ✧ Phase II of ERIS is being developed by the Internal Services Department, OCP, DCFS, and the CIO, adding data from other departments and incorporating changes based on user feedback to improve system functioning.
 - ✧ Final user-testing sessions are being held with emergency-response workers and supervisors to ensure that the system functions properly.
 - ✧ A web-based training is being developed to train all users on the new features and data within the system.
- Working with the Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services (LANES), DPH, County Counsel, DCFS, and the CEO to provide access to LANES, a health information exchange system, for PHNs who are helping to coordinate health care for DCFS youth. With this access, PHNs will be able to use the LANES portal to view timely health records for their child-welfare clients, as appropriate, to coordinate care and ensure effective treatment.
 - ✧ Conducted user-acceptance testing, collecting input from a representative set of PHNs to enhance the presentation of LANES data for child welfare purposes. Worked with this same team to outline the current PHN consultation workflow and identify how LANES should be folded in to and improve that workflow
 - Prepared the project for piloting in three DCFS regional offices and one Medical Hub. A key part of that work has included drafting policies and procedures to guide the pilot. This work also included customizing the LANES user manual to reflect the needs of PHN users.
 - Created operational plans for data-sharing between DCFS and DPH needed to support this project

- Developed procedures to ensure that secure printing is available to PHNs in every regional office
- The Education Coordinating Council (ECC), which functions under the OCP umbrella, has also made significant progress toward greater access to accurate and consistent education data for foster youth.
 - ✧ LACOE and DCFS have developed a web-based Education Passport System (EPS) mobile app to give social workers access to foster youth education data in the field.
 - ✧ LACOE has trained 125 staff at 16 school districts on the EPS this quarter.
 - ✧ Since January, over 28,000 documents have been uploaded into the EPS system, 9,701 documents have been retrieved by school-district staff from EPS, and there have been 20,518 student searches.

GOAL 3: PERMANENCY *No child leaves the system without a permanent family or a responsible caring adult in his or her life.*

Increasing the Use of Relative Placements

- The Upfront Family Finding project continues in 10 DCFS offices: Belvedere, West Los Angeles, West San Fernando Valley, Santa Fe Springs, Glendora, Vermont Corridor, Santa Clarita, Wateridge, Hawthorne, and Lakewood.
 - ✧ From January 2020 through the end of March, 1,085 children have been subject to detention hearings in these 10 offices; 78% of those were placed with kin, consistent with previous reports.
 - ✧ Child Trends has begun its longitudinal study of the project to evaluate its impact on placement stability, family reunification, permanency, and more. Several more months are needed to complete the study.

Permanency and Self-Sufficiency Planning for Transition-Age Youth (TAY)

- On September 4, 2019, the OCP submitted a report to the Board of Supervisors, [*Increasing Stability and Permanency for Transition-Age Youth*](#),⁸ which contained recommendations from the OCP Permanency Workgroup on data, family reunification, DCFS's Youth Permanency Units, and the Dave Thomas Foundation's foster-child adoption project, "Wendy's Wonderful Kids," plus a draft analysis of programs and benefits available to eligible youth.

⁸ [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Permanency/Office of Child Protection \(OCP\) Stability and Permanency for TAY Report 09-04-2019 \(with attachments\).pdf?ver=2019-10-28-090046-917](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Permanency/Office%20of%20Child%20Protection%20(OCP)%20Stability%20and%20Permanency%20for%20TAY%20Report%2009-04-2019%20(with%20attachments).pdf?ver=2019-10-28-090046-917)

- The OCP Permanency Workgroup has resumed meetings after a three-month hiatus, and DCFS reported the following statistics on April 3, 2020:
 - At the end of March, 2,997 children have been freed with a plan of adoption and are awaiting adoption finalization.
 - 832 of the children awaiting finalization have been waiting for more than six months.
 - As of February 25, 905 cases in the dependency court for 90 days or longer have not reached disposition.
- Work has begun on an evaluation of the adoption process from termination of parental rights to adoption finalization. The goal is to identify barriers to timeliness and to streamline the process as much as possible. The workgroup will also discuss ideas to eliminate the backlog of pending adoptions once the COVID-19 pandemic subsides.
- Worked with stakeholders to develop three documents related to benefits. These include two benefits charts and one chart delineating barriers, perceived or otherwise, to permanency. The charts have been distributed to workgroup members for discussion, which will also include how best to use them.

Transitional Shelter Care (TSC) Pilot

- Bi-weekly meetings continue with stakeholders—including DCFS, DMH, Probation, the Juvenile Court, the Children’s Law Center, Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), County Counsel, and others—to discuss the multidisciplinary teaming pilot led by DCFS’ Accelerated Placement Team (APT), along with DMH, to stabilize and find permanency for hard-to-place youth (overstays and chronic repeaters) at 10-day Temporary Shelter Care Facilities (TSCFs). The APT has named the unit of special social workers who staff this unit “the OCP unit.”

Recent pilot data shows:

- 17 children were transitioned from TSCFs into Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) or resource family homes
- Out of those 17 children, 13 were transitioned from a TSC into a placement, and the other 4 were placed before they could get to the TSC
- Only the most recent OCP client inductee has been placed and returned to the TSCF. That represented a **95% success rate** with the implementation of the new OCP placement specialist and case-coordinator collaboration.

- In February, Dr. Wendy Smith, Chair of the Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families filed a [Report on the OCP Transitional Shelter Care Pilot Project](#).⁹
- Two vignettes from current youth:
 - ✧ MH is almost 18 years old and had been in a foster home since last year that started to deteriorate quickly about two months ago over a disagreement, resulting in the foster parent's requesting DCFS to remove MH from her home. The team worked to find another foster home in which MH could be placed and was successful in March. The new arrangement is so positive and supportive that the foster parent has agreed to let MH stay in her home even after he turns 18 years old.
 - ✧ CL is a gender-fluid individual who has previously demonstrated self-harming behaviors, as well as those being a danger to others, and resides in a Level 14 facility. CL has experienced a significant amount of trauma over the years and has had a particularly difficult time adjusting to the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. The team has worked to ensure that CL celebrates milestones in the face of these trying times, and has gone out of their way to make these celebrations special. CL is motivated to lower the occurrence of self-harming and dangerous-to-others behaviors so that CL can be stepped down to a lower level of care.
- Comments from OCP unit staff on their efforts and experiences while adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic are included as Attachment 1 to this update.

GOAL 4: WELL-BEING *Ensure that system-involved youth achieve the physical, emotional, and social health needed to be successful.*

Efforts to Improve School Stability

- Continuing to partner with DCFS, Los Angeles County school districts, and LACOE to implement the foster-youth school-stability provisions included in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
 - ✧ The Education Coordinating Council (ECC), DCFS, LACOE, LAUSD, and WDACS conducted a transportation pilot to keep foster youth in their schools of origin when that is in their best interest. The two-year pilot, completed on July 30, 2019, served as a “bridge solution” and learning opportunity while long-term transportation agreements between DCFS and the school districts are finalized.
 - ✧ The ECC, DCFS, and LACOE are reaching out to encourage Los Angeles County school districts to sign the long-term ESSA transportation MOU.

⁹ [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Permanency/Transitional Shelter Care Pilot Report \(Commission\) \(02-12-2020\).pdf?ver=2020-02-12-113146-730](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/Permanency/Transitional%20Shelter%20Care%20Pilot%20Report%20(Commission)%20(02-12-2020).pdf?ver=2020-02-12-113146-730)

- An ESSA outreach coordinator began in July 2019 to contact superintendents of the 8 school districts with the highest foster-youth populations:
 - Antelope Valley Union High School District
 - Compton Unified School District
 - Lancaster School District
 - Los Angeles Unified School District
 - Long Beach Unified School District
 - Pasadena Unified School District
 - Palmdale School District
 - Pomona Unified School District
- To date, 6 of these—Antelope Valley, Compton, Lancaster, Palmdale, Pasadena, and LAUSD (which together serve approximately 40% of the County’s foster youth)—have signed on to the long-term MOU.
- Of the 72 remaining districts, 24 have signed the MOU:
 - Alhambra Unified
 - Beverly Hills Unified
 - Burbank Unified
 - Centinela Valley Union High School District
 - Charter Oak Unified
 - Claremont Unified
 - Culver City Unified
 - Duarte Unified
 - El Monte City School District
 - El Monte Union High School District
 - El Rancho Unified
 - Glendale Unified
 - Inglewood Unified
 - Monrovia Unified
 - Montebello Unified
 - Norwalk La Mirada Unified
 - Paramount Unified
 - Rosemead Unified
 - South Pasadena Unified
 - South Whittier Unified
 - Torrance Unified
 - Walnut Valley Unified
 - Westside Unified
 - Whittier Union High School District
- The ECC is also engaging with several other districts to facilitate agreements:
 - Azusa Unified
 - Bonita Unified
 - East Whittier City School District

- Long Beach Unified
 - Mountain View Unified
 - Rowland Unified
 - San Marino Unified *[on school-board agenda for 4/28/20]*
 - West Covina Unified
 - William S. Hart Union High School *[being scheduled for school-board agenda in early May]*
 - Wiseburn Unified
 - Wilsona Unified
-
- The 30 districts whose boards have signed the MOU and the districts the ECC is currently engaging serve approximately 82% of the County's foster youth. Monthly updates are continuing to be made to the Board by DCFS on the progress of districts signing on to the long-term MOU.
 - Worked with DCFS, LACOE, and WDACS to forecast estimated ESSA school-of-origin transportation costs for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020–21 and disseminated that forecast to all 80 school districts to help their budget and Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) planning for next year
 - Working with LACOE and DCFS to strengthen processes around placement-change notices, best-interest determinations, and decisions about long-term methods of transportation. LACOE will be dedicating staff to help provide technical assistance and training to district foster youth liaisons on best-interest determinations.
 - The DCFS education team has trained 17 DCFS regional offices on these processes.
-
- Working with John Burton Advocates for Youth and relevant County departments to facilitate enhanced support for post-secondary educational attainment for youth in the child-welfare and juvenile-justice systems, and to implement SB 12 provisions
 - ✧ DCFS, Probation, and LACOE are participating in 2019–20's California Foster Youth FAFSA® Challenge (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), designed to increase system-involved youths' access to financial aid for college by increasing FAFSA completion rates. Last year, Los Angeles County matched general population rates by assisting 61% of eligible system youth to complete FAFSA applications, nearly doubling its 2017–18 rate of 33% and thereby winning a "most improved" jurisdiction designation from the state.
 - ✧ As of this March, 59% of eligible system-involved youth in Los Angeles County have completed their FAFSA applications.
 - Probation has worked in the probation camps and juvenile halls to support 174 FAFSA-eligible youth, 10 of whom were identified as youth in foster care. The department's Placement Services Bureau has also confirmed over 50 completed FAFSA applications from suitably placed youth.

- DCFS has worked through its Independent Living Program (ILP) to help youth complete 262 FAFSA applications.
- ✧ As a result of COVID-19, DCFS, Probation, LACOE, and WDACS are working with John Burton Advocates for Youth and the OCP to develop creative solutions for reaching out to system-involved youth to provide support with completing the FAFSA virtually.
 - DCFS has been working with its youth to complete the FAFSA by walking through the process over the telephone and by referring youth to John Burton Advocates for Youth online resource guides and webinar for step-by-step assistance.
- ✧ Probation organized a FAFSA workshop at its College Summit in February that had 25 to 30 high school seniors in attendance.
- ✧ Partners updated the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) form to address education planning and account for new SB 12 requirements. The updated TILP form was submitted to the state and is currently awaiting approval.
- ✧ John Burton Advocates for Youth and LACOE collaborated to create a [High-School Counselor Foster-Youth FAFSA Challenge Toolkit](#)¹⁰ that provides counselors with the information needed to effectively support foster youth in completing the FAFSA. LACOE disseminated the toolkit to its foster youth liaisons to support their technical assistance and training.

School-Based Healing-Informed Arts Education

- Working with the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture and DMH to implement a healing-informed arts education pilot for middle and high schools with high numbers of foster and probation youth. The program will help youth build protective factors through the arts and will develop local art-focused networks of mental-health clinicians, artists, teachers, and other stakeholders within schools and their surrounding communities.
 - ✧ Finalized the *Creative Wellbeing: Arts, Schools, and Resilience* Facilitators Guide created jointly by the Department of Arts and Culture, DMH, community artists, and the OCP. This document provides dozens of activities, best practices, and guidance on how school-district faculty can use arts-based tools to enhance student and community connection and well-being.
 - ✧ Because of school closures during COVID-19, Arts and Culture is assessing the needs of partner schools at LAUSD, Pasadena Unified, Antelope Valley Union High School District, and Pomona Unified. This includes developing a plan for

¹⁰ https://www.jbaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HS-Counselor-Toolkit_Combined-1-1.pdf

how this program could be adapted and implemented both during and after COVID-19 to support mental health and healing for school staff and students.

- ✧ The pilot evaluators, Harder+Company, have developed program outcome measures and finalized an evaluation plan.

Workforce Development

- The departments of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) and Human Resources (DHR) launched the Countywide Youth Bridges Program (CYBP) in December 2017, the County's first public-sector strategy to establish a direct talent pipeline of next-generation County employees.
 - ✧ The program provides youth age 16 to 24 with 120 hours of work experience. Once these initial hours have been completed, youth who are 18 years or older are encouraged to apply for a 12-month full-time internship within the County. (As a result of the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, WDACS and partners are developing an online employment training component to temporarily replace the work experience.)
 - ✧ Training in and implementation of the WDACS-developed Automated Referral System (ARS)—designed to coordinate and streamline referrals for foster, probation, and homeless youth to the public workforce system—was completed at all DCFS offices. However, because of COVID-19 social-distancing requirements, further trainings have been placed on hold.
- The Opportunity Youth Collaborative—in partnership with DCFS, WDACS, Probation, the Alliance for Children's Rights, John Burton Advocates for Youth, Los Angeles Reproductive Health Equity Project, and the City of Los Angeles' Economic Workforce Development Department—is leading an effort to add college and career readiness requirements (as well as sexual and reproductive health) to the 40 hours of training required in the current contracts DCFS has with foster-family agencies, Short-Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTPs), and the Transitional Housing Placement for Non-Minor Dependents (THP-NMD) housing programs. DCFS has the option of adding up to 16 additional hours to the 40 hours of required training, if needed.
 - ✧ For older youth, in addition to career exploration and post-secondary educational pathways, work experience is also required—100 hours of paid work experience before the age of 16 and 300 hours before age 18. These requirements align with operational agreement signed by Los Angeles County's Workforce Development Boards, LACOE, Probation, and DCFS.

County Medical Hubs

- Working with DHS, DCFS, DMH, and DPH to implement a detailed workplan to improve the overall Hub system, focusing on timely access to forensic exams and Initial Medical Exams (IMEs) in the short term (Phase I), and potentially broadening Hub services in the longer term (Phase II). Examples of recent improvements include:
 - ✧ As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hub clinics have prioritized certain core services; outstationed staff from partner departments are teleworking, when possible, to limit the number of people at the clinics. The Hubs are continuing to schedule forensic evaluations, IMEs for newly detained children, and well-check visits for babies in need of vaccinations. Other continuity-of-care visits, however, are being converted to telehealth visits or postponed, when possible. DMH mental health clinicians are rotating in the Hubs daily to deliver in-person crisis intervention, as needed; they also continue to provide mental health screenings and triages by telephone.
 - ✧ In an effort to stabilize existing out-of-home care placements by educating and supporting caregivers and providers about COVID-19 and its impact on children in their care, DHS and DCFS have developed a 24/7 telephone warmline, staffed by medical professionals from LAC+USC Medical Center, to answer COVID-19–related questions from DCFS social workers, resource parents, STRTPs, foster-family agencies, and other caregivers. Information about the warmline has been disseminated to DCFS staff, caregivers and providers, and other stakeholders. DMH’s ACCESS hotline is also available 24/7 to the community for emotional support and/or resources.
 - ✧ Based on feedback from caregivers at the 2019 Hub community convenings, DCFS, DMH, DHS, and the OCP are in the process of finalizing a caregiver informational flyer on the Medical Hubs that will include an overview of services, helpful tips, and Hub contact information. Once finalized, the flyer will be included in the DCFS caregiver placement packet.
 - ✧ DCFS, DHS, the OCP, and County Counsel are implementing action steps to improve communication and coordination between DHS hospitals/Hub clinics and DCFS Hotline staff around DHS staff reporting suspected child abuse and neglect cases to the Hotline. Key strategies include cross-training staff around the language and definitions used in these communications, and implementing multidisciplinary team meetings to review specific issues/cases.
 - ✧ DHS and DCFS leadership in the Antelope Valley region, along with the OCP, continues to improve workflows and communication between the Palmdale/Lancaster DCFS offices and the High Desert Regional Health Center (HDRHC) Medical Hub. Key strategies include implementing a streamlined forensic-referral triaging process, developing a decision tree for social workers around Hub services (discussed below), and continuing to recruit additional medical providers for the HDRHC Medical Hub. Staff recruitment for the Hub, however, has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which in turn has affected the timeline for

the HDRHC Medical Hub's expansion to weekday evening clinic hours. DHS anticipates having a revised timeline for the HDRHC Medical Hub's weekday evening clinic hours in May 2020.

- ✧ DCFS, DHS, and the OCP are drafting a decision tree/workflow flyer for social workers on when and how to make referrals to the Medical Hubs for core services like forensic evaluations, medical clearances, CSEC exams and clearances, and IMEs; and with whom to communicate within DCFS and at each Hub if concerns arise around the disposition and/or timing of Hub exams. Once it is finalized, DCFS will disseminate this flyer to its staff and share it on the DCFS intranet as an electronic resource for its social workers.
- ✧ DCFS, DPH, and the OCP have started vetting a comprehensive working agreement between Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), DCFS, and DPH on CHLA's Medical Hub. This working agreement is modeled on the interagency MOU for the DHS-operated Medical Hubs that is currently being vetted by DCFS, DHS, DMH, and DPH. The Hub Department Leads Workgroup anticipates finalizing both the interagency MOU on the Medical Hubs and the CHLA working agreement by the end of 2020.

Dental Screenings and Exams

- Working with DCFS, DPH, DHS, and UCLA to develop a plan for increasing the number of foster youth receiving dental screenings and exams, when needed, within policy timeframes.
 - ✧ On January 31, 2020, the OCP, DCFS, DPH, UCLA's Dental Transformation Initiative, and the Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) program at West Los Angeles College implemented a train-the-trainer program to provide oral health training to 20 FKCE trainers who can then train potential caregivers beginning the Resource Family Approval process. The training covers the basics of oral health, evidence-based practices for improving oral health for children, strategies to effectively communicate about the importance of good oral health for children, and information on community resources and Denti-Cal benefits.
 - ✧ As a result of COVID-19, partners are working to adapt the oral health training into a webinar on the UCLA-led Dental Transformation Initiative's More LA Smiles online platform to train more FKCE trainers; the virtual train-the-trainer sessions are anticipated in May. DCFS, the OCP, DPH, and UCLA are also working on providing the training to social workers through the same virtual platform.
 - ✧ The UCLA initiative is providing oral health resource "swag bags" to families and youth across the County that include an oral health activity book, dental kit, and other oral health-related resources. DCFS and the OCP are working with UCLA to survey how many resource families and youth need the resource bags.

Mental Health Coordination

- Working with DCFS and DMH to implement an independent process evaluation of the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) and the overall front-end assessment process to help inform how mental health processes can be streamlined for DCFS-involved youth. DCFS and DMH are jointly funding the evaluation, and the OCP is managing the independent contractor, the California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS), to implement the evaluation; we anticipate a complete report by mid-2021. Efforts to date include:
 - ✧ Through the juvenile court research petition process, received approval from the Superior Court for CIBHS to 1) access specific DCFS and court-case information and 2) implement the planned evaluation methodology
 - ✧ Finalizing processes with the DCFS/DMH privacy and data staff for CIBHS to access the DCFS/DMH information needed for the evaluation
 - ✧ CIBHS is developing a crosswalk of Los Angeles County practices and evidence-based front-end assessments, screenings, and tools to help DCFS, DMH, and the OCP determine where there may be duplication in the front-end assessment process and provide recommendations to streamline processes. The evaluator will continue to engage stakeholders and subject-matter experts (e.g., MAT providers) while developing the crosswalk and throughout the evaluation.

Addressing Psychotropic Medication Use in Child Welfare

- Monthly meetings of the Psychotropic Medication Workgroup have resumed. The workgroup has been overseeing the implementation of the protocols it adopted in April 2017 for approving and monitoring the use of psychotropic medications for youth in out-of-home care.
 - ✧ Quarterly updates of psychotropic medication data have been received from DCFS and Probation.
 - DCFS data as of April 10, 2020 indicates that:
 - 1,482 children are being administered psychotropic medications, which is 7.99% of all Los Angeles County foster children
 - 318 foster children are being administered antipsychotic medications, which is 21.46% of Los Angeles County foster children on medications
 - 733 foster children are being administered two or more medications, which is 49.46% of Los Angeles County foster children on medications
 - Probation data as of March 31, 2020 indicates that:
 - 52 youth who are suitably placed are being administered psychotropic medications, which is 9% of those in suitable placement

- 4 youth in suitable placement are being administered antipsychotic medications, which is 1% of suitably placed youth on medications
 - 22 youth in suitable placement are being administered two or more psychotropic medications, which is 42% of suitably placed youth on medications
 - 39 of 57 youth placed at Dorothy Kirby Center are being administered psychotropic medications, which is 68.42% of youth at that location
 - 145 of 428 youth in juvenile halls are being administered psychotropic medications, which is 33.87% of that population
 - 82 of 219 youth in probation camps are being administered psychotropic medications, which is 40.64% of that population
- ✧ The Psychotropic Medication Youth Engagement Worksheet (YEW) has been implemented by the DPH Child Welfare Public Health Nurse unit (PHNs) and by Probation. Probation filed 46 YEWs in March. The PHNs initiated 49 in March and completed 27; they initiated 57 in February and completed 28. The process is still a work in progress.
- ✧ The DPH PHNs have created a form to assist with a process to ensure that necessary lab tests have been conducted and reviewed on youth who are being administered psychotropic medications. The workgroup is reviewing the form and discussing the process.

GOAL 5: CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES *Rethink structures, programs, and processes, on an ongoing basis, that impact multiple entities, to take advantage of new thinking and learning that meaningfully improves our child protection system.*

Dual-Status Youth Motion

- On March 20, 2018, the Board directed the OCP, in collaboration with multiple County stakeholders and others, to report back on a Countywide plan for dual-status youth. The work on this motion continues with monthly meetings of the Dual-Status Youth Workgroup's two subcommittees—Delinquency Prevention and WIC 241.1 Multidisciplinary Team (MDT).
- ✧ The Delinquency Prevention Subcommittee led by Professor Denise Herz of California State University Los Angeles has drafted a comprehensive report and recommendations on delinquency prevention throughout both the child-welfare and juvenile-justice systems. The subcommittee is currently reviewing the report and will meet in May, June, and July to flesh out these recommendations with additional subject-matter experts.

- ✧ A complete draft of the updated WIC 241.1 protocol was distributed to stakeholders in December 2019. Comments were received and incorporated, and the draft was submitted in February to the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court for review. The workgroup is currently waiting to hear back from the court.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth

- In the recently released evaluation [*Commercially Sexually Exploited Girls and Young Women Involved in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice in Los Angeles County: An Exploration and Evaluation of Placement Experiences and Services Received*](#),¹¹ two recommendations out of a total of eight were identified as short-term fixes that would help improve CSEC placement stability.

The first recommendation was to ensure that all service providers are properly trained on issues facing CSEC, such as non-judgmental communication skills, trauma and mental health, and recognizing signs of AWOL. The second supports a youth preference for placements in the most homelike environment possible, and the finding that CSEC placed in foster-family agency homes stayed significantly longer in those placements if specialized services were also provided to them.

- ✧ DCFS, Probation, and the OCP have created a planning workgroup to focus on these two CSEC recommendations.
 - The existing CSEC training contract held by Probation will expire at the end of February 2021. A new statement of work for a CSEC trainer is expected to be completed by mid-May and will be vetted by the planning workgroup; a new contract should be in place by January 2021.
 - The statement of work for Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) homes targeting CSEC should be completed by the end of May and will be vetted by the planning workgroup as a potential pilot project.

Additional OCP Activities

- Participate on DPH's Office of Violence Prevention Leadership Committee
- Participate in the Strengthening Economic Supports Subcommittee for the California Essentials for Childhood initiative
- Participate in DCFS's advisory workgroup on planning for the Family First Prevention Services Act
- Participate on the state's Comprehensive Risk Aid (CRA) Steering Committee
- Participate on the advisory board for DCFS's Invest LA initiative

¹¹ https://youthlaw.org/publication/csec_la_childwelfare_juvenilejustice/

Each Supervisor

April 30, 2020

Page 26

- Participate on the CIO's Business Management Committee and on its Information Management Committee for Countywide data-sharing
- Participate in the steering committee to establish a family treatment court in Los Angeles
- Participate in the Project ABC Governance Board on serving young children and their families
- Participate in the Youth Justice Work Group that is developing recommendations for the most effective structure needed to best serve probation youth
- Convened a brainstorming session in April with key prevention leaders to gather input for DCFS's Invest LA cross-sector partnerships plan

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:eih

Attachment

c: Chief Executive Office
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Alternate Public Defender
Child Support Services
Chief Information Office
Children and Family Services
County Counsel
District Attorney
Fire
Health Services
Mental Health
Parks and Recreation
Probation
Public Defender
Public Health
Public Library
Public Social Services
Sheriff
Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services

From the Front Lines of COVID-19

Staff of the DCFS Accelerated Placement Team/Office of Child Protection (OCP) Pilot Project

During this pandemic, I have adjusted to not seeing clients in person by using FaceTime and having phone contact with them throughout the day. I also work more closely with the whole APT/OCP team, have a clearer vision of what an OCP case coordinator does, and can attend more CFT [Child and Family Team] and other meetings via phone, since I no longer have to drive across town to them. In addition, I have had clients realize that they do have the skills to work through a crisis without the in-person contact. Working through the pandemic has strengthened my client and team relationships as well as my clients' relationships with their primary and mental health teams—plus it's increased my documenting.

—OCP case coordinator Kelly

With the shelter-in-place order, OCP service delivery has grown and adapted to keep high-risk youth in placement and out of TSCFs [Temporary Shelter Care Facilities]. Most of my clients appreciate daily telephone check-ins during this stressful time, since they are reminders that we are still a present support. With social interactions greatly reduced, clients have been more intentionally engaged in telephone contact, which improves the depth of communication and disclosure—a positive offset to the lost connection of weekly in-person visits. The absence of significant travel, too, has drastically reduced my fatigue and subsequent stress; teleworking gives me greater stamina throughout the day. My productivity has improved as a result of new routines and disciplines that were previously disrupted by traffic and long travel times. In total, I have more energy and passion to build on existing foundations and create innovative methods of connection and support, both directly to clients and in coordinating families and teams.

—OCP case coordinator Jason

One major change for me as an OCP case coordinator has been the inability to go out on calls to assist my clients during times of need. I had a child who was hospitalized during the end of March and I was not able to visit her. I am grateful, though, that I was able to speak to her over the phone and continue to check in with her through FaceTime and Skype.

—OCP case coordinator Daisy



Working during COVID-19 as an OCP placement worker has not been as difficult as I thought it would be. I continue to reach out to children over the phone about the placements I send them to for interviews, and for the most part the children have been pretty receptive to speaking to me and sharing their concerns. The only barriers I have come across are the lack of beds available at STRTPs [Short-Term Residential Treatment Programs], plus quite a few foster homes being unwilling to take children because of the virus—even after I explain that they show no symptoms! There is some push-back, but overall I have still been able to place children in homes and STRTPs.

—OCP Placement Specialist Ketlyn

Even in light of pandemic restrictions, my work as an OCP CSW [children’s social worker] continues to be fully operational. Video conferencing, FaceTime, and phone contact have taken over face-to-face as the new norm. Although in-person interactions are more meaningful, virtual or telephonic communication has been just as effective. The youth have been incredibly adaptive to this world. As most are sheltering in place at home, reaching them via phone or text has been easy and our interactions indicate that most are doing well—keeping themselves occupied by completing their school work, watching movies, playing games, and bonding with other family members. Though they’ve expressed frustration at not being able to go into the community on pass, for the most part they’ve been patient, staying put in their placements. They are fully aware of the public health risks. CFT meetings continue to take place without disruption from within the walls of our respective homes. Videoconferencing with the youth’s IFCCS [Intensive Field Capable Clinical Services] team and others allows ongoing communication to ensure the youth’s needs are being met during this pandemic. Also, being accessible 24/7 to clients, caregivers, and other important team members during a crisis is invaluable, especially during these times of anxiety, isolation, and uncertainty, when clients and caregivers need us the most.

—OCP case coordinator Charles



Working with clients during COVID-19 has been challenging, but it is still business as usual. I have been able to FaceTime my clients and see some of them virtually. They have enjoyed just seeing my face. I call my clients in juvenile hall twice a week, and sometimes they call me on their own. Mostly they are feeling anxious (like most of America) about the pandemic. To continue teaming, we hold monthly phone CFTs for all clients. Although CFTs by phone can be a bit awkward, I can tell they are slowly adjusting to it.

One of the biggest complaints I hear is their sadness around not being able to see their family and friends during this time. (No visits are taking place and a lot of parents do not have access to FaceTime.) I have had to assist parents with setting up other forms of virtual contact, but it has not been easy; I *was* able to link one of my case parents, though, to a resource providing free internet service so that she could virtually see her daughter.

When it comes to my feelings, I can honestly say that I miss seeing my clients and I can tell they miss me as well. We have already begun discussing what we plan to do once the stay-at-home order is lifted. COVID-19 has definitely changed some things, but OCP is still helping youth not only to maintain their placements, but to maintain their connections.

—OCP case coordinator Auriel

