

Recap of Partners in Child Protection Reform Meeting August 2011 meeting

David Whiteside presented the cuts to the 6 strategy areas of the Division of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI). David answered questions regarding these cuts and the strategies the division will employ moving forward. DFPS agreed to email an electronic copy of the presentation to Ashley Harris.

After David presented, Katherine Barillas began the discussion with a question regarding strategies that could be employed in order to strengthen prevention work both within and outside of the context of DFPS. However, the remainder of the discussion focused primarily on PEI.

Diana Martinez indicated that the TexProtects Roundtable has met with Commissioner Heilgenstein regarding improving performance measures for PEI grantees as well as how outcome measures can be developed. Diana also reported that moving forward the Roundtable plans to hold quarterly prevention meetings. She also recommended that Partners wait to see the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task Force to ensure there isn't overlap with what they will suggest.

The group was asked if they thought a Partners Improvement Circle on prevention would be an appropriate way to move forward. There seemed to be interest from the group; however, Jane Burstain indicated that it would be important to first clarify if the improvement circle was to address child abuse prevention, juvenile justice prevention or both.

In whatever context the discussion takes place, it appears it is timely given that a new procurement process will begin in two and a half years - although David Whiteside indicated that PEI will begin talking about a strategy over the interim.

The following list consists of areas that were brought up by the group as needing attention:

- There needs to be a discussion of prioritizing who gets services or more generally how to most effectively allocate PEI resources. Currently, the decision regarding who get services occurs almost randomly. Formula funding consisting of risk factors could be developed and how current providers prioritize or will do so moving forward could be considered.
- There is a lack of capacity of counties/providers to deliver prevention services especially under evidence based standards. How do you support capacity building in this area?
- PEI contracts should require community partnerships to expand capacity (most of them already do but it isn't happening).
- It might be helpful to do a need assessment of kids in TYC and TJP to find out what led them there.
- Prevention should be refocused to the age range of 0-3 or 0-5 as the focus is heavily on older children.
- Performance and outcome measures should be revamped.

- There should be greater clarity of what PEI programs are for (prevention / intervention; tertiary programs & child welfare / juvenile justice). An example of this issue is that STAR receives child abuse prevention money but is commonly known as a juvenile justice prevention program.
- PEI needs an infrastructure to do more than manage contracts.
- Child abuse prevention should be integrated into K-12 curriculum.
- Prevention needs to be expanded/reframed (i.e from parenting programs to day care, Medicaid, adult health insurance etc.)
- The structure and delivery of child abuse prevention should be considered – being housed in the governor’s office, HHSC, public health arena etc. in order to protect it and support effectiveness. This is the area the Blue Ribbon Task Force will be giving recommendations on; however, it is not clear if they will also work on strategies for how that could happen.
- The family code governs PEI structure and function. It could be examined to see what needs to be changed.
- There are statutory issues regarding the Children’s Trust Fund. Currently it is indicated in statute that CTF is to be used for primary prevention of child abuse; however, STAR and CYD, known primarily as juvenile justice prevention programs, receive the most CTF funding.