

**State of California Department of Social Services
Office of Child Abuse Prevention**

**SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA
CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS**

October 1, 2005-September 30, 2006

June 2007

State of California

Since 1999, California has been required to have at least three Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) in operation in order to receive its grant for child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment programs under the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Since that time, the California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention (CDSS/OCAP) has provided the funding and technical support necessary to ensure that at least three counties operate CRPs and that there is a body that functions as a statewide CRP by reviewing the policies, practices and procedures of California's Child Welfare Services System.

This report covers the activities of California's panels for Federal Fiscal Year 2006 which began on October 1, 2005 and ended on September 30, 2006. Future directions will address Federal Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008. The annual reports and recommendations of the counties included in this report are on file at the CDSS/OCAP.

County Citizen Review Panels

Objective

To ensure that there are a minimum of three county-level citizen review panels in operation at all times.

Activities

Alameda, Kern, Napa, San Mateo and Calaveras Counties received funding to operate panels during this reporting period. A report on their activities, findings and recommendations along with a discussion of their future directions for FFY 2007 and FFY 2008 can be found under the specific county sections below.

Future Directions

The fourth citizen review panel funding cycle began on October 1, 2006 and will end on September 30, 2008. The selection process for the fourth funding cycle began in March of 2006, with the issuance of an All County Information Notice (ACIN) requesting applications to operate a CRP.

As a result of the FFY 2006-2008 application process, two county CRPs were funded. The San Mateo County CRP, which has been in existence since June 1999, was re-funded and Calaveras County CRP, which is a new panel, was also funded.

Objective

Provide training and on-going technical assistance to the three county level citizen review panels.

Activities

Strategies, Region II, which is implemented by Interface Children Family Services, is still retained by CDSS/OCAP to provide technical assistance to the county CRPs. One of CDSS/OCAP's requirements when the technical assistance consultant was hired for the October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2008 funding cycle was that the consultant has experience with Child Welfare Services System Improvement at the county level. This is important as county panels are beginning or continuing to review the effectiveness of the child welfare service departments in implementing policies, practices and procedures that support these departments in meeting the goals and objectives of county System Improvement Plans that are being prepared as part of Child Welfare Services System Improvement. The consultant that was hired, Louanne Shahandeh, continues to share with the county CRPs her knowledge of program and staff development, children's residential facilities, and CWS management. The consultant has provided on-going assistance to the new Calaveras County CPR through technical assistance with the structure and reporting responsibilities of the CRP. The consultant has also attended the meetings to assist with identifying realistic goals and work plans.

Objective

To review and respond to panel recommendations.

Activities

During this reporting period, the Kern County CPR submitted eleven recommendations to the county and four recommendations to the state. Kern CRP's county recommendations focused on more public representation on CWS oversight boards and committees and the need for non-emergent medical care for children in the emergency shelter. Kern's state recommendations concerned CAPTA requirements for reporting child fatalities and *guardian ad litem* responsibilities.

The San Mateo County CRP made seven recommendations to San Mateo County Human Services Agency. The recommendations focused on Team Decision Making (TDM), re-entry into the CWS and Differential Response. The Napa County CRP made recommendations addressing independent living staffing and Mandated Reporter training. The Alameda County CRP also focused on TDM. Since the Calaveras CRP was established in July 2006, it has been focused on establishing its structure and identifying goals so no recommendations were submitted for this report. See the county reports below for more information.

CDSS responded to the state recommendations by May 1, 2007. The Statewide Citizen Review Panel will review the recommendations made by the counties and make comments to the state regarding these recommendations prior to any response to the local panels by the CDSS/OCAP. County CWS agencies will be notified of their obligation to review and respond to recommendations from their panels.

The Statewide Citizen Review Panel

Objective

To ensure that there is a review body that examines the state-level Child Welfare Services System.

Activities

The statewide Citizen Review Panel, which grew out of the Child Welfare Services Stakeholders' Group, has worked over the past year to develop a functional panel with by-laws, regular meeting attendance and a cohesive strategy. New members have been recruited to represent the diverse perspectives that comprise the CWS in California. The statewide CRP has received technical assistance from CDSS, including presentations and documents on a wide variety of topics related to CWS.

CDSS staff made a detailed presentation on the first draft of California's Annual Progress and Services Report (2004-2005) to the statewide CRP. This report, which was submitted to ACF, Region IX, in June of 2006, represented efforts at the local and state levels to improve outcomes, such as reducing incidents of recurrent abuse and the time that children remain in out of home care. The CRP members provided CDSS staff with valuable feedback and information about projects in the state to include in the report.

The statewide CRP had a conference call with the county CRPs at the December 2005 meeting concerning the county panels' activities and recommendations to their CWS. The statewide CRP members interacted with the county members on the recommendations that they were making to the counties and the state.

Future Directions

In FFY 2007, the panel will focus its attention on the state's efforts to standardize the decision making process at critical stages of a child abuse investigation. A secondary issue is whether this process has an adverse impact on ethnic groups or parents who are socio-economically disadvantaged. The statewide CRP will review the assessment tools—Structured Decision Making (SDM) and the Comprehensive Assessment Tool (CAT)—utilized in this standardized process and how the tools are used by the line staff.

Kern County

County Profile

Kern County is located in California's Central Valley. In 2000, Kern's population was approximately 713,087. About 32% of its population is under the age of 18. In 2005, there were 15,314 child welfare referrals. In 2006, there were 2,466 children in foster care.

White persons (non-Hispanic/Latino) comprise roughly 50% of the Kern County population, while persons of Hispanic/Latino background represented about 33% of the population. People who reported being "some other race" were 23.2% of the population, while Blacks/African Americans represented 6%. Persons who reported being "two or more races" were 4.1% of the population, Asians were 3.4%, American Indians and Alaska Natives were 1.5% and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were less than 1%.

In 2000, foreign born persons accounted for 16.9% of the population and 33.4% spoke a language other than English at home. Of the population 25 and older, 68% have graduated from high school and 13.5% have bachelor's degrees.

Kern's population is at an economic disadvantage relative to the state as a whole. Kern's median household income is \$35,446 compared to \$47,493 for California. The per capita income for Kern is \$15,760 and the percentage of persons below the poverty line is approximately 20.8%. The figures for the state of California are \$22,711 and 14.2%.

Panel Activities

The Kern County Citizen Review Panel has been in existence for four years. During 2005-2006 the panel's work focused on the following objectives:

- Reviewing current practices regarding the availability of medical care for children who are placed in the county's Emergency Shelter Care Facility.
- Assessing the Mandated Reporter training, as well as assessing response follow up to child abuse reports by the local CWS staff.
- Assessing responses and/or changes made in practice, written policy and/or impact of the previous years recommendations made on both the local and state level.

Formal Recommendations

Recommendations to the County

- Add public members to internal child welfare policy/procedure development, quality assurance review processes and foster care administrative review body
- Add CWS expertise to Kern County Board of Supervisors by creating a CWS staff position for the Board.
- Demand improved collaboration among public agencies serving dependent children, especially emancipating youth.

- Improve quick identification of cases involving history of severe child abuse.
- Expand the reach of the Family to Family Initiative and the Differential Response program.
- Add more local housing for youth emancipating from foster care.
- Support continued health care services to children sheltered at the Jamison Center.

Recommendations to the State include:

- Public access to case information involving fatalities and near fatalities provided no later than 7-10 days after the incident.
- The state should comply with the CAPTA requirements that *guardian ad litem*s obtain first hand understanding of needs of children they represent. Also requested is the annual state data report concerning the average out of-court contacts between *guardians ad litem* and children they represent.
- The state should require performance measures for counties' ILPs in specified areas of their ILP work
- The state should comply with CAPTA provision relating to safe plans of care for drug-exposed infants and gathering of data to describe the county-level compliance with this requirement

CDSS has responded to the CRP's recommendations from FFY 2005. These responses are attached to this report. The responses must first be reviewed by CDSS legal staff prior to release. Kern County has responded to the CRP's FFY 2005 recommendations and those responses are attached to this report. CDSS is in the process of reviewing and responding to the CRP's FFY 2006 state recommendations and will include the state's response in the FFY 2007 CAPTA report and application.

Future Directions

Kern County chose not to apply for funding for the CRP in 2006-2008. Therefore, the Kern County CRP will not continue with its review of the county CWS.

Napa County

County Profile

Napa County, which is world-famous for its wines, is a rural county with a population of approximately 131,607 people. Population is concentrated in the cities of Napa, American Canyon, St. Helena and Calistoga which have many of the commercial features of larger cities: hotels, restaurants, and upscale shops that accommodate the tourist industry that has been spawned by the wineries. The wine industry employs many Hispanic farm workers. In 2005, there were 1,206 child welfare referrals. In 2006, there were 118 children in foster care.

Whites (non Hispanic/Latino) comprise roughly 69.1% of the population. Hispanic/Latinos are approximately 23.7%. Asians comprise approximately 3% of the population; Black or African Americans are roughly 1.3%; American Indians/Alaska Natives are approximately 0.8% and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders are 0.2 %.

Approximately 80.4% of the population aged 25 or older is comprised of high school graduates. About 26.4% hold bachelor's degrees. Median household income in 2000 was higher than that of the state as a whole, \$51,738 compared to the state's \$47,493. Per capital income was also higher: Napa's was \$26,395 as compared to \$22,711 for California. Persons in Napa living below the poverty line comprise roughly 8.3% of the population compared to 14.2% for the state as a whole.

Panel Activities

Napa County Citizen Review Panel has been in existence since June 1999. During 2005-2006 the panel's work focused on the following objectives:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Independent Living Program (ILP) components in preparing youth to transition out of care.
- Reviewing the level of engagement of families in the case planning process.
- Reviewing the practice components of the child welfare system (CWS) agency focused on reducing the recurrence of maltreatment.

Formal Recommendations

- The ILP Policy and Procedures should be written as soon as possible by CWS.
- CWS and schools to schedule Mandated Reporter Training.
- Safe Measures be expanded to give all social workers access to the program.
- Parent Partners to be used to help families understand the CWS system.

Future Directions

Napa County did not apply for CRP funding for FFY 2006-2008. The panel has decided to "remain a Panel and work on issues specific to our county."

County Profile

San Mateo County is located in the western portion of the San Francisco Bay Area, directly below the city/county of San Francisco. It is one of California's most affluent counties and, as part of "Silicon Valley," is home to many high-tech firms. Many of its foreign-born are highly educated professionals who are proficient in English. However, service industries employ both Americans and the foreign-born who have limited skills.

San Mateo's population is approximately 697,456 people, of whom approximately 23% are under 18 years old. In state Fiscal Year 2005-2006 there were 4,081 child welfare referrals and 477 children in foster care.

White persons (non-Hispanic/Latino) make up roughly 50% of the population, while persons of Hispanic/Latino origin make up 22%. Asians are 20% of the population, persons who reported being "some other race" are 10%, persons who reported being "two or more races" are 5%, Blacks or African Americans are 3.5%, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders are 1.3%, and American Indians and Alaska Natives are less than 1% of the population.

The median household income for the county is \$70,819, per capita income is \$36,045 and the percentage of persons below the poverty line is 5.8%. The median household income for California is \$47,493 and the state's per capita income is \$22,711. In the state of California approximately 14.2% of the population is below the poverty line.

Panel Activities

The San Mateo County Citizen Review Panel (CRP) has been in existence since June 1999. During 2005-2006 the panel's work focused on the following objectives:

- Reviewing re-entry factors and the impact of current family support and engagement practices facilitated by the San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA). In doing so, the panel focused on review activities involving Best Practice Models of Family Engagement, Best Practice Models regarding family support and resources referrals.
- Reviewing the Team Decision Making (TDM) process, as it relates to practices and policies focusing on engaging families in their own case planning.
- Reviewing the county's Differential Response implementation strategies.

Formal Recommendations

The CRP's recommendations to the HSA include:

- Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the TDM model and promote its use in all appropriate situations.
- Continue to provide opportunities for regular community input regarding the implementation of the TDM model and inform CRP as the opportunities are scheduled.

- Continue efforts to address the relatively high re-entry rate and report on its progress quarterly.
- Study the possibility of implementing a parent mentor program to assist parents in navigating the child welfare system.
- Review and update the parent education curriculum and information ensuring that it is accessible for parents who may have language, reading or learning challenges.
- Pursue funding for enhanced family services, such as family maintenance after reunification and after-care.
- Closely monitor the implementation of Differential Response to ascertain its impact on keeping families out of the child welfare system.

Future Directions

The CRP has been funded by OCAP for the FFY 2006-2008. In the upcoming year, this CRP will focus on:

- Reviewing data and reports concerning the implementation of TDM.
- Exploring options, such as “Parents Helping Parents”, to mitigate difficulties child welfare clients experience in accessing services.
- Seeking information on improving effectiveness of the CWS and reducing re-entry into the CWS.

County Profile

Alameda County received funding from OCAP to operate a citizen review panel for the 2004-2006 funding cycle. That was the first time that the county applied and received funding for a panel.

Alameda County is an urban county in the San Francisco Bay Area and the county seat is Oakland. Its population is approximately 1,461,030. Roughly 25% of the population is under the age of 18 years old. In 2005, there were 13,888 child welfare referrals. The foster care caseload was 2,714 in 2006.

Whites (non-Hispanic/Latino) comprise approximately 41% of the population, while Asians make up 20%. Hispanics/Latinos and Blacks make up 19 and 15% respectively of the county's population and 8.9% are those who report being "of some other race." Those who are of two or more races represent 5.6%. American Indians and Alaska Natives make up less than 1% of the county's population. Twenty-seven percent of the population is foreign born. Eighty-two percent of those age 25 or older are high school graduates, while 35% have bachelors' degrees. Median household income is roughly \$55,946, per capita income is \$26,680 and 11% of the people live below the poverty line.

Panel Activities

The Alameda County Citizen Review Panel (ACCRP) has been in existence for two years. During 2005-2006 the panel's work focused on the effectiveness of the Team Decision Making (TDM) process and the relationship between this practice and the well-being of the families and clients participating. The ACCRP also explored the impact TDMs have on the follow through of the case plan by families and social work staff.

Formal Recommendations

Recommendations made by the ACCRP to the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA) are as follows:

- More broad-based training is needed for all key system stakeholders to be educated about the strengths and value of the TDM process.
- Hold TDMs in the evening and in the client's own community.
- Include a mental health specialist in the TDM meeting.
- Include a drug counselor on the team and/or have substance abuse services available.
- Establish a process to contact families in a timely manner to ensure maximum participation in TDM.
- Establish a "timed" follow-up session with all participants to ascertain if the case plan that was established at the initial TDM was successfully implemented.

Future Directions

The ACCRP did not apply for funding for the 2006-2008 funding cycle.

Calaveras County

County Profile

Calaveras County received funding to implement a citizen review panel for the funding cycle of FFY 2006 to 2008. This is the first time this county has applied and received funding for a panel. The panel has only been functioning since July 2006.

Calaveras is a rural county in the "Gold Country" of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Its population is approximately 45,711 and roughly 22% of the population is under the age of 18. In 2005 there were 124 child welfare referrals. The foster care caseload was 99 in 2006.

The racial make-up of the county was 91% White, 7% Hispanic/Latino, .75% Black or African American, 1.74% Native American, .85% Asian, 2.07% from other races and 3.3% from two or more races.

The median income for household in the county was \$41,022 and the per capita income was \$21,420. The population below poverty level was 11.8% with 15.6% of those under age 18.

Panel Activities

The Calaveras County CRP has only been in existence since July 2006. The panel is part of the child abuse prevention council. The panel's initial activities centered on training the members about the functions and responsibilities of CRPs, determining the focus of the panel during the funding cycle, and developing a work plan to achieve its goals. The CDSS staff and consultants, Louanne Shahandeh and Annette Marcus, from Strategies have attended meetings of the panel to provide an overview of the CRP process and reporting responsibilities and to provide guidance on development of a work plan and CRP goals. Additionally, conference calls have been conducted to provide ongoing technical assistance and support.

The panel developed six goals, which address CRP membership recruitment and training, work plan development, reporting and dissemination of the CRP findings and recommendations and a CRP self-review component. The panel has developed a work plan to assess the policies, procedures and practices of the Calaveras County Child Welfare Services. Rate of foster care re-entry was a topic the panel members identified for study during the first year of its inception.

Formal Recommendations

During this reporting period, the Calaveras County CRP's focus has been on start-up activities including creating the structure, orientating members and developing goals. During the next reporting period, the panel will submit its first annual report including any recommendations to Calaveras County or the state.

Future Directions

In the FFY 2007, the CRP plans to hold focus groups including foster youth, bio-parents, social workers and community partners. University of California, Davis, staff will facilitate these groups. Current policies that impact re-entry will be reviewed by the panel and any issues that arise from this review will be integrated into the focus group interview questions. To accomplish the goals of the CRP, three subcommittees (Case History Review, Focus Group and Policy and Procedure Review) will be formed.

Appendix A : Statewide Citizen Review Panel Member List

NAME	TITLE and ORGANIZATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Robin Allen	Executive Director, California Court Appointed Special Advocates	660 13 th Street, Ste 300, Oakland CA 94612 (510) 663-8440 Fax (510) 663-8441 rallen@californiacasa.org
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Mike Carll	California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT) Parent Leader, Parents Anonymous of California	Mike: PO Box 98, San Andreas, CA 95249-0098 (209) 754-6885 Fax (209) 754-6721 mcarll@co.calaveras.ca.us
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Kate Cleary	Executive Director, Consortium for Children	1115 Irwin Street Ste. 2000, San Rafael, CA 94901-3321 (415) 458-1759 Fax (415) 453-2264 kate@consortforkids.org
Jacqueline Flowers	Assistant Superintendent, San Joaquin County Operated Schools and Programs	PO Box 213030, Stockton, CA 95213-9030 (209) 468-9107 Fax (209) 468-4951 jflowers@sjcoe.net (Kelly Fry is executive assistant)
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Pamela Maxwell	California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT) Parent Leader, Parents Anonymous of California	Pamela: PO Box 233462, Sacramento, CA 95823-0441 (916) 453-2704 X21 (916) 206-1721 Fax (916) 453 2708 pmaxwell@starsprogram.org
Francine McKinley	ICWA/Social Services Director, Mooretown Rancheria	1 Alverda Drive, Oroville, CA 95966-9379 (530) 533-3625 Fax (530) 533-0664 icwa@mooretown.org
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Cora Pearson Alternate: Velma J. Moore	California Foster Parent Association, Inc. <i>Velma: 3900 Moran B, Ceres, CA 95307</i> (209) 541-3819 velma@cfpa.com	Cora: 2414 Marigold Ave, Harbor City, CA 90710 (310) 539-0268 Fax (310) 539-8120 preciouspearl1@aol.com
John Phillips, MA	Program Supervisor, AOD Services, Mariposa County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Assn. of CA (CADPAAC) rep.	PO Box 99, Mariposa, CA 95338-0099 (209) 966-2000 Fax (209) 966-2000 jphillips@mariposacounty.org
Patricia Reynolds-Harris	Director, California Permanency for Youth Project	4200 Park Blvd, Oakland, CA 94602-1312 (510) 562-8472 Patrh@sbcglobal.net

Jennifer Rodriguez	Former foster youth, California Youth Connection	c/o Janet Knipe (415) 442-5060 X15 jknipe@calyouthconn.org Jennifer's contact info: jennar22@hotmail.com
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Susan A. Taylor, PhD	National Association of Social Workers, CA Chapter	Dept. of Social Work, CSUS 600 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-6104 (916) 278-7176 (w) (530) 622-7602 (h?) taylor@s@hhs4.csus.edu
Christopher Wu, JD Alternate: Don Will	Supervising Attorney, Center for Families, Children and the Courts, Judicial Council of CA-- Administrative Office of the Courts <i>Don, Supervising Research Analysis</i> Administrative Office of the Courts (415) 865-7557 don.will@jud.ca.gov	445 Golden Gate Ave, San Francisco, CA 94102- 3688 (415) 865-7721 Fax (415) 865-7217 christopher.wu@jud.ca.gov

No members left the California Citizen Review Panel in FFY 2006. Patricia Reynolds-Harris was added as a member.