

**SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS**  
**October 1, 2006-September 30, 2007**

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 CAPTA. Since that time, the 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 CWS System.

This report covers the activities of California's CRPs for FFY 2007, which began on October 1, 2006 and ended on September 30, 2007.

**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**

San Mateo and Calaveras Counties received funding to operate their CRPs during this reporting period. The third CRP is the state Citizens Review Panel (CCRP). The report on their activities, findings and recommendations, along with a discussion of their future directions for FFY 2007 can be found below.

**Future Directions**

The fourth citizen review panel funding cycle began October 1, 2006 and will end on September 30, 2008. The selection process for the fourth funding cycle began in March 2006, with the issuance of an All County Information Notice (ACIN) requesting applications to operate a CRP. County Fiscal Letter 07/08-03 authorized funding for the final cycle, which ends on September 30, 2008. CDSS/OCAP will be extending and augmenting the funded CRP counties through FFY 2008/09, while also starting a statewide solicitation process designed to recruit future CRP counties.

The Calaveras County CRP Annual Report was submitted on October 31, 2007 and the Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency responded on November 15, 2007. The San Mateo County CRP submitted its annual report on October 31, 2007 and the San Mateo County Human Services Agency responded on June 18, 2008. CDSS/OCAP has noted that CAPTA requires that the county and state responses be given within six months of the submittal of the CRP reports. San Mateo County was alerted to this fact and subsequently submitted its report. CDSS/OCAP staff have developed a process by which each participating county will be notified upon receipt of the CRP reports and reminded of the response due dates. CDSS/OCAP staff will more diligently monitor the timeliness of such reports and responses. The process will also be revised so that both the date the CRP report is submitted and the date the state/county responds will be clearly documented.

**Objective**

To provide training and on-going technical assistance to California's citizen review panels.

**Activities**

Strategies, Region II continues to provide technical assistance via a sub-contract to a consultant, Ms. Louanne Shenandoah. During this reporting period approximately 104 hours of technical assistance has been provided to the California CRPs. Technical assistance has included program orientation, development of policies and procedures, and self- evaluation. Services have been provided during site visits and via conference calls

**Objective**

Review and respond to panel recommendations.

**Activities**

Calaveras and San Mateo counties submitted recommendations to their respective counties. San Mateo County made recommendations to the county government only, while Calaveras submitted one recommendation to the state and five county recommendations. The California Citizens Review Panel (CCRP) submitted seven recommendations to the state regarding the efficacy of California's safety and risk assessment tools being used in all 58 California counties.

The Calaveras County recommendations included addressing local child welfare staff training needs, increasing Parent Partner Services, increasing use of the Family Group Decision Matrix, and continuing work and support services for reunified children. The county child welfare department has confirmed receipt of the recommendations. The recommendation made to the state contains a request to update the CDSS' Manual of Policy and Procedure (MPP) Division 31 Regulations in order to reflect child welfare redesign and improvements..

The San Mateo County CRP made six recommendations to the county child welfare department and none to the state. County recommendations include a request to receive more information on the Team Decision Making goal setting process, review of each county re-entry case, and suggested the increase of parent partners as a strategy to meet the need of the diverse children and families within the county child welfare system in San Mateo County. The final request is for the county to provide the CRP with quarterly status reports on the Differential Response services.

CDSS responded to the recommendations that had been addressed to it by May 13, 2008. CDSS/OCAP has reviewed and responded May 2008, to the recommendations from the panels with their county CWS agencies.

**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 California Citizen Review Panel (CCRP), which grew out of the CWS Stakeholders' Group, became active in September 2005. During this reporting period the CCRP completed the following:

- Submitted comments on the draft of the state of California's Title IV Child and Family Services Plan Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR).
- Served (on-going) on the Steering Committee of the state of California's Child and Family Service Review.
- Made a presentation about Citizen Review Panels and their role in the CWS to the San Mateo County Citizen's Review Panel.
- Reviewed the comments and recommendations of the county Citizen Review Panels.
- Investigated the implementation and efficacy of safety and risk assessment tools being used, or about to be used, in all 58 counties in California.
- Held four (4) meetings in Sacramento, California.

## **Future Directions**

The CCRP is scheduled to meet quarterly during FY 2007/08, while continuing to serve as the Prevention Advisory Council (PAC) for California. The CCRP continues to track the uniform safety assessments implemented in all 58 California counties. Additional future activities include examination of family reunification plans where children have been removed from the home, the ICWA, and state funding methodologies; including review of how state funding is monitored and audited.

Appendix A: Statewide Citizen Review Panel Member List

NAME	TITLE and ORGANIZATION
<b>Elaine Azzopardi</b>	San Mateo County Human Services Manager
<b>Mara Bernstein</b>	Center for Families, Children & the Courts, Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts
<b>Mike Carll</b>	California Parent Leadership Team, Parents Anonymous of California, Parent Leader
<b>Miryam Choca</b>	California State Strategies, Casey Family Programs, Director
<b>Kate Cleary</b>	Consortium for Children, Executive Director
<b>Kelly Cleary</b>	Consortium for Children
<b>William Fuser</b>	Lilliput Children's Services, Executive Director (Retired)
<b>Nanette Gledhill</b>	Cal-ICWA, Director of Operations
<b>Corene Kendrick</b>	Youth Law Center
<b>Pamela Maxwell</b>	California Parent Leadership Team, Parent's Anonymous of California, Parent Leader
<b>Michelle Neumann-Ribner</b>	San Diego County Office of County Counsel, Juvenile Division, Senior Deputy County Counsel
<b>James M. Owens</b>	Los Angeles County Counsel, Dependency Division, Assistant County Counsel, California County Counsel Association
<b>Lois Patrick</b>	El Dorado County Children's Services, Deputy Director (Retired)
<b>Karen Pank</b>	Probation Officers of California, Chief
<b>Jennifer Rodriguez</b>	California Youth Connection, Former Foster Youth

## **San Mateo County**

### **County Profile**

San Mateo County is located in the western portion of the San Francisco Bay Area, directly below the city and county of San Francisco. It is one of California's most affluent counties and part of the "Silicon Valley," home of many high-tech firms. A unique characteristic of this county is that many residents are foreign-born, highly educated professionals who are proficient in English.

San Mateo's population is approximately 733,496 people, which is estimated to be 1.9% of California's population, of whom approximately 164,018 are children under the age of 18. In SFY 2005/06 there were 721 emergency response referrals and 464 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 5.0%, 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.

### **Activities**

During FY 2006/07, the San Mateo CRP focused on monitoring the recommendations it developed during SFY 2005/06. Activity included receiving CRP training designed to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the CWS to increase the panel members' ability to meet the CRP requirements.

The San Mateo CRP also developed operational guidelines that describe the desired make-up of the CRP, which maintains ongoing efforts to build membership within the established guidelines for the purpose of increasing the panel's diversity.

The San Mateo CRP also worked on launching a county CRP web site and reported that it is active by June 2008.

The CRP continued to examine the San Mateo Team Decision Making model, promoting increased use of the model while expanding opportunities for broad community input regarding the model's effectiveness.

The final activity monitored by the CRP was the Child Welfare re-entry rate. Areas examined included accessibility for parents who may have language, reading or writing barriers.

## **Formal Recommendations**

The San Mateo panel made the following formal recommendations for FY 2006/07 to the county:

1. County Children and Family Services (CFS) should clarify/clearly define the goals of TDMs and make those goals clear to all, prior to implementing an effective evaluation of the TDM process and outcomes, including short and long term assessment of the outcomes.
2. CFS should allow CRP to review each re-entry case for the purpose of accessing narrative and anecdotal information.
3. CFS should proceed with the development and implementation of a parent as partner program and provide CRP with quarterly status reports.
4. CFS should continue implementation of the new parent education curriculum and provide CRP with evaluation information by June 2008, following the first year of the program.
5. CFS should continue to ensure that all materials used to educate parents about the CWS are accessible to families who may have language barriers, communication challenges or learning difficulties, and report to CRP in six months.
6. CFS should continue to closely monitor the implementation of Differential Response and report to CRP with quarterly status reports.

## **Future Directions**

The CRP will be addressing the following priorities in the upcoming year:

- Continued recruitment of new members.
- Assessing training and technical needs.
- Monitoring TDM implementation by receiving and reviewing quarterly reports that are submitted to the Stuart Foundation by the HHSA and requesting additional information as appropriate (i.e., results of participant evaluations).
- Receiving a joint report from Sphere Institute and HHSA on factors that are impacting re-entry.
- Continuing to monitor quarterly performance reports (AB 636) on system improvement.

## **Calaveras County**

### **County Profile**

Calaveras County received funding to operate a CRP for the 2005-2008 funding cycle. This is the first time that the county has applied and received funding for a CRP. Calaveras

County is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, approximately 135 miles west of Lake Tahoe.

The population for Calaveras County consists of approximately 46,028 residents of which 8,401 are children 18 years and younger. The county racial demographics consists of 89% Caucasian/white, 7% Latino/Hispanic, 2% Native American Indian, and the remaining 2% of the county population is represented by all other groups. The county child protection agency received 801 emergency response referrals while having 130 substantiated cases during SFY 2005/06. There are 98 children in placement which represents 11.7% of the children population under the age of 18.

### **Activities**

During SFY 2006/07 the Calaveras CRP combined membership with the County Child Abuse Prevention Council to have a larger and more diverse group. The CRP continues to support CRP membership with a program orientation and manual/guide that includes a confidentiality statement, historical information on CRP activities and information on the county SIP. The CRP has established protocols regarding county case information and data.

### **Formal Recommendations**

1. The Calaveras County Child Welfare Department internal policies and procedures are in need of updates. These recommended updates may provide additional supports to the 12 week in-house training program provided to all social workers, as recommended by the University of California Davis Training Academy.
2. Case reviews revealed a need for the Calaveras county child welfare department to offer Parent Partner services to families as a strategy to improve family reunification outcomes. The CRP recommends families be included in the development of their family case plan and that the case plan be reviewed several times to ensure families understand what is expected of them to reunify with their children.
3. The focus group committee of the Calaveras CRP recommends the inclusion of the family in the development of the case plan. The committee believes this action will improve family buy-in and result in better outcomes for children and families. Additionally the CRP requests that reunification services continue in the home after the children have been returned.
4. The recommendation made to the state contains a request to update the CDSS' Manual of Policy and Procedure (MPP) Division 31 Regulations in order to reflect ongoing federal PIP language. CDSS agrees and this update is currently in process.

### **Future Directions**

Over the next year, the CRP will continue to research and evaluate the county's rate of children re-entering the foster care system. The CRP will be focusing on the following areas:

- Policies and Procedures regarding re-entry into foster care.
- Re-evaluating Parents understanding of their case plans.

- Research cost and payment options for drug and alcohol services.