

# Orange County Children's Partnership (OCCP)

---

October 19, 2017 Minutes

## **In Attendance: 25**

Eldon Baber, Sharon Boles, Jeff Burgett, Lisa Burke, Karen Christensen, Denise Churchill, Curtis Condon, Kim Goll, Dr. Eric Handler, Jim Harte, Judge Maria Hernandez, Fatima Juarez, Raina Lee, Susan Leibel, Tracy LeSage, Norean Lubchenko, Jean Martin, Josie Roemhild, Mike Ryan, Denise Schleicher, Linda Smith, Shatoya Wallace, Janis White, Veronica Zuniga, Victor Chavez

## **Introductions / Announcements:**

Introductions were made. Raina Lee introduced Fatima Juarez and Shatoya Wallace, both have been hired by the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) as new Youth Voice Representatives, and they would be joining OCCP.

Judge Hernandez announced that she would be stepping down as the Juvenile Court representative for OCCP by the end of the calendar 2017 year. Judge Hernandez introduced Judge Joanne Motoike, who will be the new representative.

Janis White announced her retirement. Paula Noden will be the new Regional Center of Orange County representative.

Judge Hernandez introduced Denise Schleicher. Denise announced that she would be taking over the law office of Harold LaFlamme. The office would continue to serve as the primary attorney for dependent children in the County of Orange and a representative would begin attending OCCP meetings regularly.

## **State Legislation/Budget:**

No discussion.

## ***ACTION ITEM:***

Review and approve minutes from the September 19, 2017 meeting. Minutes were approved.

## **WE CAN Coalition Update**

Dr. Anne Light provided an update on the WE CAN Coalition. The presentation focused on drug / alcohol usage, opioid overdose and death, and community treatment usage in the County of Orange. Dr. Light reported the available data does not provide a full picture and that correlations assumed based on available data and heat mapping do not provide all the information. Additional evaluation would be required. She asked attendees to consider participating in emerging communications committees.

## **Annual Conditions of Children's Report**

Lisa Burke reported the Report had been presented at the October 17, 2017 Board of Supervisors Meeting. Supervisor Do commented on positive trends in the report this year. There were no other comments. Lisa said the reports are being stored at the Children and Families Commission of Orange County. She has reached out to members of the OCCP for distribution. The goal is to get the reports out into the community. Any OCCP attendees that want copies to share with constituents should contact Lisa. An email with digital access to the Report and a one-page teaser is in development and will be

distributed to the email list created last year. Lisa reminded attendees the First District's forum is scheduled for October 27, 2017, at the Delhi Community Center in Santa Ana, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. To date eighty people have signed up to attend the forum which will focus on immunization and childhood obesity. The Fifth District is planning to hold its forum on December 13, 2017 at Mission Hospital. Supervisor Bartlett has decided the topic will focus on mental health. Lisa said a planning committee is in development and asked anyone interested in participating to contact her. The Third District, in partnership with St. Joseph's Hospital, is planning its forum for January 2018 at Cal State Fullerton. The focus is under consideration. Once Supervisor Nelson has determined the topic, Lisa will report to the OCCP and ask for assistance.

### **Short-term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP) Continuum of Care Subcommittee**

Veronica Zuniga reported the subcommittee met with providers to review program statement. Jim Harte reported a challenge is that providers are being required to modify their service model from traditional longer-term group treatment to a six-month to a year model, which is a dramatic shift in focus. SSA and HCA continue to support providers along the process. Veronica added that assistance continues to be provided at the monthly committee meetings and that plans for further assistance are in development for the January 2018 Quarterly Group Home Forum.

### **Foster Family Agencies Continuum of Care (FFACCR) Subcommittee**

Norean Lubchenko reported the subcommittee had met on October 17, 2017. Although all fifty-five contracted agencies were invited, only a small group of providers attended. Providers have reported that accommodating court ordered visitation hours is extremely challenging with some voicing that other counties, particularly Los Angeles, order far less weekly visitation hours than Orange County, and that the higher amount of hours makes it difficult for foster caregiver to provide a sense of normalcy with family, sport and school events. Judge Hernandez said appropriate visitation schedules were critical for the well-being of the child and the possibility for reunification with family. She cautioned that other counties may not give visitations the high value Orange County does and thus not see their benefit. Mike Ryan said SSA seeks to work with its community partners to help alleviate the need for visitation sites and identify resources.

Jim Harte reported that providers are engaged in strategies to identify experienced foster families and provide training and support so that they may care for hard to place children. These families have experience with children at varying levels of behavioral barriers, as well as dealing with child welfare, mental health and juvenile court systems. They are very experienced with the process and the population. Jim said agencies are finding it difficult to recruit families willing to work with hard to place children.

Shatoya Wallace stated that time is of the essence, particularly with CSEC, as the youth seeks to develop a relationship with the foster parent and maintain relationship with biological family. A person not fully committed to the process or afraid of its challenges should not consider fostering. She added that visitations are crucial in developing both relationships and in helping youth reunify with family. The foster child seeks to find foster parents truly making efforts to help get the youth and family back on track, and this helps youth to have faith in the system. She added that her brother, as a foster care child, continually ran away from foster caregivers, frustrated with trying to get his needs met

and the length of it took to create constructive relationship with foster parents and obtain assistance. He often felt discourage and ran way in an effort to find resolution on his own.

Linda Smith said she was concerned with foster family agencies having difficulties becoming Medi-Cal certified and the possibility of families not being able to appropriately qualifying for Medi-Cal. She is concerned that there will not be sufficient caregivers to support the children.

Ann Bloxom reported SSA continues to seek families for the four hard to place categories: commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC), special medical needs, large sibling sets and children with high needs behaviors. SSA, similar to the FFA, continues to struggle at it recruitment efforts for these populations. Norean added that SSA is seeking to recruit family willing to foster high needs children. Faith in Motion partners have also been recruiting with a frank message of the reward and challenges of fostering these populations. Saddleback Church provides a support group dealing with foster care which includes a trauma informed foster care series and toolkit. Mike said SSA and its partners continue to create means of stabilizing children in placement and to recruit families to meet the demand. This is an ongoing issue.

**OCCP Areas of Focus: All areas are on hold.**

- Assembly Bill 403
- Commercially Sexually Exploited Children
- Child Abuse / Neglect – WE CAN Coalition
- Early Childhood Development
- Food Security
- Mental Health Advocacy for Adolescents

**General Committee Member Comments:**

Dr. Eric Handler announced that he is working to bring a representative from the Orange County Human Relations to speak on its Hate Free OC campaign. He also reported that Waste Not OC in collaboration with its partners has redistributed over ten million pounds of food this calendar year. Lastly, he reminded the membership of the need for Orange County to stay vigilant in its efforts to inform the community of its near drowning prevention campaign and he addressed efforts to have California pass legislation which would be similar to Florida’s residential swimming pool safety act. Included in the act is the requirement that residential pools are fenced on all four sides.

**Public Comments:**

None

**Next Meeting:**

Next meeting will be held November 16, 2017, at the Probation Grand Avenue Office Building located a 1001 South Grand Avenue, Santa Ana 92705.