

Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel (CSRP) 2017 Annual Report

Mission Statement:

Provide opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring the child protection system is protecting children from abuse and neglect and ensuring a nurturing home environment.

Panel Members:

Mary Agnew, resigned
Chandra Bittmann
Amanda Block
Lois Gehrman, Co-chair (Resigned as Co-Chair)
John Hanna
Jeanette Jones
Tonya K Long, Co-chair
Karen Mercado
Tony Porter, Co-chair (Resigned as Co-Chair)
Laurie Rottach, resigned
Jackie Thomas, pending

Meetings:

In 2017 the Ramsey County Children's Service Review Panel (CSRP) met on the following dates: January 12, February 9, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8, August 3, September 14, October 12, November 9, and December 14

County and State Support:

The Panel receive regular updates from the Ramsey County Social Services Department and the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). Tami Baker-Olson, Kim Cleminson, Gayle Kittleson and Alex Cleaveland have represented the County in this capacity and Mary Doyle attends from DHS. Kristen Jackelen is the Coordinator for Ramsey County. She performs many administrative tasks for the Panel.

Activities:

January 2017

- The CSRP project for 2017 is the Foster Care Survey in Ramsey County. The Foster Care Project committee members are Tonya Long, Tonya Porter and John Hanna. Tonya Long presented ideas for sample questions for the Committee's approval and proposed a letter to the Children's Law Center which seeks their help in administering the survey to youth in care.

February 2017

- Tonya Long presented questions for the survey, the panel reviewed and made changes.

March 2017

- Kim Cleminson reported that the Ramsey County Civil Attorney does not approve of the Panel's participation in Redetermination hearings. As an alternative Kim suggested that the Panel participate in the Ramsey County Child Mortality Review (CMRs).

April 2017

- Patti Vitek from Ramsey County attended the Panel's meeting and answered questions re: screening and investigation.

May 2017

- Mary Agnew will attend the Ramsey County Child Mortality Review on May 23rd.
- Tonya Long attended the National Citizens Review Panel in Alaska on May 10 – 12.
- The Foster Care Survey for youth questions were finalized, however members thought the survey should be vetted by CASCW at the University of Minnesota

June 2017

- Tonya Long was elected as Co-Chair. Tony Porter resigned as Co-Chair.
- Kim Cleminson reported that all sexually exploited youth are coming into child protection intake.

August 2017

- Mary Doyle shared that a bulletin that is available online regarding a legislative update.
- Mary Doyle shared information concerning the major law suite against Hennepin County and DHS regarding the handling of child protection cases.
- Alexander Cleaveland reported that Ramsey County has two new contracts in place to recruit foster care homes within the Native American and African American communities.

September 2017

- Mary Doyle presented an overview on 2017 Child Welfare Legislation.

October 2017

- Janet Salo, Family Support Specialist-Kinship Family Support Services at Lutheran Social Services, was the guest speaker, along with Heather Bailey, Parents Forever Program at LSS.

They provided an update on resources for kin families and kinship caregivers. This includes family support services and Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP).

- Kim Cleminson discussed her concerns with the Foster Care Survey for youth not being vetted and received feedback from other Panel members regarding their reservations as well. Kim asked that the youth survey not be administered. She offered instead an opportunity for the Panel to work the Casey Family Foundation who will be working with Ramsey County to review their work processes and service delivery.
- Tonya Long attended the Why is Minnesota Removing so Many Children into the Child Protection System conference on October 13.

November 2017

- The Annual Meeting for Citizens Review Panels (CRPs) was held on 11-16. Lois Gehrman and John Hanna received updates on ongoing work at DHS including the Domestic Violence Work Group, Prenatal Exposure Best Practice Guide and Child and Youth Sex and Labor Trafficking
- Kim Cleminson reported that Sexually Exploited Youth (SEY) training is taking place.
- Kim Cleminson reported that the County is moving forward with their work with Casey Family Foundation and that the Panel will be invited as a stakeholder.
- The Foster Care Parent/Caregiver Survey was sent out. November 9, 2017

December 2017

- Mary Doyle from DHS reported that DHS will reissue the Screening Guidelines in January 2018. One of this issues is to clarify that the statute that states that the clock starts running for the 24-hour response by the County to cases involving egregious harm and/or sexual abuse begins at the time of the call to report the abuse, and not when the case is screened in.
- Kim Cleminson reported the County's 24/7 approach is going well and that the County is working hard to meet the 24-hour response from the time of the call.
- Mary Doyle from DHS offered to take the Foster Care Surveys and tally the responses for the Panel, so that the Panel has some data for their Annual Report.
- Tonya Long attended a meeting regarding Foster Care. An issue was raised about the lack of training for children in Foster Care regarding Child Protection. She learned that 90% of children interviewed who were or had been in Foster Care felt that it was their fault that they were in Child Protection.

Committees:

The Panel has two active committees: Child Mortality Review, Foster Care Survey Project.

Ramsey County Citizen's Review Panel

2017 Recommendations

To the Ramsey County Social Services Department and

The Minnesota Department of Human Services

The Panel did a Ramsey County Foster Parent Survey. This survey went out to foster homes in Ramsey County licensed through the agency. The survey consisted of 10 questions around training, information, expenses and unity. Over 200 surveys were mailed out and at the time of this writing we have received 50 surveys. While we review the responses at this time one question did stand out. The question on the out of home placement plan, 47 of the respondents indicated that they had not received training regarding the out of home placement plan.

MN Stat. 260C.212 (b) An out-of-home placement plan means a written document which is prepared by the responsible social services agency jointly with the parent or parents or guardian of the child and in consultation with the child's guardian ad litem, the child's tribe, if the child is an Indian child, **the child's foster parent** [emphasis added] or representative of the foster care facility, and, where appropriate, the child...

Other responses are that the foster parents wanted training for Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, CPR, and all 48 would like a foster parent support group.

The panel recommendations from the survey would be to include the following:

- Training for the out-of-home placement plan and foster parent's involvement in that plan's preparation.
- Foster parent support groups

Looking Ahead:

1. The Panel will continue its work on the Foster Parents survey project which will include analyzing data from the surveys and gathering information for recommendations to DHS and Ramsey County. The Panel hopes to present its findings to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners.
2. The Foster Care committee will work with Ramsey County and the Casey Family Foundation as a stakeholder in continuing the Panel's previous work on developing a plan for surveying children in foster care, to better understand their concerns and needs.

3. The Panel will continue to monitor the changes in policies and procedures in the child protection system in Minnesota through information received by the Legislative Oversight committee.
4. The Panel will pursue discussions with the Ramsey County Intellectual and Developmental Disability Advisory Committee as to how we might collaborate to promote more effective Transitional Services for youth in both the foster care and special education.
5. The Panel will pursue the development of a round-table discussion with DHS and Ramsey County on strategies for strengthening permanent connections for youth transitioning out of foster care. This will include the use of the Permanency Pact Model that is used in other states.
6. The Panel will continue to pursue the possibility of participating in Requests for Redetermination of a finding of abuse in Ramsey County.