

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2015
Buena Vista, New Castle

Call to Order: Senator Blevins, Chair, called the DVCC Quarterly meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

Introductions: In attendance were the following DVCC members: Senator Patricia Blevins, Dana Harrington Conner, Neda Biggs, Commissioner Robert Coupe, Diane Glenn, Chief Jeffrey Horvath, Brendan O'Neill, Secretary Jennifer Ranji, and Secretary Lewis Schiliro. Also in attendance were Linda Carmichael (Superior Court), Chief John Horsman (DPCC), Gary Melvin (DPCC), Maggie O'Bara (DCP), Adrienne Owen (DSP), Krista Griffith (DOJ), Cherelyn Homlish (People's Place), Karen McGloughlin (DHSS), Maureen Monagle (CJC), Addie Asay (Family Court), Alan Cooper (Family Court), Peggy Bell (DELJIS), Shamla McLaurin (Catholic Charities), Leslie Williams (Catholic Charities), Catherine Zwolak Kilian (DE Civil Clinic) and DVCC Staff Ellie Torres, Natasha Smith, Aimee String, Pat Kwetkauskie and Karen Ewing.

Minutes: A motion to approve the March 2, 2015 minutes was made, seconded and the minutes were approved.

Presentation: Aimee String gave a brief presentation about the International Batterers' Treatment Conference entitled "Advancing the Narrative: Inspiring the Future". The Conference sponsored by the Batterers' Intervention Services Coalition of Michigan (BISC-MI), took place from April 15-17 in Grand Rapids, MI. Notable speakers included Tony Porter, David Mandel, Kit Gruelle, Michael Paymar and many more. Aimee discussed emerging trends in the field including the need to understand the role that "gender norms" play in domestic violence, the role of diversity in treatment programs and the need to tailor treatment programs for women offenders. Aimee also discussed and distributed information about a recent UK study regarding the effectiveness of domestic violence treatment programs entitled Project Mirabel. The study offers evidence that domestic violence treatment programs are effective. While at the conference, Aimee was asked to serve as Delaware's representative to AQUILA, a national organization committed to providing accurate evidence based information about batterers' intervention programs and their impact on those who batter.

Widener Symposium Summary:

The Widener University School of Law Symposium entitled "Strengthening & Protecting Families" was held April 17, 2015. This symposium addressed domestic violence as a significant family health policy issue, explored the legal and community response to intimate partner violence to improve outcomes for survivors and their children. Dana Harrington Connor stated that not all the feedback was processed but seventy-six (76) survey responses have been collected and 99% show improved knowledge of domestic violence issues. Feedback from the Council was that the event was "tremendous" and that the "symposium had a good collection of stakeholders". The Family Health Law & Policy Institute will be conducting future trainings.

Any ideas or thoughts regarding future trainings should be forwarded to Dana Harrington Connor.

Family Court Enhancement Project Update: The four sites met in Minneapolis for a valuable informational sharing session. There was an opportunity to discuss custody cases involving domestic violence and receive concrete suggestions for identifying and handling these difficult cases. Delaware has begun reviewing files in a sampling of cases that involved domestic violence and custody. Judge Cooper is available for further discussion, if needed.

Lethality Assessment and DV Intervention Program Update: Gary Melvin stated that in late January 2014 only 39% of officers were utilizing the lethality assessment. Trainings began on February 24, 2014 with 43 training sessions completed in 25 of the 43 police departments resulting in over 500 trained officers. Trainings are tailored to each department scheduling needs. It was mentioned briefly that the Baltimore Police Department manually writes lethality assessment reports with an 81% completion rate. With Delaware's technology and electronic report writing, we are looking for our numbers to increase.



The Domestic Violence Intervention Program (VIP) is designed to assist those that need to use the courts for any domestic violence related issues. For example, a criminal trial as a witness, civil issues such as divorce, child custody or support, or protection from abuse hearings. On the Delaware Capitol Police website, anyone can click on the icon (left) to complete a request form to have police accompaniment to court. Requests do not have to be made by the victim but can be made on their behalf. The icon link will be available in the future to be added to other websites including the courts. To date the court accompaniment program has received 80 referrals with 120 accompaniments.

Teen Dating Violence Policies Update: Ellie Torres briefly gave background on the TDV legislation which required Delaware public and charter schools to send a TDV policy to the DVCC by January 5, 2015. To date, all public schools have complied and all but six charter schools have submitted policies. The remaining six charter schools have been in communication with Aimee String to submit their policies. The second part of the bill was to have administration, nurses and counselors trained on the response to teen dating violence. Unfortunately, only 194 out of approximately 600 staff have completed the training which is available on-line through the DOE training website. Aimee is working with John Sadowski to add training reminders in a weekly newsletter. Ellie wanted feedback on the next steps for expanding training. It was suggested that additional teen dating violence training should be included with the mandatory child abuse reporting training for teachers.

DVCC Committee Updates:

Criminal Justice: Natasha updated the Council on behalf of Renee Burskirk from Department of Correction regarding the unserved PFAs. As of May 6, 2015, the 40 unserved default PFA orders where the Respondent is/was on active Probation are as follows:

- 14 – Served
- 8 – Respondent served at hearing but not entered in Family Court system
- 6 – Absconded from probation
- 4 – Probation Discharged (informed PFA prior to discharge)
- 3 – PFA has since expired
- 1 – DOC custody (JTVCC)
- 4 – Informed of PFA by Probation Officer (e-mail requesting follow up sent

to assigned Officers on 5/6)

Renee also began training DV Probation Officers in New Castle County at Hares Corner on PFA process and types of PFAs so there will be greater understanding of language used in the PFA orders including what it means to see a default order in DELJIS. Renee plans on training probation officers statewide because a PFA Respondent does not always get assigned to a DV Probation Officer. Renee received positive feedback about the training.

Brendan O'Neill sent a letter to Chief Bryson to get clarity and uniformity as to how police officers should handle situations where there are unserved PFAs. John Horsman reported for the Police Chiefs' Council that they are working to create a model policy for service of PFA orders and have reviewed policies nationwide. He mentioned that a PFA with a traffic stop is complicated referencing children present as an example. Chief Horsman will have an update on the model policy by the September Quarterly meeting.

DVCC Legislative Committee: Senate Bill 55 which would extend exparte PFA orders from 10 to 15 days is on hold for this year. Senator Margaret Rose Henry has a gun violence bill (SB83) amending sections of PFA statute and it would be best to wait this year. Representative Barbieri has sponsored HB132 which has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. HB 132 clarifies that regardless of whether parental rights have been terminated, a petition for protection from abuse may be filed on behalf of a child against a former parent whose conduct constitutes abuse. Ellie Torres mentioned additional bills that are related to domestic violence but are not DVCC sponsored: HB4 and HB7.

Elderly & DV Committee: Secretary Schiliro mentioned that the Committee will be actively working to find the underlying issues surrounding elderly domestic violence and that in Fall 2015 the Committee would like to have a statewide public meetings. The Committee will be working with Peggy Bell to set a foundation for statistics.

Children & DV Committee: Secretary Ranji will be working with Vicky Kelly and David Mandel on the possibility of bringing the Safe and Together Model to Delaware. She is looking to have all DSCYF staff trained. The Committee will be discussing adding crimes to the definition of perpetrator of domestic violence at their June 1st meeting.

Immigration Committee: Neda Biggs mentioned that the Committee will be collaborating with others on a fall DV Forum that will focus on the downstate immigrant population. The Committee is also reviewing the VERA Institute Trafficking tool. The Immigration Resource Guide is complete and is being distributed to providers.

Fatal Incident Review Team: Dana Harrington Conner stated that the FIRT team will meet for a full day to allow the team to review a case more thoroughly. They will conduct family interviews, compile details and screen for themes. The next case will be reviewed on June 18, 2015. Three Team members (Ellie Torres, Natasha Smith and Melanie Ewing-Lahutsky) will be going to St. Petersburg for the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative Conference. Dana Harrington Connor will provide feedback from the day long review at the September Quarterly meeting.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting Date: September 11, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.

December 14, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. – note time change

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.