

Child Protection Accountability Commission
Joint Committee on Substance-Exposed Infants/Medically Fragile Children

Friday, October 23, 2015

Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Dr. Judith Gorra, Child Development Watch
Wendy Felts, Christiana Hospital
Lisa Bechler, Christiana Hospital
Pam Jimenez, Christiana Hospital
Bridget Buckaloo, Beebe Hospital
Pamela Laymon, Bayhealth
Karen Kelly, Bayhealth
Linda Shannon, DFS
Trene Parker, DFS
Aleks Casper, March of Dimes
Heather Baker, March of Dimes
Lisl Phelps, DPH
Jill Walters, Connections
Vikki Benson, Children & Families First
Margaret-Rose Agostino, Nurse Educator/Consultant
Kelly Ensslin, OCA
Tania Culley, OCA
Anne Pedrick, Child Death Commission
Jennifer Donahue, DSCYF

I. Committee Member Introductions

Jennifer Donahue chaired the meeting welcoming everyone and facilitating introductions.

II. Approval of July 24, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Upon Motion and no objection, the Committee approved the May 29, 2015 meeting minutes, with changes per Dr. Amanda Kay's request.

III. Update on Substance Abuse Liaisons for Screened-In Reports

Linda Shannon stated that for the period of June 2015 through September 2015, there were 8 expedited referrals to the AOD Liaison in New Castle County, 16 referrals in Kent County and 25 referrals in Sussex County. There was some discussion about the low number of referrals received in NCC and whether the hospitals are aware of the liaison process and

whether the low number is due to Christiana not universally screening every pregnant mother who is admitted to labor/delivery. Tania Culley requested that DFS bring more information about the disparity of the referrals to the next meeting. Joan Brusch will continue monitoring the referrals, as well as capturing the drug types, and will provide updated information at the next meeting. Pam Jimenez indicated that universal screening of pregnant mothers at Christiana is “in the works” and that the hospital will be meeting next week to discuss any and all concerns associated with universal testing.

IV. Umbilical Cord Testing

Wendy Felts shared information about umbilical cord testing and provided a handout. She stated that the cord test results can provide information about substances used by the mother from 20 weeks gestation to birth, which gives us a longer picture of newborn exposure compared to other types of testing. Cord testing allows more rapid reporting of results, approximately 24-48 hours, compared to other specimen types. Josette Manning stated that the cord testing could be considered a public health initiative, but there may be ethical concerns that need to be addressed. Tania Culley stated that the medical insurance companies may have an issue with the cost of this type of test.

As a “parking lot issue,” Tania stated that the committee should determine whether NAS infants who are seriously injured and return to the hospital are being tested for substances. There was much discussion on whether infants who are diagnosed as NAS could or should be “flagged” on the Immunization Registry so that every subsequent medical provider will be aware of the infant’s NAS history. The members agreed that there may be challenges to implementing this practice. Some in favor argued that the Immunization Registry is confidential to only medical providers and aliases can be used for these infants. In addition, NAS is an objective medical diagnosis. Some members voiced their concern of the stigma that the mother may feel as a result of the NAS flag on the registry. Anne Pedrick agreed to reach out to her contact at Division of Public Health and will provide information at the next meeting.

V. National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare In-Depth Technical Assistance

Jennifer Donahue reported that she and Dr. DeJong had a teleconference with national experts, Linda Carpenter (Program Director for SEI In-Depth Technical Assistance),

Annabelle Hussani, and others, to find out whether Delaware could receive technical assistance from this program. Ms. Carpenter advised that the opioid epidemic is predominantly occurring on the East Coast corridor. She stated that there is a stigma associated with addicted mothers so it is important for system partners to use appropriate language, such as “substance exposed” infants instead of “substance-addicted.”

Ms. Carpenter further advised that it is difficult to define SEI because it means something different to every MDT member and that states with statutes with a punitive approach are not beneficial to addicted mothers. She stated that we should all ask the question, “What is your desired outcome?” in addressing SEI and mothers. Ms. Carpenter told us that modifying policy may be more appropriate than statutory changes and that a Five Point Intervention Framework is good approach. She stated that it is important to take a 2 prong approach – care of mother and care of baby – in order to achieve our desired outcomes. In addition, Ms. Carpenter advised that universal screening, prenatally, is critical as it is very helpful to get these mothers services while pregnant. Universal screening, testing at birth and protocols for referring for services are necessary. Ms. Carpenter and her team shared various tools and the Best Practice Matrix for SEI which have been shared with the committee members. The SEI-IDTA program will be accepting 2 more states next year. Tania asked about whether Delaware would need a team leader, how many system partners and whether the technical assistance would add to our workload or lessen it. Ms. Donahue agreed to obtain the answers to these questions for the next meeting.

Finally, Aleks Casper agreed to contact Nancy Orly who is a representative at Nanticoke Hospital to invite her to our next meeting.

VI. Plans of Safe Care – deferred until next meeting

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will occur on Friday, January 15, 2016, from 9:30 11:30am, in the 9th Floor Conference Room in the New Castle County Courthouse. For the convenience of those located in Sussex and Kent Counties, there will be a live video feed of the meeting to the Wild Wings Conference Room in the Sussex County Family Courthouse in Georgetown and to the 1st Floor Conference Room in the Kent County Courthouse.

VIII. Public Comment

No public comment was received and the meeting was adjourned.