

**MINUTES OF THE
CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT PANEL**
Tuesday, October 13, 2015 – 1:00 p.m. – Room 250 Capitol Building

Members Present:

Sen. Allen M. Christensen, Senate Chair
Rep. Earl D. Tanner, House Chair
Sen. Gene Davis
Rep. Johnny Anderson
Rep. Sandra Hollins

Staff Present:

Mr. Gregg A. Girvan, Policy Analyst
Ms. Lee Killian, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Lori Rammell, Legislative Assistant

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Tanner called the meeting to order at 1:19 p.m.

MOTION: Sen. Christensen moved to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2015, meeting. The vote in favor was unanimous.

2. Qualitative Case Review and Case Process Review

Mr. Brad McGarry, Director, Office of Services Review, Department of Human Services, presented "FY2015 Systematic Review of the Division of Child and Family Services." He first defined the case process reviews, saying they measure compliance with DCFS guidelines from a statewide sample of case records. He reported that this year's case process review scores were similar to last year's, but with improved scores in several areas and a lower score in the area of "Child Protective Services activities." Mr. McGarry added that the Qualitative Case Review provides a focused measure of outcomes of services provided by the Division of Child and Family Services, including such standards as child safety and permanency. He said the Qualitative Case Review also measures system performance, examining such standards as whether case plans with families are developed and how closely case workers engage with families.

Mr. McGarry responded to questions from the panel regarding his office's goals in creating the reviews and the effect of the hiring freeze as shown in the reviews.

Mr. Jeff Harrop, Program Manager, Office of Services Review, Department of Human Services, reported on the qualitative case review. He discussed the decline in scores in the areas of "child status" and "system performance." Mr. Harrop responded to questions from the panel regarding the significance of the changes in these areas, the issues surrounding "long-term view," and the evaluation of child nutrition as part of the review process. He explained the reason for low scores in the Eastern Region and the Salt Lake Region, and what those regions are doing to address deficiencies.

Mr. Brent Platt, Director, Division of Child and Family Services, addressed questions from the panel about the area of "medical neglect," as shown in the case process review. He stated that there was no change in practice in medical neglect response, so he is looking into possible errors in documentation resulting in low case process review scores. Mr. Platt also responded to questions from the panel regarding staffing deficiencies as a result of the former hiring freeze. He said that caseloads are currently manageable, and morale among case workers has improved.

3. Fatality Reviews

Mr. Girvan gave a brief description of the statutory requirement for the panel to review fatality reports. Specifically, he noted that the panel is required to review at least one fatality report for a child who died in the previous year if the family received services from the Division of Child and Family Services at some time.

Ms. Cheryl Dalley, Fatality Review Coordinator, Department of Human Services, distributed "Fatality Review Executive Summary FY2015." She explained the purpose of the Child Fatality Review Committee. Ms. Dalley stated that there were 270 deaths reported for the entire Department of Human Services, of which 37 were in the Division of Child and Family Services. She further broke down that number into cause of death, gender, and age. She said that recurring issues identified by the committee concerned worker assessments and problems at the supervisory level in failing to correct errors. She also pointed out examples of outstanding case work, including a case worker who enlisted every community service available to keep a family in the family's home. Ms. Dalley responded to questions from the panel regarding the types of cases that appear in the Fatality Review Report.

MOTION: Sen. Davis moved to close the meeting to the public pursuant to Utah Code Subsection 52-4-205(2)(b) for the purpose of reviewing child fatality review reports. The vote in favor was unanimous.

MOTION: Sen. Christensen moved to open the meeting to the public. The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. Other Items/Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Davis moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Chair Tanner adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.