Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group
Meeting Minutes – 11.02.17

The second meeting of the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (SSWG) was held at the University of North Carolina School of Government (UNC SOG) on November 2, 2017.

Working Group Members and School of Government Staff in Attendance
Sen. Tamara Barringer, co-chair
Rep. Sarah Stevens, co-chair
Sen. Joyce Krawiec
Susan Perry-Manning, Deputy Secretary for Human Services, DHHS
Michael Becketts, Assistant Secretary for Human Services, DHHS
Lisa Cauley, Chief, Child Welfare Section of the Division of Social Services, DHHS
Hon. Robert Stiehl, Chief District Court Judge, Cumberland County
Hon. Kevin Austin, Commissioner, Yadkin County
Hon. Brenda Howerton, Commissioner, Durham County
Hon. Page Lemel, Commissioner, Transylvania County
Chris Dobbins, Consolidated Human Services Director, Gaston County
Glenn Osborne, Social Services Director, Wilson County
Angie Stephenson, Orange and Chatham Counties

Working Group Members Attending Remotely
Sen. Kathy Harrington

Working Group Members Not in Attendance
Rep. Jonathan Jordan
Rep. David Lewis
Susan Osborne, Social Services Director, Alamance County
Hon. Bob Woodard, Commissioner Dare County

Convene
- Welcoming Remarks by SSWG Co-chairs:
    - Sen. Barringer convened the Working Group with opening remarks.
    - Rep. Stevens followed with additional opening remarks.
    - Both stressed the importance of the work being conducted by the Working Group and called members to action.
- Each member of the Working Group introduced themselves and shared thoughts they had between the first and second Working Group meeting.
- A. Sachs reviewed the meeting's purposes and agenda; the Working Group adopted these without change.

- A. Sachs reviewed the rules for productive meetings adopted by the Working Group at its previous meeting.
- Working Group Members decided to postpone consideration of the Minutes of its previous meeting until after the lunch break.
- Commissioner Lemel presented on research she conducted between meetings. She had conducted an interview with a member of the North Carolina Forestry Service to ask about the development of their regional maps. She shared some of her notes from that conversation.
    - She noted that the relationships that the Forestry Service maintains with community partners are critical to their success.
    - She also highlighted some of the geographical, resource availability, resource allocation, and workload factors that played into the development of their regions.
- Judge Stiehl commented on factors that should be taken into account when developing regions.
    - Noted specifically that a contiguous regional map may not be the best strategy.
- A. Wall presented a map of the regional presence maintained by the Vocational Rehab Services; reviewed the Social Services Working Group Website and the available resources that could be found there; reviewed some of the materials provided to the Working Group members in their meeting folders.

Stage One Proposed Plan
- A. Wall reviewed "Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group– Stage One Proposed Plan" handout. Review of Proposed Plan was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. "Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group– Stage One Proposed Plan" handout and accompanying presentation are available at https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/social-services/materials.
- M. Henderson led the Working Group in a discussion of the Proposed Plan:
    - Comments Regarding Discussion Topics:
        - Considerations need to be made regarding the county governing boards and the county commissioners.
        - The working group must also discuss economic assistance and adult services programs.
    - Comments Regarding Meeting Times/Dates:
        - Additional business may be conducted remotely to supplement the work that is being performed during in-person SSWG meetings. The group agreed to add several placeholder dates on the calendar for conference calls during larger gaps between meetings.
        - All SSWG meeting dates enumerated on the Proposed Plan handout are definite, with the exception of the January 11 date (now shifted to January 9 to accommodate legislative session).

Goals for a Successful System of Regional Supervision

- M. Henderson directed the Working Group's attention to the "Goals for a Successful System of Regional Supervision" text box located on the back of the meeting agenda and reviewed the items enumerated.
    - Items included as Goals were synthesized from comments made during the "Good Supervision" discussion held during the first SSWG meeting, research conducted by the SOG staff, and focus groups convened by the SOG staff between the first and second SSWG meetings.
    - The goals included should be considered a first draft.

Goals for a Successful System of Regional Supervision
County Departments – Regional Offices – Central Office

An effective system of regional supervision would demonstrate _____.
- Consistent interpretation and application of policies
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Timely responses
- Productive and trusting relationships
- Successful innovation/ problem-solving/conflict resolution
- Fair enforcement and accountability
- Fiscal stewardship

We will use these goals in the next activity and need to gain a shared understanding of expectations. Instructions:
1. Do we need clarification on any of the goals?
2. Review the list and assess if it adequately summarizes our expectations for a successful system of regional supervision. Edit as needed.
3. Obtain consensus on final version of goals.

- M. Henderson led Working Group in a discussion of the "Goals for a Successful System of Regional Supervision":
    - Clarification of the first goal ("Consistent Interpretation and Application of Policies") was requested and discussed. Specifically, the Working Group discussed the distinction between statues, laws, regulations, and policies and clarified what the first goal is referencing.
        - Legal Authority vs. Program Policy
        - Importance of Program Policy
        - Re-Evaluation of *ad hoc* Policies
    - Working Group members noted that all items listed as goals are equally important and inter-related.
    - Concerns over performance metrics were expressed related to the goal of "Fair enforcement and accountability" were expressed.

- o The term "Accountability" must not only apply to the county offices, but to the regional and central state offices as well.
  - o Clarification regarding "Timely Responses" was requested.
  - o Prioritization of goals may be required during situations of conflict or crises.
  - o The goals are for the entire system, not just the regional offices.
  - o Accessibility to the public and to county-level, direct service providers.
  - o Automation, effective use of technology.
  - o Fiscal control and responsibility in addition to fiscal stewardship.
- The "Goals for a Successful System of Regional Supervision" were edited by A. Wall in accordance with comments made by Working Group Members and resulted in the following revised list:

Goals for a Successful System of Regional Supervision
County Departments – Regional Offices – Central Office

An effective system of regional supervision would demonstrate _____.
- Consistent interpretation and application of laws, regulations, and rules
- Policy guidance – issuance of policies, technical assistance
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Timely and efficient responses, consistent with law and policy
- Productive and trusting relationships
- Successful innovation/problem-solving/conflict resolution/leadership
- Fair enforcement
- Accountability
- Supporting quality assurance and improvement, informed by data and practice
- Fiscal stewardship (control, efficiency, and accountability)
- Help agencies prioritize among the goals
- Transparency and accessibility for the counties and the public re: law, policy, and practice; feedback opportunities for the public and counties
- Effective technology tools and support

Approval of Minutes
- C. Dobbins made a motion to approve minutes.
- Commissioner Austin seconded the motion.
- Minutes from 10.03.17 SSWG meeting were approved.

Who Should Do What?
- A. Wall presented on Supervisory Functions – "What is being done to supervise the administration of these programs?" Slides can be found at https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/www.sog.unc.edu/files/Plan%20and%20Functions%20PPT%2011.2.pdf.
  - o Introduction to the "Menu" of supervisory functions that must be allocated.

- o Brief description of each function being discussed and examples of tools that relate to each function were provided.
- o Comments made by Working Group members regarding Supervisory Functions:
  - ▪ Conflict of interest is a common occurrence, developing a policy for this is important. Placing the responsibility of managing conflicts of interest with the counties has been problematic in the past.
  - ▪ Training models need to be effective, have good educational design, and must be relevant to current practice theory.
  - ▪ Workforce development has been overlooked as a supervisory function and should be considered in the present discussion.
- • Working Group members formed smaller groups at their tables and the twelve supervisory tools were divided amongst them for discussion. The small groups then presented highlights from their conversations to the rest of the Working Group.
- • Some supervisory tools were discussed as an entire group:
  - o Workforce Development
    - ▪ Personnel issues are handled in a variety of ways across counties. Regional personnel may be able to offer guidance across the counties in an effort to increase cohesion.
    - ▪ Consultants with Human Resource expertise can help advise supervisors at the county level when personnel issues arise. They can help illuminate common pitfalls, develop corrective action plans, and ensure compliance.
    - ▪ Barriers that prevent supervisors from removing ineffective or negligent personnel need to be addressed.
    - ▪ Factors that increase staff turnover must also be assessed and addressed.
  - o Risk Assessment
    - ▪ Direct practitioners at the local level often walk into explosive situations without enough background information, putting themselves and others at risk. Maintaining a central database that can inform social workers of possible risks may help to mitigate the harm that comes to professionals and families. This should be a Central-level role.
    - ▪ Training for dangerous situations is a risk management activity.
    - ▪ Financial risk should also be considered when discussion risk assessment and management – some counties are shrinking in population size and may not be able to finance their services moving forward. Monitoring this potential risk should be a Regional-level role.
    - ▪ Rebasing allocations to ensure not entity is left particularly at risk should be a Central-level and Regional-level role.

Next Steps
- • A. Wall reviewed what can be expected from the UNC SOG moving forward.
  - o Synthesis of notes from the present meeting (11.02.17);
  - o Continued research on other states; and
  - o Continued research into North Carolina's programs, policies, and practices.