

## **Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group Meeting Minutes – 12.11.2018**

The eighteenth meeting of the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (SSWG) was hosted by the University of North Carolina School of Government (UNC SOG) by conference call on December 11, 2018.

### **Working Group Members Participating**

Sen. Tamara Barringer, co-chair  
Rep. Sarah Stevens, co-chair  
Sen. Joyce Krawiec  
Rep. Jonathan Jordan  
Hon. Page Lemel, Commissioner, Transylvania County  
Hon. Kevin Austin, Commissioner, Yadkin County  
Hon. Bob Woodard, Commissioner, Dare County  
Michael Becketts, Assistant Secretary for Human Services, DHHS  
Hon. Robert Stiehl, Chief District Court Judge, Cumberland County  
Glenn Osborne, Social Services Director, Wilson County  
Susan Perry-Manning, Deputy Secretary for Human Services, DHHS  
Chris Dobbins, Consolidated Human Services Director, Gaston County  
Angie Stephenson, DSS Attorney, Orange and Chatham Counties  
Hon. Brenda Howerton, Commissioner, Durham County  
Susan Osborne, Social Services Director, Alamance County

### **Working Group Members Not Participating**

Rep. David Lewis  
Sen. Kathy Harrington  
Lisa Cauley, Chief, Child Welfare Section of the Division of Social Services, DHHS

### **Convene**

- Welcoming remarks by the Co-Chairs.
  - Rep. Stevens welcomed members and thanked them for their hard work on the Stage Two Report.
- Roll call of the SSWG members.
- M. Henderson reviewed the meeting agenda.
- C. Dobbins moved to approve the minutes from the November 20, 2018 meeting. P. Lemel seconded.
  - Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

## Final Draft Report Review and Revision

- M. Henderson reviewed the draft report and asked for member edits and comments. The Draft Stage Two Report can be found at <https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/social-services/materials>.
  - Executive Summary
    - G. Osborne recommended strengthening the wording under number 4 (Other Recommendations Related to ICC) to emphasize the urgency in timeliness of action on NCFast.
      - Rep. Stevens noted the conclusion may be another place to highlight the timeliness component.
      - R. Stiehl recommended emphasizing that a functional system is essential to the endeavor of better serving the public.
      - Sen. Krawiec recommended adding “immediately” to the recommendation and reordering to have this bullet at the top.
      - Rep Stevens, R. Stiehl and Sen. Barringer agreed with no objection.
  - Project Background
    - SSWG members approved with no edits.
  - ICC
    - Intro and Criteria
      - SSWG approved with no edits.
    - Recommendations
      - Correct typo on p.7 (COI third bullet; “when”).
      - A. Wall reported the suggestion of R. Kelly to move Recommendation 2.h to the Other Recommendations portion of the report, as it was broadened by the SSWG.
        - A. Stephenson noted either way works.
        - Sen. Krawiec and P. Lemel agreed to move.
        - No member opposition to moving.
      - R. Stiehl recommended a clarification for recommendation 4.h., commenting that that the “not consensus” phrasing does not reflect that there was agreement around 4.h.
        - R. Stiehl emailed in recommended clarifying language:
          - “The SSWG recognizes current potential issues with NCFAST in the current configuration especially when dealing with child welfare and adult services. However, there were two separate approaches formulated to assure this information system was designed and implemented with the greatest effectiveness and ease of use for staff and the public.”
        - Rep. Stevens agreed the need to identify the alternatives the SSWG considered.
        - C. Dobbins asked for the rephrasing to reflect agreement of the SSWG on the need for a better information system and the alternative avenues identified by members as to the independent evaluation of the system.
        - SSWG members agreed.

- Regional Administration
  - Introduction
    - SSWG approved with no edits.
  - Recommendations
    - A. Wall reported the suggestion of R. Kelly for some clarification in the last sentence of the rationale for recommendation 5.a on p.19 to specify the benefits and challenges identified relate to regional administration.
      - No opposition.
    - A. Wall recommended reformatting the headings for the benefits and challenges in the rationale section under recommendation 5.a. on p.19, similar to recommendation 1.c in ICC, reflecting the SSWG's intent that these are part of the rationale.
      - No opposition.
  - Table 1. Examples of Possible Shifts in Responsibilities
    - R. Stiehl recommended broadening the shift of licensing responsibilities to other departments by changing the language to "issuing licenses" instead of naming specific licenses in case there are others.
      - P. Lemel and M. Becketts noted there are other licenses for foster homes and group homes that DSS would maintain.
      - R. Stiehl noted there are still certain circumstances where another county department could assume some licensing functions not related to social services.
        - P Lemel, R. Stiehl, A. Stephenson and G. Osborne agreed to change to "Issuing licenses for activities outside of social services core functions, such as hunting and fishing licenses."
          - No opposition.
  - Appendix
    - M. Henderson recommended a change on p.23 regarding the potential benefit of regional departments aligning with other key regions in a regionally administered system, to replace "would be aligned" with "could be aligned."
      - No opposition.
- A. Wall asked the large group for their input on the content of the report's conclusion.
  - Members comments included:
    - Rep. Stevens asked for emphasis of the SSWG's preference for regional supervision over regional administration.
    - A. Stephenson pointed to the bottom paragraph on p.6, concerning the assumptions the SSWG is working under in Stage Two, and suggested those assumptions be included and broadened for the conclusion.
    - S. Perry-Manning emphasized the inclusion that any changes recommended in the SSWG report should be considered alongside the recommendations from CSF and DHHS in producing the intended goal of improving services for children and families.
      - Added that the DHHS follow-up recommendations would come out soon, and offered a preview of the DHHS report, noting the majority of

DHHS recommendations mostly align and do not conflict with the CSF or SSWG reports.

- C. Dobbins suggested emphasizing the SSWG's preference for a flexible system to produce consistent application of programs and services.
  - R. Stiehl agreed and suggested recognizing the ability of those in the field and the goal of regional supervision to identify and supplement existing practices and relationships, and develop and supplant services in other communities with those best practices.
  - K. Austin stressed the importance of robust inter-county collaboration, facilitated by regional supervision, as well as the SSWG's preference of regional supervision over regional administration.
  - G. Osborne agreed with recognizing the good work and strength of counties and prioritizing consistency in outcomes across all counties, noting the role of regional offices in driving consistency with sharing best practices.
    - R. Stiehl added that this implicitly reassures stakeholders in the system and shows respect for best practices and innovation that come from within DSS's.
  - Several members noted the addition of language giving the essential nature of good quality data and useable data system for this endeavor to work and reiterating the law's goals of consistency and transparency.
    - Again, recommended underscoring the critical timeliness of evaluating the data system.

## **Closing Comments**

- Next steps
  - A. Wall will incorporate the edits and comments from the SSWG's discussion and send a revised version of the final report in advance of the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - After an indication by the majority of members that they could be available to review and vote on the final draft of the report on December 20<sup>th</sup>, whether in-person or remotely, the Co-Chairs determined the SSWG will review and vote on the revised final report on December 20<sup>th</sup> in an online meeting.

## **Adjourn**