

**MINUTES**  
Braam Oversight Panel  
SeaTac Red Lion, Rainier Room  
SeaTac, WA  
September 10-11, 2007

Monday, September 10

**Panel Members:** John Landsverk (Chair), Jeanine Long, Jan McCarthy, Jess McDonald,

**Panel staff:** Carrie Whitaker

**Plaintiffs' Attorneys:** Casey Trupin, Bryn Martyna, Bill Grimm, Erin Shea

**Assistant Attorney General:** Steve Hassett

**DSHS Staff:** Cheryl Stephani, Ross Dawson, Deborah Purce, Lee Doran, Jody Carpenter, Steve Wickmark, Tim Hunter, Robin McIlvaine

**Others:** Linda Mason Wilgis, Ron Murphy, Laurie Lippold, Jim Theofelis, Ron Murphy, Paula Moore, Kevin Black, Sydney Forrester, Alisa Moore

Note: The minutes are a general summary of discussion and do not attempt to document every comment.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am.

**Introduction**

John Landsverk noted that the Panel's fourth Monitoring Report would be released at the end of September, and would include the results of the foster parent survey. He noted that December 2007 will mark the three-year anniversary of the first meeting of the Panel. He noted that the second day of the Panel meetings would include a discussion of clarifications and modifications to the Implementation Plan based on what has been learned during this period.

**Presentation from Children's Administration**

Cheryl Stephani noted that she appreciated the opportunity to update the Panel and others on important initiatives at Children's Administration (CA).

Cheryl began with a presentation regarding the development and roll-out of "FAMLINK," the new statewide automated child welfare information (SACWIS) system, which is on track for a September 2008 release of the case management components and fall 2009 release of financial and other elements. Cheryl's power point presentation is available on the Braam website, along with the minutes for the September 10, 2007 Panel meeting.

Jess McDonald asked whether Braam requirements had been incorporated into the design of FAMLINK. Cheryl noted that they had been, and that one of the advantages of having a long planning period due to funding concerns was that it allowed time to ensure that all requirements would be included in the system. Cheryl noted that many processes that caseworkers must currently complete manually will be automated in the new system.

Bill Grimm asked whether there would be any parameters regarding the transfer of data from the old to the new computer system. Cheryl noted that CA is still working on the data

conversion plan, but that no data would be lost. John Landsverk noted that questions related to the conversion are important in light of Braam monitoring processes, as the Panel will need to have the ability to consistently measure progress related to Braam outcomes for periods both before and after the launch of FAMLINK.

Cheryl also presented an update on Children's Administration's implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs). She noted that expanding EBPs can be challenging, as it requires working with the model developer, a contracted provider, and staff in order to ensure fidelity to the program model. Cheryl's power point presentation is available on the Braam website, along with the minutes for the September 10, 2007 Panel meeting.

Bill Grimm asked whether there were any incentives for RSNs and their providers to develop EBPs. Cheryl stated that CA works closely with mental health services to build the array of services available to children. John Landsverk reminded the group that not all EBPs are mental health interventions. Bill asked whether Medicaid could fund some of the EBPs that CA is developing and paying for. He suggested that this might be a strategy for increasing resources available for EBPs. Cheryl replied that if children meet access to care standards, they will receive Medicaid-funded services through the Regional Support Network (RSN) system. She noted that CA is always looking at funding streams to maximize use of Medicaid. Jess noted that it is important to think creatively and to not limit programming and services based on Medicaid requirements; in many cases, innovative EBPs will be cost-effective, even when they cannot be funded under Medicaid.

Jeanine noted that the programs Cheryl had mentioned were pilots with limited capacity, and asked whether CA is monitoring their effectiveness. Cheryl indicated that quality assurance is a key element of EBP implementation, and that a QA team is looking at each EBP.

Cheryl presented an additional power point related to contracted services, and noted CA's work with providers on consistency, EBPs and training. She also noted that CA has been busy implementing the many pieces of legislation passed during the 2007 session.

### **Use of Regional Data**

*Issue: At an earlier meeting, the Panel requested comments from the parties related to the issue of whether benchmark data for individual regions is to be used for informational purposes, or to factor into the Panel's decisions about compliance with the benchmark. Comments submitted by the parties were discussed.*

John Landsverk noted that Panel member Dorothy Roberts had been unable to attend the meetings due to her teaching schedule, but would be joining the discussions related to regional data and data by race/ ethnicity by phone.

John noted that, at the Panel's request, the parties had provided written comments regarding how regional data should be used in assessing compliance with the benchmarks in the Braam Implementation Plan.

Steve Hassett noted that the Department supports the approach taken by the Panel to date, in which compliance is addressed for the state as a whole. He expressed concern that if compliance were to be assessed separately for each region for each benchmark, this would

result in over 300 different compliance requirements, each with the potential need for compliance planning. However, he also stated that an approach that takes regional variation into consideration would be acceptable to the Department. He noted that the language in the Implementation Plan is inconsistent with respect to use of regional data. He proposed an approach that assesses compliance on a statewide basis. To achieve statewide compliance, the approach also would require 4 out of 6 regions to meet the overall benchmark, with the remaining 2 regions to be within 20% of the benchmark.

Casey Trupin stated that the plaintiffs view regional data as a matter of compliance and do not want to see some regions lagging behind even if progress is made at a statewide level. He noted that the plaintiffs' letter proposed that compliance be assessed at the statewide level, with the condition that the state as a whole could not be viewed as in compliance if any region's performance was less than 90% of the benchmark requirement. He agreed with Steve that assessing compliance separately for each region, thereby creating over 300 benchmarks, would not be useful. Bill Grimm noted that examining regional variation is consistent with the GMAP process used by the Governor.

Jan McCarthy noted that the Panel had not intended to create 300 separate benchmarks with individual compliance plans, and other members of the Panel agreed. John Landsverk noted that there seemed to be agreement among the Panel, plaintiffs and Department that regional variation should be examined and should factor into compliance decisions, but that the Panel should make a single determination of compliance for the state as a whole.

Dorothy Roberts noted that the plaintiffs' focus seemed to be on ensuring that all regions are close to the benchmark, while CA's approach would ensure that no region is too far behind. Bill Grimm agreed, and noted that the plaintiffs' primary concern is with ensuring equitable improvements across the state. Steve Hassett wondered whether regional variation is more important for some benchmarks than for others, and suggested that it might be useful to set priorities. Jan McCarthy responded with concern, noting that any discussion of prioritization has much larger implications.

Cheryl noted that the discussion seems to presume that performance levels are close to the benchmarks, and unfortunately they are not. As a result, regional variation may be a moot issue at this time. In addition, she commented that whether the Panel requests a single compliance plan for each benchmark or plans for each region, there is little difference in workload as long as the plans are expected to address regional issues. John suggested that the Panel continue to operate as it has been for the short term, and look at rewriting the language with new rules about regional compliance when performance is closer to benchmark levels. Several Panel members, as well as the plaintiffs, disagreed, noting that all parties need clarity on the Panel's expectations.

The matter was deferred to the next day for further discussion.

### **Data by race/ ethnicity**

*Issue: The Panel indicated that it was considering requesting that data for all benchmarks be provided with a breakdown by children's race/ ethnicity. Currently, only a handful of benchmarks in the Implementation Plan include this requirement.*

John noted that the Panel is considering modifying the Implementation Plan to request data for all outcomes by race and ethnicity. Currently, the Implementation Plan only addresses race and ethnicity in a handful of areas in the mental health and placement stability areas. Dorothy Roberts added that, in addition to the question of whether these data breakdowns would be required, the next logical question relates to what the Panel would do with the subgroup data, and whether the data would be used in compliance determinations. John Landsverk noted that at this time there is no consensus within the Panel that race/ ethnicity data would be used for compliance decisions.

Cheryl noted that there had been legislation passed during the 2007 session to create a commission to examine issues of disproportionality in child welfare. She suggested that the work of this commission could be useful to the Panel. Cheryl indicated that the Department would be able to provide data by race/ ethnicity, although it might request technical assistance regarding how that data should be provided. Steve agreed that provision of the data would be possible, but registered a concern that, 18 months after the completion of the Implementation Plan, these appears to be a new request for monitoring data. Dorothy noted that the Panel had reserved the right to request these data in the introductory section of the Implementation Plan.

John indicated that the Panel would request data by race/ ethnicity for all benchmarks.

### **Benchmark compliance plans**

*Issue: Issues related to benchmark compliance plans submitted by CA in response to the April 2007 Monitoring Report were discussed, including general issues related to benchmark compliance plans as well as clarifications related to several specific benchmarks.*

John Landsverk noted that the compliance planning process is still underway for benchmarks that the Panel's April 2007 monitoring report indicated had not been met. He stated that under the timeframes in the settlement agreement, CA still has some time to submit revised plans; as a result, CA should not be expected to have specific responses on all matters related to pending compliance plans at this time.

As a general matter, John noted that the Panel would look differently at compliance plans for benchmarks where data have been provided than those for action steps. With action steps, the Panel has required reporting on implementation of the compliance plans, and has assessed completion of each individual substep in the plan. With benchmark compliance plans, John noted that the Panel would instead look at progress with respect to the benchmark.

There was additional discussion within the Panel regarding this issue, particularly related to the question of whether ongoing reporting related to the implementation of benchmark compliance plans (where data have been provided) would be required and reviewed by the Panel. Some Panel members, including John, noted that they had expected that there would be continued monitoring. Others, including Jeanine, indicated that they felt that it would be more useful to rely on data to assess progress with respect to benchmarks, without requiring reporting on the individual strategies included in benchmark compliance plans. Jeanine requested that Carrie Whitaker read the Panel's language in its August 23, 2007 decision on compliance plans. Carrie read language from that document, which stated: "While the Panel has indicated approval of compliance plans intended to improve performance on a benchmark, the ultimate measure of compliance will continue to be whether the benchmark is reached in future years. Thus, unlike with action step compliance plans, the Panel will not monitor the completion of each individual

strategy within an approved compliance plan for benchmarks for which data have been provided. Instead, the Panel will assess compliance in terms of achievement of the annual benchmark.” Based on this language, the Panel agreed that status updates on benchmark compliance plans where data have been provided would not be required.

There was some general discussion of data issues. Cheryl Stephani noted that a strength of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process has been the ability to renegotiate strategies with the federal government if a given course of action was deemed not to be producing improvements. Casey Trupin replied that the plaintiffs would welcome discussion with the Department of which strategies have been effective or ineffective, and making changes when all agree that particular action steps are not working.

Steve Hassett noted that the Department has ongoing concerns about the benchmark process, including the quality of the data (particularly until SACWIS is launched), the setting of benchmarks without examining baseline performance, and the arbitrary nature of the benchmark targets. Jess noted that he agreed that the benchmarks that require improvement in comparison to a baseline are problematic, and that he would support revisions to the Implementation Plan such that benchmarks are set as absolute targets. Jeanine noted that the Panel's Implementation Plan did reserve the right to modify benchmarks.

Bill Grimm responded to Steve's comment regarding data quality, and asked whether the Department is saying that data will be of questionable quality until after September 2008 when SACWIS is launched. John Landsverk commented that, based on his experience in other jurisdictions, he has felt that Washington's administrative data systems are quite good. He noted that SACWIS is still critically important, but that there are many areas in which data from CAMIS have been useful. Cheryl pointed out that there are a number of areas in which Braam monitoring has required hand counts and/or add-on separate databases. Jess stated that if CA has concerns about the quality of the data, it is CA's obligation to fix them; inability to document is not an alternative to compliance. Jess also expressed concern with Steve's comment that the benchmarks had been set arbitrarily, noting that the Panel had attempted to develop an approach that recognized complex solutions to complicated problems by assessing performance in relation to a baseline. However, given that data in some areas remain unavailable, Jess stated that the Panel should not wait indefinitely for baseline and should set absolute performance targets. Following up on Cheryl's comment regarding the need for hand counts and new databases, Steve noted that this type of activity takes away from social workers' availability to actually provide services.

John Landsverk noted that CA had provided new data related to shared planning meetings (SPM) through a new database, and unsafe and inappropriate placements through the Administrative Incident Reporting System (AIRS) database. He noted that the AIRS data had been helpful, but that the Panel had just received the SPM data and had not had an opportunity to review it.

John Landsverk noted that these data raise a general question related to what amount of data is sufficient for the Panel to make a compliance decision—is it 4 months, 6 months, 12 months, etc?

Steve replied that the Department appreciates the Panel's interest in looking at data as soon as it is available, and thinks this will be helpful so that the Panel can provide guidance as to format, etc. Regarding how long a period is needed to look at compliance, he stated that in

some cases it will be difficult to set a baseline without a full year of data. For some benchmarks, less than a year may be acceptable, but never less than 6 months. In general, however, Steve noted that a year of data will be more useful.

Casey noted that the plaintiffs believe that it is important that data be used for monitoring purposes as quickly as possible, particularly given that we are entering the second half of the settlement period. He noted that 4- 6 months of data seemed like a reasonable period, but that benchmarks should be examined individually. Cheryl noted that she agreed with Casey, except that some benchmarks might be affected by seasonality due to school schedules, etc, so that a full year would be important.

Jan noted that according to the Implementation Plan, most baselines were to be set in FY05 or FY06. Given that it is now FY08, the Panel cannot afford to wait a full year for baseline data, plus an additional year for benchmark performance.

John suggested that the parties work together to develop a proposal for the Panel on this issue. Carrie noted that this would not be an issue for the forthcoming monitoring report, because the benchmarks for which only partial year data have been provided relate to FY07 performance, which will not be addressed until the March 2008 report. It was agreed that the Department would develop a proposal regarding how much data is necessary to be used in monitoring, and the plaintiffs would respond.

John asked for an update on early intervention data (B 1.2.7, referrals to early intervention). Cheryl stated that, although CA has data on the children who receive early intervention services, referral information is not captured. Jody Carpenter noted that she had researched federal requirements related to early intervention, and had found that the federal rules require referrals but do not require documentation or reporting on this. She indicated that capturing this information would likely require a new tracking process for social workers. Jess suggested that early intervention programs might maintain information on referrals in their own databases, but Jody observed that obtaining data from these programs might pose problems similar to those encountered in obtaining data from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Jan asked whether CHET screeners track this, and noted that the benchmark was based on CA policy. Cheryl noted that SACWIS will track this, and that the policy is to make the referral, but not to track this process. Cheryl said she would need to check to find out whether this is in the CHET database. Bill Grimm suggested looking at the children who are ultimately served, and matching that with children who are in care. John Landsverk noted that the Panel would entertain looking at a penetration rate. Cheryl indicated that CA could look into this approach.

With respect to benchmarks related to school data (F 2.1.1, school attendance within 3 days of entry to care or placement change, and F 2.2.1, children enrolled in same school district they attended prior to placement), Steve Hassett provided an update on his discussions with the Assistant Attorney General (AAG) representing OSPI. Several months ago, this AAG wrote a memo advising that releasing child-identified data to CA would be a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act FERPA. Steve noted that FERPA does include some narrow exceptions regarding release of information to children's guardians, and that it could be argued that CA is the guardian for children in foster care. However, FERPA does not define guardian,

and state statutes include two separate definitions of this term. It is not clear that the FERPA exception for release of information to guardians would be allowed in this circumstance.

Jeanine asked about the status of agreements between CA and individual school districts. Steve noted that under FERPA CA can obtain data from individual school districts, but not from OSPI. However, obtaining annual data from 296 school districts would be an overwhelming task.

John Landsverk observed that it appears unlikely that data will be obtained through OSPI. He asked about alternative sources of data for these benchmarks. Cheryl noted that some relevant information will be entered and captured in SACWIS. Bill Grimm suggested that, based on his work at Chapin Hall, Mark Courtney might have expertise in data sharing with education agencies. Laurie Lippold noted that FERPA has created challenges for many years, and she wondered whether CA could obtain data from the 10, 20 or 30 school districts with the largest numbers of children in placement. Cheryl noted that this would be a capacity issue, and would be particularly challenging given the intensive efforts underway to ensure a timely SACWIS launch. John Landsverk wondered whether any of the relevant items could be added to the foster parent or adolescent survey.

John Landsverk suggested that CA, the plaintiffs, and a Panel representative convene a small working group to discuss educational data and make a proposal regarding data sources and alternatives to the Panel by November 1. Casey Trupin suggested that Janis Avery of Treehouse be involved in this group, and mentioned that he would share with CA and the Panel a report developed by Treehouse that included information related to timeliness of school enrollment.

### **Visits and Caseload Size**

*Issue: The Panel and parties discussed issues related to measurement and compliance plans for monthly visits, visits within the first week of out of home placement, and caseload size reduction.*

John Landsverk noted that the Panel continues to consider the Department to be out of compliance with action steps related to monthly visits, visits within the first week of out of home placement, and caseload size.

With respect to monthly visits, John noted that measurement of this outcome is important to the Panel. The Department has some methods of measuring this, with limitations, and foster parent survey will soon be available.

Cheryl noted that the Panel had inquired in a recent letter about how the July 2007 Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) presentation had obtained historical data regarding monthly visits for the period before the policy was implemented. She indicated that these data included 2 codes in CAMIS—the new code on 30-day visits, and the existing code for 90-day health and safety visits. The GMAP data provide a look at the percentage of children in care who received a visit in a given month. Lee Doran clarified that this approach results in a snapshot for each month, but does not follow individual children to determine whether they had visits on a monthly basis. Cheryl also noted that this approach captures several types of contacts, including visits that would not meet CA's policy requirements for a 30-day visit. For instance, these visits might not be in the child's home.

Jan asked for clarification of the term "attempted visit" included in the GMAP materials, and Lee replied that there is a specific definition that requires several attempts to make a visit. Bill Grimm stated that an attempted visit is not acceptable because the child is not actually seen by the social worker, and he urged the Panel not to count attempted visits as meeting the requirement to see children. The Panel agreed that attempted visits are not acceptable.

Jess noted that the ability to count visits using administrative data is encouraging, despite the limitations in data. John Landsverk argued that the foster parent survey data were more useful, as these data would be immediately available and were based on a question to foster parents that is consistent with the benchmark's emphasis on private and individual visits. Jess noted that administrative data should be the standard in this area, but Jeanine argued that, since the question has been posed to foster parents, the Panel should use this information.

John indicated that the Panel would need to have further discussion regarding data sources for the monthly visit benchmark. In any event, the Panel would request that the Department's November 2007 submission include administrative data for monthly visits, with a clear indication of what the data represent and any limitations.

With respect to revised compliance plans for the action steps related to caseload size, monthly visits and visits within the first week of out of home placement, Steve Hassett noted that the plaintiffs' statements earlier that day to the House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee regarding a probable return to Court had specifically mentioned these issues and that the Department would need to consider the implications of this as it discussed these issues with the Panel. Jess argued that these issues should be discussed before the Panel regardless of any potential next steps with Court.

There was discussion of the caseload size projections included in a submission to the Panel. John noted that Cheryl had indicated that current average caseload size is roughly 22 children per caseworker, but the materials submitted to the Panel showed an average closer to 19 children. The Panel asked for clarification regarding which children were included in the figure of 13,000 children in care, particularly as it relates to children in guardianship, who do not generally have caseworkers. CA indicated that it would need to check on these figures to clarify which children had been included in the caseload size projections. Jess noted that he continues to believe that the Department may be closer than they think they are to achieving COA standards with respect to caseloads. John noted that the Panel still intends to add an outcome related to caseload size to the Implementation Plan. Casey Trupin noted that the Panel has previously indicated that the outcome would be examined in terms of the percentage of children with caseworkers with 18 or fewer children on their caseloads, and that this could reveal different trends from the average caseload figures being discussed.

It was agreed that CA would provide additional clarification on the caseload figures submitted to the Panel.

The meeting was adjourned for the day, and scheduled to resume at 9:00am on Tuesday September 11.

Tuesday, September 11

**Panel Members:** John Landsverk (Chair), Jeanine Long, Jan McCarthy, Jess McDonald,

**Panel staff:** Carrie Whitaker

**Plaintiffs' Attorneys:** Casey Trupin, Bryn Martyna, Bill Grimm, Erin Shea, Tim Farris

**Assistant Attorney General:** Steve Hassett

**DSHS Staff:** Cheryl Stephani, Ross Dawson, Deborah Purce, Lee Doran, Jody Carpenter, Robin McIlvaine, Vicki Stock, Lyn Craik

**Others:** John Tarnai, Alan Puckett, Paula Moore, Shannon Dorsey, Alisa Moore, Tammy Hay, Jim Theofelis, Laurie Lippold

Note: The minutes are a general summary of discussion and do not attempt to document every comment.

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am.

### **CHET screening**

*Issue: The Panel requested explanation from the Department related to the compliance plan submitted for benchmark B 1.2.1, related to CHET screenings within 30 days of placement.*

John Landsverk requested clarification regarding the statement in the Department's proposed compliance plan related to CHET screenings that CA had changed the definition of a complete CHET. Ross Dawson explained that the previous definition of a complete CHET required all screening activities to have been completed, records received, and a staffing meeting to have been held. The new definition requires that the CHET screener complete all activities, but certain external information (such as school records, EPSDT exams) may still be pending and the staffing meeting may not have been held. This is a recognition that even if the screener has requested all records, it can take time to receive them, and it can be difficult to schedule and hold a screening within 30 days (a related benchmark allows 60 days for this meeting to take place).

John asked for clarification regarding whether 2006 data were calculated based on the new or the old definition of a complete CHET, and Ross indicated that it had been based on the old definition. Lee Doran noted that it would not be possible to re-run those data using the new definition, because recording requirements have changed.

Jess asked whether there was any statutory guidance regarding when the screening process was to be considered complete, and Steve responded that there is not. Ross agreed, noting that this type of definition is part of CA policy, not the statute. Jess asked Jeanine whether she could comment on legislative intent, and Jeanine replied that the intention was that all children should have a full screening including a staffing.

Jan asked how CA could be sure that all remaining elements of the screening and staffing were ultimately completed under the new definition of a complete CHET. Ross noted that the Panel's monitoring provides several checks and balances, including benchmarks related to shared planning meetings within 60 days and health and education plans in the ISSP. Bill Grimm stated

that he saw this as another instance of "slippage," and that the CHET should be considered complete only when all elements are complete. He asked whether obstacles to obtaining school records had been addressed in CA's agreements with school districts. Steve Hassett replied that DSHS request legislation that was passed this session created a Court order to be used by social workers to facilitate the receipt of records from other systems.

John wondered whether the Department could provide 2 sets of data, including the proportion of CHETs that have been fully completed, as well as those in which all but certain specific elements were completed. Jess noted that he understands the operational issues in obtaining information from other agencies and systems, but that he objects to redefining complete in order to make performance appear to have improved when no changes have actually been made. Jess and John both stated that it would have been helpful for CA to come to the Panel and the plaintiffs to explain these issues in advance of making the definitional change. Steve Hassett noted that CA had alluded to this change in earlier presentations to the Panel, but he agreed that they should have done a more thorough job of explaining this issue.

Steve noted that there are several elements in this process, including the CHET screener's duties, the receipt of records, and the staffing. He suggested that at the very least, the staffing should be considered separately from this benchmark, since it is measured with different timeframes under a separate benchmark. Jess suggested that CA provide a "process map," so that the Panel can better understand the process and make an informed decision regarding how data should be counted. Cheryl agreed that this could be provided. John Landsverk noted that the Panel would consider an extension to the deadline for the revised compliance plan to allow CA time to develop this process map and a proposed approach.

### **Case Review**

*Issue: A general approach to case review had been approved by the Panel at the June 2007 meetings. The Panel had requested more detailed proposals from the Department, which had been provided in early September for discussion at these meetings.*

John noted that the Department had submitted detailed proposals on several items related to the case review process on September 7. A small group including the CA case review team, plaintiffs, a representative of the Panel, and Lucy Berliner of Harborview, who will serve as the QA contractor on this project, has been discussing the case review for Division of Licensed Resources (DLR)/ Child Protective Services (CPS) and the health and education plans in the ISSP. In addition, CA had submitted a proposal based on the Panel's requests for benchmarks related to matching.

*DLR/ CPS (D.2.2.1, timely and thorough investigation of abuse/ neglect referrals for children in out of home placement) - Lyn Craik presented a proposal that had been agreed to by the small group that has been meeting to discuss questions and decision rules. She noted that this case review process would assess the thoroughness of investigations for abuse/ neglect referrals for children in out-of-home placement. As discussed with the Panel previously, this review would take place through a special review process to be conducted by the CA case review team, with an independent audit of 10% (or at least 25) of cases by an external contractor. Lyn proposed that the review for FY2007 would take place in January 2008, with a report to the Panel in February 2008. Elements of this benchmark related to timeliness would come from administrative data.*

Jan McCarthy asked for clarification on the proposal to look at completed investigations, and asked how that would account for situations in which investigations are not completed. Carrie Whitaker noted that the administrative data would capture situations in which investigations are not completed within timeframes.

Jeanine Long asked about how the recent case in Pierce County would be viewed under this review. Cheryl noted that that child was not a member of the class, as that was a safety plan for a child with his biological family.

Bill Grimm asked whether a review of electronic files, rather than paper files, would be sufficient to obtain data for this review. He urged the Panel to request details from the Department on exactly what is included in the paper files and the electronic files in order to understand whether the electronic files would contain adequate information. Lyn explained that certain information, such as documents received from law enforcement, may not be in the electronic files, but that the electronic source will provide a good summary and would include references in narrative portions of the record to other documents in the case file. John Landsverk noted that the Panel had previously approved the approach to this case review through electronic records because it would enable an efficient, centralized review process, and that decision should not be revisited.

Jan asked whether the reviewers would examine whether the investigation included a review of the child's records, and Lyn noted that this was addressed in the questions for reviewers to consider. Jess noted that a pattern of incidents could be important, even if not all incidents resulted in formal investigations.

Lyn called the Panel's attention to an outstanding issue related to the collection of demographic information on the cases being reviewed. She noted that the case review team intends to adapt its existing computer system, and that system does not include fields in which to record demographic information such as the race and age of the child. She noted that creating this additional functionality in the data collection system would delay the timeframe for conducting the review because of IT capacity issues. Lyn suggested that the first year of the review be conducted using the existing system, which would therefore not provide demographic data. By the second year of the review, when SACWIS is available, this information could be collected. The Panel discussed this proposal and indicated that it approved of this approach.

Lyn noted that the language in the benchmark related to "licensing decisions" was somewhat ambiguous, and indicated that it might be difficult for reviewers to gather this type of information because it would reside in a different record. Jess asked whether there is a process to automatically notify the licensor when DLR investigates a home. Lyn confirmed that there is an automatic alert to both the licensor and the social worker. Jess noted that many jurisdictions do not have this linkage, and that this process should make the Panel feel more comfortable about CA's ability to follow up on licensing issues. The Panel indicated that it is not necessary to adapt the proposed case review approach to address issues related to licensing decisions.

*Health and Education Plans in the ISSP (B 2.1.1, health and education plans within 60 days of placement and B 2.1.1, health and education plans updated every 6 months)*- Lyn Craik noted that the same small group that had developed the detailed proposal for questions to examine

DLR/ CPS investigations was working on a proposal for the benchmarks related to health and education plans, but that an additional meeting would be necessary before a proposal is completed. She noted that the Panel had approved the general approach to review of these benchmarks, which will involve new questions being added to the case review team's existing process, as well as an external quality review.

Lyn noted that the small group had agreed that the case review should focus on children's emergent and special needs being addressed in the initial ISSP, and should also assess routine needs when reviewing subsequent ISSPs. John Landsverk noted that the small group had developed well-reasoned approaches to these items and suggested that the Panel continue to let the small group conduct its work.

Lyn proposed that the small group provide a detailed proposal to the Panel in October. John agreed, and indicated that the Panel would provide feedback on this proposal within 1-2 weeks of receiving it. Lyn noted that this would allow work to begin in November 2007.

*Matching (A1.5.1 and A1.6.1, matching between the needs of the child and the capacity of the placement)* - John Landsverk noted that the Panel had requested that CA develop a proposal to assess matching between children's needs and the capacity of foster homes by looking at a handful of key indicators including placement with siblings, placement with relatives, placement in child's home school area, foster parents' preference for children of certain ages, foster home licensing and training, and standards related to capacity of the home. CA had submitted a proposal to the Panel on August 31.

Lyn noted that the benchmarks related to matching had been most difficult for the case review team. She summarized the challenges encountered in the pilot conducted during fall 2006, which included difficulty in finding information on children's needs at the time of placement and in locating information about the specific capacities of the foster home. She noted that the new proposal before the Panel would look at information available through CAMIS during the first year, with additional indicators to be added in the next year when FAMLINK becomes available.

Jeanine noted that the use of county as a measure of proximity was problematic, as a child could be placed close to home but still in a different county. Lee Doran agreed that this is a proxy, but that it is the best available data.

John Landsverk inquired as to how the separate indicators would be woven together to make an assessment of whether matching occurred. Lee stated that each element alone provides some indication of matching.

Jess referred to the licensing information included in the proposal, and noted inconsistencies between COA standards and CA licensing rules regarding the maximum number of children placed in a home. He noted that, since COA is undergoing accreditation, these rules should be aligned. Cheryl replied that she could look into this issue.

Bryn Martyna stated that plaintiffs understand the constraints of the data, but the questions being proposed don't get to the heart of the matter related to matching. John Landsverk asked whether the additional indicators to be assessed through FAMLINK would make this a more meaningful measure, and Bryn replied that it would represent an improvement. There was

discussion of whether any of the indicators to be included in FAMLINK (such as foster home training) could be assessed through the CAMIS system during the first year of the review, but Lyn replied that there are limitations to what information is available in the record.

John Landsverk suggested that this proposal be sent to the small group that has worked on other case review items for discussion and refinement. Carrie Whitaker noted that some Panel guidance would be helpful, particularly in relation to whether the 2 staged approach (using CAMIS information in the first year and adding new indicators when SACWIS is available in 2008) is acceptable to the Panel. Jeanine and Jan indicated that this seemed like a reasonable approach. Lyn suggested that FAMLINK and data unit staff would need to be included in the small group. Casey Trupin agreed with the suggestion to further discuss the proposal in the small group, but expressed concern that the proposed approach might fall short of assessing the matching issues that the Panel intended to examine.

### **Visits within the first week of placement**

*Issue: The Panel requested information on current policy related to an action step for which a new policy is being phased in.*

Jan McCarthy noted that the Panel had asked for clarification on the current policy on the initial social worker visit to children in a new out of home placement. Ross noted that there are two relevant policies. For children placed in receiving homes on weekends or evenings, the assigned social worker is expected to visit as soon as possible and always within 3 days. For children placed in regular foster homes, policy states that the worker is expected to make contact with the caregiver as soon as possible; no specific timeframe is given. Jan asked whether this meant it could technically be as much as 90 days before a child receives a social worker visit, and Ross agreed that this is technically possible. He noted that the new policy phase-in would require visits within the first week of placement and every month thereafter; this expectation currently applies to children under age 6 in unlicensed relative care.

John Landsverk asked that CA provide the current policy language in writing to the Panel, including definitions of terms such as receiving home.

### **Foster Parent Survey**

*Issue: An update was provided on the foster parent survey, for which interviews began in April 2007 and were completed in July 2007.*

John Landsverk noted that foster parent survey interviews have been completed, and that the Panel and parties have agreed to a process for review and release of data. Reports have been drafted, and are being reviewed for consistency and clarity by a small group including CA, plaintiffs, and a representative of the Panel. As soon as that group completes its review, the survey results will be released publicly. The results will also be included in the Panel's Monitoring Report, which will be published in late September.

John Landsverk indicated that John Tarnai, Washington State University (WSU), would provide an update on the process, but not the findings, of the foster parent survey.

John Tarnai noted that interviews were completed at the end of July. A random sample of 3800 active and inactive foster parents and relative caregivers were selected to be called, and a total

of 1234 interviews were completed. The response rate of 60% is considered excellent. Interviewers encountered 305 refusals, 986 non-working phone numbers, 724 non-contact/ no answer, and 389 foster parents who were ineligible because they had not served children during 2006. He noted that interviewers had attempted each phone number at least 10 times and made attempts at several times during the day. John indicated that, although the survey was intended to reach inactive foster parents, the requirement that a child be served during 2006 resulted in only 33 interviews being completed with inactive foster parents. He suggested that it might make sense to modify this approach for next year's survey if it is considered important to reach inactive caregivers.

John Tarnai noted that all regions had been well-represented, with over 200 interviews in 4 regions, 147 interviews in region 2, and 180 interviews in region 4. As such, the survey has a high confidence level (i.e. a small margin of error) of 6% in each region and 3% at the statewide level.

John Tarnai indicated that the survey had resulted in huge amounts of data, and that WSU had developed separate reports—one report addresses only the benchmark questions to be used by the Braam Panel in monitoring, while the other report includes raw data for all questions included in the foster parent survey.

Steve Hassett noted that the Department may consider requesting a short extension to the embargo period in order to share the data with regional administrators so that they could be prepared for questions from stakeholders when the data are released. Casey Trupin indicated that this might be problematic, as stakeholders are anxious to receive data as soon as possible. Laurie Lippold agreed, indicating that the embargo period creates suspicion among stakeholders, and she urged the Panel to release the data as soon as possible. John Landsverk noted that the embargo period was solely for clarity and consistency of the reports, and that substantive changes were not being made. Casey noted that plaintiffs would not object if CA wishes to share data with regional administrators during the review period and before the drafts are finalized, in order to avoid the need for a lengthened embargo period.

John Landsverk called attention to two benchmarks for which the Panel had not yet reached a final decision regarding whether the foster parent survey would be used as the data source for monitoring: monthly visits and continuity of mental health provider. John noted that it was his suggestion that, since data are now available, the Panel should use the foster parent survey data in its monitoring process.

John Tarnai raised a question regarding how WSU is expected to respond to requests for additional analysis. Steve Hassett questioned whether it is part of WSU's responsibility to conduct numerous analyses. Traci Russell asked whether outside entities could request analysis of the data, such as a report looking separately at DCFS and private agency homes. John Landsverk noted that since Children's Administration had funded the survey, this question is outside of the Panel's purview. John Tarnai noted that it is technically possible to present data for numerous subgroups, in addition to the licensed/ unlicensed caregiver breakdown that will be included in the reports.

Bill Grimm thanked John Tarnai for his work, noting that it was a huge effort that would represent a contribution to the national literature in this area. He also noted that the plaintiffs

were concerned by the statement that nearly 1000 phone numbers were non-working, and wondered whether this indicates that CA is not able to reach foster parents who are actively caring for children. John Landsverk replied that there are many possible interpretations, and Bill's conclusion is premature. These numbers could belong to inactive foster parents who can no longer be expected to notify the Department of their phone numbers. Steve Hassett stated that the Department had the same questions, and would be pursuing this type of analysis. Jess agreed that this is an important issue that needs to be examined.

### **Adolescent Survey**

*Issue: An update was provided on the adolescent survey, which will be used to gather data related to independent living services for Braam monitoring purposes.*

Ross Dawson noted that as part of the discussion of benchmarks to be reviewed through a case review process, CA had suggested that outcomes related to adolescents would be better assessed through a survey of youth. The Panel had approved this approach, and CA had convened a workgroup. CA has also approached John Tarnai, WSU, about serving as the contractor for this project.

Ross noted that the workgroup, including youth, had recommended that the survey focus on a school year, rather than a fiscal or calendar year. Jess noted that many of these youth may not be in school, so that a calendar year might be more useful. John Landsverk agreed that this might be more straightforward.

Ross noted that the group had agreed that a 10-20 minute survey would be appropriate. John Landsverk indicated that as evidenced by the foster parent survey, participation is affected more by the level of interest in the topic than the length of the survey.

Steve Hassett noted that discussions in the small group and with John Tarnai had resulted in the proposal to use internet, mail, and phone surveys, and wondered whether the use of mixed methodologies would affect the reliability of the data. John Landsverk expressed concern about this approach, and indicated his preference for an all phone survey, even if this results in a higher cost. John Tarnai noted that there might be special concerns for youth with a phone survey, such as youth's concerns with being overheard, and that in other surveys he has been able to obtain as high a response rate with a mail survey as with phone calls. Cheryl responded to John Landsverk's comment about cost, noting that CA does not have designated funding for this project and does need to consider cost issues. Bryn Martyna noted that there had been earlier discussions of pursuing private funding for this survey, and that plaintiffs were eager to support the Department in such a funding request in whatever way possible.

Steve noted that youth had expressed an interest in a focus group approach, but were understanding of the need for statistically reliable data. The group had agreed that focus groups would be useful in developing the survey. John Landsverk suggested that the small group continue to discuss methodological issues and related costs, and make a final recommendation.

Ross proposed that 600 surveys be completed, resulting in a 5% confidence interval statewide. He noted that an oversample of age 18 youth might be required to gather sufficient data

regarding pre-exit staffings. John Tarnai noted that the survey mode is relevant to the sample size; 100% of youth could be interviewed inexpensively if a web-based approach is chosen.

Steve noted that the small group had identified several areas of interest that go beyond Braam monitoring needs, and suggested that focus groups might be an opportunity to gather information on some of these items while still allowing the overall length of the survey to be manageable. John Landsverk noted that there is a diversity of opinions within the Panel regarding the usefulness of adjunct questions beyond those needed for monitoring purposes. Jeanine noted that open ended questions can be very useful, and John Tarnai responded that the data set for these questions from the foster parent survey is massive.

Jan suggested that CA consider adding questions to address benchmarks for which there is not another source of data, such as school enrollment issues. In addition, she suggested asking youth how they feel about where they live and whether they feel safe. Bill Grimm noted that the Casey Alumni Survey had included these types of questions, and suggested that the group borrow from this survey in developing the interview tool. John Landsverk also recommended looking at Mark Courtney and Curtis McMillan's work in these areas.

Ross suggested that the small group have additional discussion based on the Panel's feedback, and present a more detailed proposal in October.

Jim Theofelis thanked CA for taking this project on, and noted that Mockingbird's participant in the small group felt that the discussions had been meaningful.

### **Revision of Implementation Plan**

*Issue: The Panel and parties discussed timeframe and approach regarding revisions and clarifications to the Braam Implementation Plan, which was originally released in February 2006.*

John Landsverk noted that the Panel is intending to update the Implementation Plan to clarify, resolve inconsistencies, and incorporate decisions that have been reached between the Panel and the parties, particularly related to measurement. He noted that the Panel had reserved the right to revise the plan, and that it is important to make updates to reflect discussions and changes during the past 18 months since the document was originally published. He suggested that this process could begin after the 4<sup>th</sup> monitoring report is finalized in late September.

Steve Hassett stated that the Department supports the idea of clarifying and resolving inconsistencies. The Department does want to have the opportunity to provide comments on the language. Casey Trupin agreed with the need to bring greater clarity in a number of areas, and asked whether this process would include adjustments to the benchmarks. Jeanine responded that she thought it would. John Landsverk stated that the Panel has discussed revising benchmarks that are currently written in terms of improvement over a baseline to create absolute targets, with a requirement of incremental progress each year.

John proposed that the Panel outline a timeline in late September, with the goal of providing a draft of the changes to the parties in advance of the December Panel meetings. Jess suggested that the Panel create a list of all areas in which the Panel is considering making changes and provide it to the parties, and Jan agreed. Jan mentioned that the Panel had also considered adding new outcomes in a number of areas, and this issue would need to be discussed.

### **Other Comments**

Jess noted that there are many benchmarks for which the Panel has agreed to rely on a partial measure for the next year, with additional information to be available when SACWIS is launched. He noted, however, that delays in launching SACWIS systems are common. Steve agreed, and stated that the Department is very focused on its timeline and is attempting to learn from experiences in other jurisdictions. Jess requested some assurance from CA that the Braam requirements have been incorporated into the SACWIS design. Jody asked when the Panel would like to see this, and John replied that there was not a specific deadline but that the Panel would appreciate seeing this information.

John referred back to the discussion on use of regional data, and stated that he felt each benchmark would need to be examined individually. He suggested that this type of work should be done as part of the process of revising the Implementation Plan. Steve Hassett stated that this is an acceptable approach, particularly given that the Panel has clarified that separate regional compliance plans will not be required.

Laurie Lippold asked for clarification on issues related to measuring monthly visits, particularly in terms of exactly what types of contact would be counted as visits. In advocacy efforts, she noted that she had always expected that monthly visits would represent a meaningful contact between social workers and children. Deborah Purce replied that her understanding was that, in addition to the foster parent survey data, the Panel had requested administrative data for both general face-to-face contacts and health and safety visits. Health and safety visits can be assumed to address numerous issues related to the child's well-being in the placement.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 pm.