

MINUTES

Braam Oversight Panel
SeaTac Red Lion, Rainier Room
SeaTac, WA
September 14, 2009

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

Panel staff: Carrie Whitaker

Plaintiffs' Attorneys: Casey Trupin, Tim Farris, Bill Grimm, Erin Shea McCann, Jihye Kim

Attorney General's Office: Steve Hassett, Carrie Hoon

DSHS Staff: Secretary Susan Dreyfus, Randy Hart, Deborah Purce, Chris Robinson, Scott Steuby, Robin McIlvaine, Lee Doran, Jessica Pierce, Brenda Villarreal, Barb Putnam, Diane Inman, Joel Odimba, Yen Lawlor, Myra Casey, Nancy Sutton, Becky Smith, Marie Fujii, Barb Geiger, Ginny Heim, Dawn Tatman, Michael Tyres, Tammy Cordova, Darcey Hancock, Elizabeth Jones. *By phone:* Ken Nichols, Connie Lambert-Eckel

Others: Laurie Lippold, Jennifer Strus, Terry Price, Sydney Forrester, John Tarnai, John Morse, Dave Wood.

Note: The minutes are a general summary of discussion and do not attempt to document every comment. The minutes are supplemented by the attached power point presentations made during the meeting.

Introduction

John Landsverk, Braam Panel chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. He outlined the agenda for the afternoon. He noted that this is the Panel's 20th meeting, and that there are 7 meetings remaining before the scheduled end of the agreement in 2011.

John called attention to the clarification at the bottom of the meeting agenda, which notes that the Panel will not accept testimony about individual cases. The Panel does continue to welcome public comment about Braam goals and outcomes and topics addressed during the meeting.

Chris Robinson introduced the DSHS staff in attendance at the meeting, which included headquarters staff, regional administrators, and some area administrators and supervisors.

Update from DSHS Secretary Susan Dreyfus

Secretary Susan Dreyfus thanked the Panel for the invitation to join the meeting, and provided an update on recent DSHS activities. She shared a document entitled "DSHS: One Department, One Vision, One Mission, One Core Set of Values." Secretary Dreyfus discussed her vision of closer collaboration among DSHS agencies and stronger partnerships with the community. She discussed the importance of strengths-based, person-centered approaches to practice. In addition, she noted the challenges facing the state as a result of limited resources, and stated that these changing times will create an opportunity to re-think and improve how the Department provides services.

Secretary Dreyfus noted that she would be announcing the new Children's Administration Assistant Secretary very soon. She indicated that her priorities in looking for a new leader for

CA have included a passionate commitment to change, strong leadership qualities, expertise with performance management, and a national perspective on child welfare.

The Secretary noted that work on HB2106 is underway. She views this effort as being about performance and partnership, not about a move to privatization. She sees this as an exciting opportunity to focus on performance, promote consistency and quality in service delivery across the state, and to define the roles of public and private service providers. The Secretary noted that she had appreciated the Panel's offer of consultation, and she had asked Randy Hart to speak with Jess McDonald about his experience with performance contracting in Illinois.

The Secretary said that, while this is an exciting time, the revenue downturn also creates challenges. Along with other state agency leaders, she has been participating in reduction exercises, which are very difficult.

FamLink

Randy Hart stated that it has now been seven months since FamLink was launched. CA had expected and planned for a challenging transition, but the transition has been even more difficult than expected. He noted that CA has emphasized to staff that core social work functions such as seeing children must continue to come first, in order to ensure that staff does not become distracted by the computer transition. He said that despite the challenges of the transition, CA is determined to provide the data required under Braam.

Dawn Tatman, director of CA technology services, delivered a power point presentation. *See power point presentation- http://www.braampanel.org/MinutesSept09_CAupdate.ppt*

Dawn reiterated that the implementation of FamLink has resulted in a daunting learning curve for staff, and that there were huge new components (such as financial information), integration of old functions, and new and different screens, codes and data fields. She also noted that the FamLink team had lost 15 staff due to budget cuts.

Dawn noted that data input has been improving. She also stated that the FamLink team has completed 5,000 hours of change requests, mostly designed to streamline the system.

Dawn reported that, with the exception of some educational data and independent living plans, FamLink includes all necessary data elements for Braam reporting. CA is planning to run performance reports for the January due date. Although the data warehouse has been somewhat delayed, Dawn explained that this does not prevent reporting. The data warehouse, when available, is a tool to make reporting more efficient.

Secretary Dreyfus commented that she was involved with implementing a new SACWIS system in Wisconsin. Having experienced this type of transition before, she stated that she has been impressed with the project management methodology in Washington. She noted that all systems experience these types of challenges with such a large computer transition, and that this is nothing out of the ordinary. She also requested that we not lose sight of the fact that FamLink is a practice-based data system that guides social work practice and that ensuring consistent quality practice is equally as important as consistent quality data.

Jeanine Long asked CA to confirm that it will be able to provide data on all outcomes. Chris Robinson replied that two issues are often confused in these discussions: the ability of the system to provide reports, and the level of confidence in the data. She stated that the latter is a problem in some areas. Lee Doran noted that not all Braam outcomes are based on administrative data; several outcomes use case review or the foster parent survey as a data source.

Randy Hart said that CA will direct resources toward being able to report data for FY09. He noted that the initial push of getting the system up and running has now been replaced by training, support and accountability. He said that even though there has been extensive staff training, there is still a need for additional training in order for staff to feel comfortable using the system.

Jan McCarthy said that the Panel has had a sense that if CA doesn't feel confident in the data, the Department may not report it. Steve Hassett replied that CA has put in place systems to improve the level of reporting and therefore the accuracy of the data; for example, he noted that CA has created reports so that there is a feedback loop for monthly visits. The Department understands the Panel's position that if no data are submitted, the Department will be considered out of compliance.

Bill Grimm expressed frustration at the lack of specificity in the discussion.

Randy Hart replied to Jan's question, saying that the Department would report data from FamLink no matter how bad the data look. CA may provide additional explanation and some backup proxy data as well. He noted that it's really only been in the last 6 weeks that staff has been able to start digging in the data to understand the system.

John Landsverk echoed Bill Grimm's frustration about lack of specificity, and asked whether CA is yet able to go down the list of Braam outcomes and identify for each one what the reporting issues will be, what level of confidence they have in the data, whether full year data are available, etc.

Jeanine Long asked about the status of CHET data, and CA replied that the new system will provide data using the Panel's definition of a completed CHET retroactive to February 1, 2009. It was noted that draft reports were provided to the Panel in the meeting materials.

Casey Trupin asked for an update on the issue of duplicate cases. Dawn Tatman reported that this is still a significant issue, and intensive efforts continue to identify duplicates and merge cases.

John Landsverk asked plaintiffs' counsel to summarize a letter they had sent to the Panel on the Friday before the meeting. Casey said that, two years from the possible end of the settlement period, plaintiffs are frustrated that data may be unreliable or unavailable. He noted that plaintiffs had asked the Panel to require CA to contract with an outside expert to assess the extent of the problems with FamLink, identify what needs to be done to rectify these problems, and set deadlines by which this can be accomplished.

Secretary Dreyfus replied that it sounds like CA needs to be very transparent, and she suggested that the Department produce a spreadsheet providing very specific information for

each Braam outcome on what the data source is, what data are available, when the data will be provided, the level of confidence in the data, gaps in the data, and workarounds or backup data sources that will be used to provide data not available through traditional sources. She indicated that she would ask her CFO and auditing office to work with CA on developing this list. She reiterated that these are typical implementation issues.

Casey Trupin replied that he feels CA has been transparent, and that their request is for a second set of eyes to review and better understand the situation. Secretary Dreyfus expressed concern that if CA is required to engage an outside expert, it could just slow down the problem-solving efforts. Dorothy Roberts stated that the Panel needs clarity on the data issues and an estimate of when problems can be fixed. Bill Grimm agreed that the problem is less a problem of transparency, and more a problem of specificity.

Randy Hart committed to providing the panel with the detailed list suggested by Secretary Dreyfus by October 15.

Secretary Dreyfus left the meeting, and indicated that she would make every effort to attend future Braam Panel meetings.

FamLink discussion with Regional Administrators

John Landsverk noted that the Panel had asked Regional Administrators to participate in the meeting to discuss experience in their regions with FamLink, as well as to provide an update from their perspective on progress related to monthly visits and caseload size.

Connie Lambert-Eckel from Region 1 spoke first. She stated that there has been some frustration related to cases that cannot be closed out in the system, as well as the issue of duplicate cases. The region has a large team working on rectifying these issues. In most cases, technical fixes are now available, and they now need to be entered into the system.

Connie indicated that the region has centralized data entry of court and legal information. In addition, they are taking steps to ensure that CHET screeners know when a child has been placed, since FamLink is not completely reliable or accessible.

Connie noted that since July 2009, supervisors have been reviewing each month 100% of cases with social workers and are discussing sibling contacts and monthly visits. Visits are tracked on a separate spreadsheet. In addition, the region is using a caseload count tool that they adapted from Region 2.

Jess asked for clarification on monthly supervisor reviews. Connie indicated that as of July, monthly supervisory reviews of 100% of cases are required. With respect to monthly visits, she noted that the data in the system still look poor, and while she hasn't tabulated the hand count, it shows a much higher level of performance. Jess asked for information on Region 1's caseloads. Connie replied that Child Protective Services (CPS) caseloads average 1:19 or 1:20, and Child Welfare Services (CWS) are around 1:20 or 1:21. She confirmed that this represents child cases. She noted that guardianship caseloads average 1:45 but do not require as much intervention by the social worker.

John asked whether there is confusion in recording monthly health and safety visits, as opposed to monthly contacts. Connie replied that they don't have a report showing this, but that she believes this to be an issue and has been training on this subject.

Ken Nichols discussed the experience in Region 2, and said that FamLink is not yet accurate. He indicated that average caseloads in his region are at 1:15.2 for CPS, 1:15.6 for voluntary services, 1:18.73 for CWS and 1:11.3 for Family Reconciliation Services. These are weighted caseloads.

Ken reported that in Region 2, 72.75% of the children in care received a monthly visit last month. Ken said that the issue of contacts compared to health and safety visits may be a problem, but they are not getting reports from the state on this. Chris Robinson clarified that reports on health and safety visits are accessible online, but that reports showing contacts were not available because it was thought that this could be confusing.

Ken reported that there are some challenges with CHET data entry in Region 2, and they are working on this issue.

Yen Lawlor, Region 3, continued the discussion of FamLink. She reported that average CWS caseloads in her region range from 1:15 or 16 in some office to 1:19 in others.

Yen stated that the region is working on CHET data and compliance. They are doing quite well, but continue to see challenges with obtaining medical appointments for well child exams. Region 3 also has placement coordinators track new placements and notify CHET screeners.

Yen stated that supervisors conduct a monthly review with workers on 100% cases. She reported that the percentage of children who received a monthly visit in the previous month ranges from 85-100% depending on the office.

Casey asked whether it would be possible to aggregate the data being reported by administrators from each region to get a sense of the totals across the state. John agreed that this would be helpful, since there seem to be so many separate standalone systems.

Joel Odimba described the transition to FamLink in Region 4. He reported that the region is focused on child safety and seeing children in their placements. He said that according to FamLink, 57% of children received a monthly visit during the previous month, but data in the region shows them being 20 percentage points higher than that. Joel reported that this is attributable to challenges as workers learn to use the new system.

With respect to CHET, Joel reported that physical health (well child exams) and education records continue to be the biggest challenges.

Joel reported that Region 4 has seen its total average caseload decline by 15% over the past two years. Currently, the overall caseload ratio is about 1:17, with 80% of workers meeting the Braam standard. He noted that caseloads in the Indian Child Welfare office are slightly higher.

Jess asked about formal monthly supervision. Joel stated that this is required, and these discussions focus on key performance measures.

Nancy Sutton reported on Region 5. She said that weighted average caseloads in the three offices in her region range are 1:15, 1:17 and 1:19. She said that permanency has been strong in the past, so there was not a backlog of cases waiting to exit the system.

With respect to monthly visits, Region 5 conducted a review in August, which showed performance of between 79-86%, depending on the unit. FamLink is showing performance in the mid-50s. Nancy indicated that one problem in FamLink is that users do not always remember to check the "note finalized" box.

Nancy reported that CHET screens have been a bit of a struggle, and that there is greater success in domains that the screeners can complete themselves (connections, developmental, behavioral health) as opposed to the physical health and education domains. Nancy said that the data in the CHET database are accurate, but they are working to improve performance.

John asked how long it would take to close the gap between what FamLink shows monthly visit performance to be, and what the region's own data show. Nancy said that it would take about 6 weeks to correct what is being done incorrectly within the region, but she did not know if there are other system issues beyond their control.

Myra Casey spoke about the FamLink transition in Region 6. She noted that Region 6 has 12 offices. Average caseload sizes vary by office, and are generally below 18 in small offices, and above 18 in larger offices.

Myra reported that offices are tracking monthly visits using different tools. Some offices report 100% compliance, while some are less than that. She reported that discussion of monthly visits and what occurred during the visits is a key focus of monthly supervision. In these meetings, FamLink reports have been used as a tool to ensure that social workers are aware of the correct codes to be used when recording monthly visits.

With respect to CHET, Myra reported that the region is performing fairly well, but continues to struggle with timely medical appointments. Placement coordinators email CHET screeners to be sure they are notified of new placements.

Jan McCarthy observed that the Regional Administrators had reported on average caseload sizes, and asked whether their tracking tools would enable them to report on the Braam measure (based on the percentage of social workers with caseloads below 18). The R.A.s agreed that this is probably possible.

Discussion of Regional Administrators' Attendance at Future Meetings

John Landsverk noted that the Panel finds it very useful to have the Regional Administrators participate in Braam Panel meetings. The Panel wanted to discuss whether it would be sufficient to have all Regional Administrators attend two meetings per year, with a single R.A. representing the group at the intervening meetings. Alternatively, the Panel may choose to ask all R.A.s to attend all meetings.

The R.A.s indicated that they have found the Panel meetings to be useful, and that the dialog helps the R.A.s understand what is required under Braam, and helps the Panel understand how the field is working toward these goals. They agreed that a field perspective is very important.

Jess McDonald stated that he feels it is critical for all R.A.s to attend all Panel meetings. He stated that he feels the Panel has worked with CA for many years, and it was not until hearing from the field that the Panel gets concrete answers. He expressed his opinion that CA headquarters does not represent the work of the field very well, which has left him to question whether or not the field is doing what needs to be done. He said that having R.A.s at the meetings is the best thing that has happened to this process. He noted that most data are about a year old by the time the Panel receives it, and the up-to-date information from R.A.s is invaluable. He noted that a recent plan from CA indicated that they are planning to train field staff on Braam, and he expressed frustration that this had not yet happened. He stated that R.A.s need to be at these meeting to demonstrate that they are working to improve performance and to speak about the challenges they face.

Chris Robinson objected to some of these comments, noting that the upcoming training on Braam is specific to the relationship between Braam and FamLink. She noted that the Department has trained on many issues relevant to Braam in the past, but has emphasized that the changes are good for children and families, not that they are being done simply to comply with a lawsuit. She agreed with Jess that the information from the R.A.s is timely and credible, but she objected to the implication that CA headquarters has failed to provide useful information to the Panel.

Casey Trupin stated that the Regional Administrators' presence at the meetings has been extremely worthwhile, and that plaintiffs' counsel would appreciate having R.A.s present as often as possible. Tim Farris agreed, and noted that this is particularly important to provide continuity during a period of leadership change.

Jan McCarthy disagreed with the implication of Jess' remarks that there was no work going on until the Panel heard directly from the field, but she agreed that the R.A.s had been very helpful by clarifying the whole picture of what is going on with CA. John Landsverk stated that it has been very helpful to see the variation among regions.

Jeanine Long expressed sensitivity to budget issues, noting that requiring all R.A.s to attend every Panel meeting would cost both time and money.

Dorothy Roberts stated that with the limited time left before the scheduled end of the agreement, it is particularly helpful to have the R.A.s' perspective at the meetings.

Randy Hart stated that CA would talk about this and try to work out how to maximize the R.A.s' participation.

Mental Health Services Update

Robin McIlvaine gave an update on DSHS mental health services. She noted that the divisions of mental health and substance abuse have been integrated in the new Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery. *See power point:*

http://www.braampanel.org/MinutesSept09_CAupdate.ppt

Robin noted that Washington is now in the 5th year of its Mental Health Transformation Grant, which has been an excellent vehicle for stakeholder involvement. She also noted that recent children's mental health legislation (HB 1088 and HB 1373) had created a platform for

expanded children's services, stronger wraparound services in pilot sites, and increased use of evidence-based practices.

With respect to budget issues, Robin noted that there had been a 3% reduction to Regional Support Network (RSN) rates overall, which had impacted RSNs differently. She indicated that it is hard to predict whether there will be any impact on children in foster care, and that all service and access requirements under the state plan remain unchanged. Robin indicated that 5 or 6 children per month are denied access to care by the RSNs, and that the Panel will receive a report about this. She noted that despite the budget challenges, key programs under HB 1088 and the evidence-based practice institute had been retained.

Jess McDonald asked whether the recent Washington Supreme Court ruling allowing parents to surrender custody of children in order to access mental health services had affected entries to care. Robin McIlvaine and Steve Hassettt replied that they did not believe there had been any impact of this type.

Jeanine Long asked about availability of Children's Long-Term Inpatient beds. Robin said that there had been no change in the number of available beds (91), but that the total number is fairly low.

Public comment

Dave Wood stated that several of the parents and grandparents who had spoken about their cases at the Panel's June public meeting had expressed to him how helpful this had been to them, so he was disappointed by the Panel's statement at this meeting that it would not hear about individual cases. He said that it was unfortunate that the Panel had the time to speak with Regional Administrators all afternoon, but not with people who are adversely impacted by what is going on in the field.

Laurie Lippold noted that several Regional Administrators had commented on challenges with obtaining timely medical appointments for children entering care. Laurie noted that she works with the WA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and she'd be happy to coordinate a meeting or make connections between the WCAAP and DCFS to speak about this.

Tim Farris stated that it is important to track whether social worker visits with children occur in private. This is important to children's ability to speak freely if they are being harmed in their placements. In addition, he stated that worker turnover is a concern, because if children are not able to get to know their social worker over time, they will be less likely to disclose if they are being harmed. Randy Hart noted that the monthly visit policy requires private visits, and that the bad economy has greatly decreased worker turnover.

Laurie Lippold asked whether there is someone social workers can contact when they have questions about FamLink. Chris Robinson said that there are "implementers" in every region and a team available to assist staff with FamLink. Randy Hart introduced Elizabeth Jones, who is one of the lead staff in supporting the field during the transition to FamLink.

Bill Grimm asked for clarification as to who can enter data into FamLink. Randy Hart stated that it depends on the type of data, but placement data can only be entered by social workers. This was a deliberate decision because of the expectation that FamLink will also drive practice. It

represents a significant change from CAMIS. With CAMIS, particularly in certain offices, clerical staff entered much of the data and social workers entered comparatively little.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

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Plaintiffs' Attorneys: Casey Trupin, Tim Farris, Bill Grimm, Erin Shea McCann, Jihye Kim

Attorney General's Office: Steve Hassett, Carrie Hoon

DSHS Staff: Randy Hart, Deborah Purce, Chris Robinson, Scott Steuby, Lee Doran, Jessica Pierce, Darcey Hancock, Michael Tyres, Yen Lawlor, Nancy Dufraine

Others: Marian Harris, Laurie Lippold, Jennifer Strus, Rashad Morris, John Tarnai, Dave Wood, Ron Murphy, Beth Canfield, Janet St.Clair

Note: The minutes are a general summary of discussion and do not attempt to document every comment. The minutes are supplemented by the attached power point presentations made during the meeting.

Introduction

John Landsverk, Braam Panel chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and outlined the agenda for the morning.

Foster Parent Survey

John Tarnai, Washington State University, provided a report on the 3rd year of the foster parent survey being conducted on issues related to Braam. John noted that he would focus on the Braam outcomes, and compare performance across the 3 years for which data are available.

See power point presentation – http://www.braampanel.org/MinutesSept09_FPsurvey.ppt

There was clarification that this year's survey population had been restricted to foster parents or relative caregivers who had cared for a child for at least 60 days in the last half of 2008, and they must have cared for at least one child who was not in a guardianship during this time. Because of these restrictions, the total population of caregivers appears much smaller than in past years. Darcey Hancock, DLR, stated that the total population of licensed foster parents has remained stable over the past several years.

John Landsverk noted that the survey had focused only on the last half of 2008 in order to improve recall, so that the time period being discussed would be more recent. Lee Doran noted that in the future the survey would be administered quarterly, which means that questions will focus on an even more recent period.

Jeanine Long asked for clarification on the difference between response rate and cooperation rate. John Tarnai explained that the cooperation rate includes only those foster parents who

were actually reached, while the response rate includes others who were attempted and were not reached (because of answering machines, for example).

The group discussed the data presented on the first three Braam measures: C 1.1 (foster parent training), C 1.2 (foster parent support), C 1.3 (foster parent information). John Landsverk observed that although performance on these items had started out higher than he had expected, there had been very little movement on these measures over time. As the Panel's researcher, he wondered whether there was a "ceiling effect" that made it difficult to increase performance without a dramatic intervention. John Tarnai suggested that it might be possible to add some questions about why foster parents report feeling inadequately trained, supported, or informed when this is the case.

The group discussed the data presented for outcome D 1.5 (medically fragile children). Dorothy Roberts noted that performance had increased significantly (from 70% in 2007 to 81% in 2008), but also observed that some of this change could be a result of the addition of a definition of medically fragile, which could mean that foster parents serving children with less intensive needs (and therefore perhaps requiring and receiving lesser support) might have been eliminated from the measure.

Chris Robinson questioned whether the benchmark for this item is attainable. Steve Hassett stated that the question pertaining to access to medical care showed a positive response of 95%; he argued that this is more important than receiving preparation and consultation to care for the child's medical needs and therefore should be weighted more heavily. Eighty percent (80%) of the FPs responded positively about "preparation and consultation". Jess McDonald suggested that the fact that 20% of the foster parents serving medically fragile children had reported that they hadn't received adequate preparation and consultation should be of concern to the Department. Chris agreed. John Tarnai noted that it would again be possible to add a question to ask these foster parents why they do not feel supported.

Casey Trupin asked whether this measure was an average of the two major components (connection to medical care and adequate preparation and consultation) or if it required the answers to both questions to be yes. John Tarnai said that he would look back at the calculation. Casey said it appeared to be an average.

Bill Grimm asked whether the number of foster parents indicating that they serve sexually aggressive youth (outcome D 1.3) matches administrative data. Chris Robinson replied that there is not currently an administrative data source on this subject, but that FamLink has the ability to capture this information. The group noted that data for unlicensed caregivers represented only 7 caregivers for this outcome, and therefore should be interpreted with caution.

With respect to foster parent survey data on monthly visits (outcome D 1.5), performance has increased substantially over the past several years—from 38% in 2006 to 43% in 2007 to 69% in 2008. The group agreed that the implementation of policy in September 2008 requiring monthly visits appeared to have had a significant impact on this measure.

The group discussed data for the outcome related to sibling visits and contacts (outcome E 2.1). Jeanine Long noted that the question did not distinguish between siblings who are in placement and those who are not in placement. Carrie Whitaker noted that the goal as stated in

the settlement agreement requires children in placement to be able to visit with both siblings in placement and those who are not in placement. Chris Robinson pointed out that this can be difficult to accomplish, depending on the location and age of the siblings who are not in placement. Jeanine Long suggested that the questions be revised to have a better understanding of this issue.

Braam Outcomes by Race/ Ethnicity

John Landsverk noted the Braam Settlement Agreement does not specifically mention racial disproportionality as an issue. However, by appointing Dorothy Roberts, a national expert on this issue, to the Panel, the parties implied an interest in these issues. John noted that the Panel's revised Implementation Plan requires reports by race/ ethnicity for all Braam outcomes.

Dorothy Roberts delivered a power point presentation—*see* http://www.braampanel.org/MinutesSept09_race_ethnicity.ppt

Dorothy noted that the Panel had received data by race/ ethnicity for only a small number of Braam outcomes, and had reiterated and clarified its request for additional data in a letter to the Department on July 16. Randy Hart replied that the Department is aware of this requirement, but that there is limited staff working on data reporting and resources are limited. He said that providing the required reports is a priority for CA, and that this could be done within the next 3 months. John Landsverk asked whether 2 months would be feasible, particularly if the data are presented as simple tables without interpretation or analysis. Jan McCarthy suggested that this should be incorporated into the previous day's discussion of broader data issues, and the availability of race/ethnicity data should be included in the detailed data report to the Panel on 10/15. Randy said that CA would do its best.

Deborah Purce noted that an updated data analysis commissioned by the statewide Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee (RDAC) would be available before December, and would analyze disproportionality at key child welfare decision points.

Dorothy Roberts introduced several members of the RDAC in attendance at the meeting: Dr. Marian Harris of the University of Washington-Tacoma School of Social Work, who co-chairs the RDAC; Deborah Purce, who serves as DSHS liaison to the committee; and Ron Murphy of Casey Family Programs, committee member.

Chris Robinson asked for clarification as to what the Panel is looking for in terms of caseload size by race/ ethnicity. Dorothy stated that the Panel is interested in whether there are any correlations between the proportion of minority children served by an office and caseload sizes. Chris said that CA could attempt to do such an analysis, but may have questions on the details.

Dorothy Roberts reviewed several examples of race/ ethnicity data on Braam outcomes that have been provided to date, discussed the Panel's observations on this data, and outlined questions about how the Panel might approach these data (what might trigger the Panel to take action in this area? What actions might the Panel take?). *See power point presentation –* http://www.braampanel.org/MinutesSept09_race_ethnicity.ppt

Lee Doran asked how the Panel might approach data that shows inconsistency across years—for example, showing disparity for some racial/ ethnic groups in certain years, and not in

others. Dorothy said that this is exactly the type of question the Panel is discussing, and is looking for feedback from the parties.

John Landsverk observed that different outcomes raise different issues. For example, in the area of monthly visits, overall performance in the past has been quite low. The Panel would hope that, as overall performance increases, any disparities between racial/ ethnic groups would decrease. For other outcomes on which performance is close to the benchmark but disparity still exists, the response could be different. He noted that national research consistently shows less favorable outcomes for Native American and African American children involved in the child welfare system.

John noted that the RDAC and the Panel are focused on very different issues. For example, the RDAC is examining disproportionate rates of entry into care for different racial/ ethnic groups. Deborah Purce agreed, and added that length of stay has also been a central focus of the committee's work. John noted that the Braam agreement is virtually silent on the subject of permanency, and is much more focused on services to children while in care. Dorothy Roberts stated that some of these issues could be related, and that some Braam priorities could affect length of stay. Chris Robinson said that some interrelationships could show up in the data—for example, since African American children tend to be in placement longer than children of other races, they may be less likely to receive a monthly social worker each and every month simply because there are more opportunities for a missed visit.

John Landsverk indicated that the Panel is seeking feedback from the parties on how to address this issue. For example, he said that even the question of what constitutes a disparity is not straightforward. He argued that statistical significance is overly sensitive to sample size and may not be the best approach, arguing instead in favor of a rule similar to the threshold for regional variation (10 percentage points below the statewide average). Dorothy asked Dr. Marian Harris whether the RDAC has considered the question of how much disparity is too much; Dr. Harris replied that they had not.

Chris Robinson noted that the absolute threshold applied to regional variation can be problematic when it includes only a small number of children. John Landsverk noted that for race/ ethnicity, it would be necessary to establish a minimum number of children in a given group for any comparisons to be applied.

Deborah Purce consulted with the other RDAC representatives in attendance, and suggested that this group speak with the RDAC and the RDAC research subcommittee in order to provide feedback to the Panel. She said that this could be done before the Panel's December meeting.

Lee Doran commented that the Department works on issues related to racial disproportionality on an ongoing basis using more recent data than what the Panel is reviewing, and that this may be more useful in addressing these issues than the Panel's retroactive, compliance-oriented approach.

Randy Hart noted that the Department is working closely with the RDAC to address issues related to racial disproportionality. He expressed concern about possible race-based Braam outcomes. Dorothy Roberts clarified that any Braam outcomes in this area would be about closing gaps in performance, not about creating different expectations for different groups. John Landsverk echoed this, stating that this is an equity issue.

Casey Trupin suggested that, in lieu of new outcomes, the Panel could take an approach analogous to the regional rule, under which the Department is out of compliance with the outcome if performance for any region (or, in this case, racial/ ethnic group) lags more than a certain amount behind the benchmark. John Landsverk said that the Panel was not inclined toward that type of approach. Dorothy agreed that this would be the most stringent approach, and was not being proposed by the Panel.

John Landsverk asked Dr. Harris if she felt that the Panel was overlooking any issues related to this. Dr. Harris replied that they were not. Ron Murphy agreed that the Panel's questions are on target, and that the committee should take some time to consider them.

Casey Trupin asked for clarification on what exactly the RDAC would be considering, and he suggested that Carrie Whitaker should attend the meeting to represent the Panel. Deborah Purce agreed that Carrie should attend. Dorothy Roberts stated that the Panel would appreciate feedback from the RDAC on the questions posed in her presentation: what type/ level of disparity would trigger Panel action? What type of action might this be? How could the Panel and the RDAC work together on these issues? It was also agreed that RDAC may identify a subset of Braam outcomes that would be of particular interest to the Committee

Outstanding issues & public comment

Jess McDonald asked about caseload data that had been provided in hard copy to the Panel earlier that morning. Lee Doran clarified that it represented all cases (not only members of the Braam class) and showed changes in case assignment in FamLink over the past several months. Jess asked why the number of cases had increased by about 50% since February 2009. Lee said that this does not reflect an actual increase in number of children, but instead reflects data issues in the FamLink conversion. He described this as a "container problem" related to how data gets loaded into the system. Chris Robinson noted that this is explained further in the section of CA's power point presentation that the group had not discussed the previous day because time had run out. The presentation would have illustrated how data in FamLink have been changing as FamLink is cleaned up.

Dave Wood commented that the discussion had been very interesting, and asked whether anyone has spoken with Francis Carr from the DSHS office of diversity about issues related to minority employment. Deborah Purce said that Ms. Carr does attend the RDAC meetings, and she agreed with Dave that she is extremely knowledgeable and helpful.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.