

November 17, 2008

The second meeting of the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Comprehensive Services Program for At-Risk Youth and Families was held November 17, 2009 in at the Fairfax Government Center in Fairfax, Virginia. Following opening remarks, presentations and remarks were heard.

**James Gillespie, CSA Program Manager, Fairfax CSA**

The meeting began with presentations from local CSA program staff. Mr. James Gillespie, CSA Program Manager for Fairfax-Falls Church described the activities and successes of the Fairfax-Falls Church program. He noted that the Fairfax-Falls Church program was a large program, and that the program's caseload had been stable, with about 1100 cases served each year over the past three years. At the same time, however, program costs had risen, growing at a rate of 11% during the past year.

**Sharon Minter, CSA Coordinator, Manassas City CSA**

Ms. Sharon Minter, CSA Coordinator, Manassas City CSA, described her program as a small, urban program. She stated that the program received approximately 140 referrals each year, and provided services to approximately 50 cases per year, at a cost of \$1.9 million. Cases referred but not served through the CSA program were served through other programs. Ms. Minter stated that for her program, cost containment was a key effort. One of the largest expenses for her program was treatment foster care, which received about 40% of her budget. Residential treatment costs were minimized, she stated, by seeking other alternatives and using residential care as a treatment of last resort. In closing, Ms. Minter offered three recommendations to the joint subcommittee: (1) increasing administrative funding to localities, (2) changing restrictions on funding to enable localities to start up news services, and (3) reducing the community based treatment services match rate and increasing the range of services eligible for the community based services match rate.

**Lisa Dunn, CSA Coordinator, Staunton/Augusta/Waynesboro CSA**

Ms. Lisa Dunn, CSA Coordinator, for the Staunton, August County and Waynesboro CSA Program, described how her multi-locality program served at risk youth and families. She stated that while each locality had its own Family Assessment and Planning team, the program was served by a single Community Policy and Management team and that planning was community wide, including all three localities in a unified plan. Ms. Dunn indicated that each locality served by the program had experienced increases in demand, but that the program had taken steps to contain costs associated with this growth, including efforts to link families with existing resources and other programs in order to divert families from the CSA program where appropriate. One problem that Ms. Dunn identified for the joint subcommittee was that of judicial referrals to the program. Ms. Dunn noted that in cases in which children are referred to the program by the court, time for service planning is drastically reduced and some children end up in residential care when other, community based services could have met their needs. To address this problem Staunton/Augusta/Waynesboro staff was working with local judges to educate the courts on options for at risk youth beyond residential care. In closing, Ms. Dunn

described a new project undertaken by the Staunton/Augusta/Waynesboro program whereby the program utilized two 10-bed "pods" at the local juvenile detention facility as an assessment facility, providing short term placement for at risk children. She also stated that utilization review procedures implemented by the program had resulted in substantial savings over the past year.

### **Local Government/Private Provider Comments**

Following presentations by local program staff, the joint subcommittee received comments from local government representatives and private providers. Mr. Dean Lynch, of the Virginia Association of Counties, recommended additional flexibility in funding, to allow localities to new services, increasing the number of local government representatives on the State Executive Council, and increasing administrative funding for the CSA program. Victor Evans, CSA Coordinator for Prince William, urged greater collaboration between localities state government, and private providers. Representatives from Loudon County stated that they had seen a substantial caseload increase, partially due to local growth. Janet Areson of the Virginia Municipal League suggested concentrating on training coordinators, FAPT team members, and others involved in the process to increase efficiency and effective planning, increasing administrative costs. Annette Bowler, Director of the Department of Family Services for the County of Fairfax described a model, currently utilized in Michigan and being evaluated in Fairfax County, through which family resource centers were established in elementary schools, to provide single point of entry into the service system, to allow coordinated planning for family services agencies including the Comprehensive Services Act program. Such resource centers, Ms. Bowler stated, had worked in Michigan to reduce the number of children moving into the family services system. Several other speakers echoed suggestions to increase administrative funding for localities, and also suggested reevaluation of the local match rates for residential and community based services.