

CITIZEN CONNECTIONS

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STATE UPDATES

Oregon

Oregon's three Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) met at a planning session in July to determine their areas of focus for 2015–2016. Each panel independently decided to examine how to better recruit, retain and support foster parents. This is an exciting opportunity for panels from across the state to work together to tackle these important topics. The panels are coordinating their efforts and plan to conduct a policy review, collect data, perform multi-jurisdictional research, convene a focus group of foster youth, and survey foster parents.



If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all.

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PEARL S. BUCK

Kentucky

Kentucky's Citizen Review Panels are in transition. After working as the Program Coordinator of Kentucky's CRPs for fifteen years, Dr. Blake Jones has taken a fulltime faculty position with the University of Kentucky College of Social Work. Blake will remain active in the national CRP community.

Iowa

Iowa's Child Protection Council (CPC) is a multidisciplinary group of 20 individuals from across the state, including judges, attorneys, parents, medical professionals, law enforcement, and advocates. The CPC serves as Iowa's Children's Justice Act taskforce (CJA), as well as one of Iowa's three CRPs. The CPC has been involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of Iowa's Differential Response system, which became effective on January 1, 2014; it has also expressed interest in doing a case review to look at pathway decisions, i.e., traditional Child Abuse Assessment vs. a Family Assessment (Iowa's Differential Response pathway). The CPC will have this opportunity with an all-day case review

meeting on November 10. Planning for the review has been a lengthy process involving significant coordination, and included a full day of training for the CPC in September. The training covered an overview of the general CPS process (from intake to substantiation) and then an overview of the guided assessment tool that will be used to review each case, as well as a sample case review to test for inter-reviewer reliability. At the November meeting, CPC members will pair with Iowa Department of Human Services Field Supervisors to review a total of 50 randomly selected intakes, half assigned as Child Abuse Assessments and half assigned as Family Assessments. Reviewers will determine if pathway decisions are being made correctly and consistently, in accordance with Iowa law, policy, and practice guidance. The CPC will also have a chance to discuss overall findings and make recommendations to the IDHS for system improvements. The review and any subsequent recommendations will be highlighted in Iowa's annual CJA report, as well as the annual CRP report.



"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Idaho

Idaho had its fall convening on October 15–16. Idaho has seven panels throughout the state who engage in many community activities and research to better inform the child welfare system. During the October meeting the panels will discuss the local work they participate in and create recommendations for the upcoming year.

Alaska

The Alaska CRP met for its fall kickoff retreat on September 26–27 to finalize its work plan for the year 2015–2016. The Panel starts its work year in September and submits its annual report on June 30 the following year. The work plan includes specific goals, travel plans, annual calendar, and other details, and guides the Panel's work through the year.

Goals: During the course of its work through the previous year, the Panel members identify potential broad areas of focus (ex: licensing, data management, etc.) for the ensuing years. The Panel's coordinator maintains a running list of all such areas of focus for the Panel's consideration during the fall kickoff retreat. The Panel then considers each focus and prioritizes them based on their relevance and immediacy relative to the recent developments in child protection in Alaska. The top four goals are included in the work plan for the year. Prioritized areas of focus are then framed as specific questions. The Panel discusses each question, identifies specific methods, data, and resources needed to answer it. One Panel member is identified as a lead person for each goal, and other interested members as support persons. The lead person updates the Panel on progress on each goal at our quarterly meetings.

Travel: The Panel's travel schedule includes three to five site visits and a visit to the Alaska legislature. Alaska's CPS system is organized into five regions with 21 field offices spread across the state. The Panel uses the Quality Assurance data from the state CPS system to identify regional and field offices to visit during the year. Each site visit may last up to four days, and includes meetings/consultation with local CPS staff, local partner agencies, schools, public safety, and parents and children involved with the CPS system.

The Panel gathers information relevant to the years' goals; policy and practice as it happens in the field; and relations between the CPS system and partner agencies. Every February during Alaska's legislative session, the Panel presents its previous years' recommendations and current years' work to the House and Senate Committees on Health and Social Services.

Calendar: In addition to the travel, the Panel's calendar includes quarterly Panel meetings, monthly meetings with the CPS leadership, meetings and conferences that CRP members may attend and represent the Panel, and the CRP National Conference.

All proceedings, related documents, and the calendar are posted on the Panel's website at www.crpalaska.org. More information is also available at <http://crpalaska.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/Alaska-CRP-Work-Plan-2015-2016.pdf>.

New Jersey

The New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (NJTF CAN), in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) and with the logistical assistance of Rutgers University, Office of Continuing Professional Education, hosted its 14th Biennial Conference for child welfare professionals recently at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Brunswick. Entitled "Kinship Care and Family Connections," this interdisciplinary, statewide conference featured Dr. Joseph Crumbley, a trainer, consultant and therapist who delivered an engaging talk and interactive discussion entitled, "Engaging Relative Caregivers: Managing Risk Factors in Kinship Care."



"I brought children into this dark world because it needed the light that only a child can bring."

LIZ ARMBRUSTER

In addition, the NJTF CAN's Protection Committee recently finalized its Human Trafficking County Task Force Guidelines. This document encourages county level multi-disciplinary collaboration. It covers prevention, response, and ongoing services to survivors, and highlights the importance of inclusion of law enforcement in this work. The Human Trafficking County Task Force Guidelines may be accessed on DCF's website at <http://nj.gov/dcf/news/reportsnewsletters/taskforce/njtfcareports.html>.

Georgia

Georgia's CAPTA Panels held their annual retreat on September 17, 2015. Forty panel members were in attendance at the retreat hosted at Cobb Superior Court in Marietta. The morning included a presentation by the Region IV Administration on Children and Families Child Welfare Specialist, Tracy Fava, on joint planning opportunities for CAPTA Panels and an overview of each of the federal funding streams that support state child welfare systems. The morning concluded with a presentation on Georgia's CAPTA Plan and utilization of its CAPTA state grant by the Director of Georgia's Practice and Guidance Unit of the Division of Family and Children Services, Colleen Mousinho. Afternoon sessions were dedicated to discussing and developing individual plans for each of Georgia's Panels for the coming year.

The Children's Justice Act Task Force (the Task Force) has established committees to advance the work of their most recent three-year assessment related to the state's child abuse protocol, including improving the consistency of language and definitions as well as the update and communication of updates, and improving the quality and consistency of mandated reporter training. Also related to their three-year assessment, the Task Force will monitor activities to address inconsistencies in child abuse language and definitions in Georgia Code and policies for agencies with child-caring responsibilities. The Child Protective Advisory Committee's interests for 2016 lie in the potential revision of the state's CAPTA plan as the child welfare agency develops an implementation plan for its "Blueprint for Change" that includes solution-based practice, stakeholder engagement and workforce development. The Child Fatality Review Panel (the Panel) will focus their activities on improving the evaluation

of data on maltreatment-related deaths, and developing training for first responders on factors ('red flags') at the scene of an investigation that might suggest maltreatment as a potential contributory factor in a child death. The Panel also plans to identify and address any differences in maltreatment-related terminology between the National Child Death Review Reporting System and Georgia's child welfare system.

Michigan

Michigan was honored to host Tom Cannady, from the Kentucky, Justice and Public Safety Cabinet and Lyn Bruckner, a Kentucky Assistant Attorney General, at its September CRP workgroup meeting. Cannady and Bruckner provided an overview of Kentucky's fatality review process and heard from the CRP about Michigan's process.

Recently, there has been some debate at the state level as to what should be redacted in the case files the CRP is provided for review. Some team members have found that conducting a comprehensive review is difficult when important information such as medical records are omitted from the case file. The Michigan CRP will continue to explore the redaction policy with the Department.

Michigan has seen results from its 2013 annual report recommendation related to domestic violence. The recommendation read: *The Department should utilize existing domestic violence programs and advocates to assist with investigations by either consultation or having advocates physically attend home visits with the workers. There should be some development of a contractual, county specific individual who is available for consultation over the phone.* In the past year, the Department started providing webinar trainings to its staff to educate them on this new policy.

South Carolina

The South Carolina Citizen Review Panel recently entered into a new Memorandum of Understanding / Agreement (MOA) with the South Carolina Department of Social Services. The agreement was sought when a new agency head was appointed. The MOA spells

out the various roles and commitments of the panel, the state agency and the University of South Carolina, the contracted entity providing support for the panels' work. The MOA includes specifics on how the panels will implement its CAPTA requirements. The agreement details scheduled meetings, information sharing, volunteer and coordinator national conference attendance, the submission of CRP recommendations, and panel members' access to confidential information. New this year is a section regarding the panel providing input to DSS on its annual budgeting needs. The MOA is the foundation for the panels' collaborative work with the agency.

Other SCCR activities and accomplishments include:

- ▶ An active new member recruitment campaign, a partnership with CRP volunteer Donna Xenakis, a well-respected trainer and passionate child advocate. The panel and Donna collaborate with various entities to provide information about child abuse and discuss CRP volunteer opportunities. The panel was recently invited by the SC Department of Social Services State Director V. Susan Alford to provide input on South Carolina's new child fatality website (<https://dss.sc.gov/ChildFatalityReports/>). The panel formed a Child Fatality Action Subcommittee in 2013.
- ▶ SCCR member Dr. Kim Janha was named to the state's Kinship Care Advisory Committee led by the Sisters of Charity Foundation. This group is working to improve the support of kinship care providers in SC.



2015 MOU signing with V. Susan Alford (in pink far right)

New Research on Citizen Review Panels

Drs. Jay Miller and Blake Jones have published new research on Citizen Review Panels. The article, entitled “Using concept mapping as a planning tool: Child welfare Citizen Review Panels,” appears in the current issue of *Evaluation and Planning: The International Journal*. The article explores concept mapping as a way to engage citizen review panel members in strategic planning and evaluation. For more information, contact Jay Miller at Justin.miller1@uky.edu.

New Website and Email Address

The National Citizen Review Panel Virtual Community is undergoing a much-needed facelift. Look for the opportunity to provide your suggestions about what you wish to see on the website.

There is also a new way to reach Blake Jones. Please use crpnational@gmail.com.



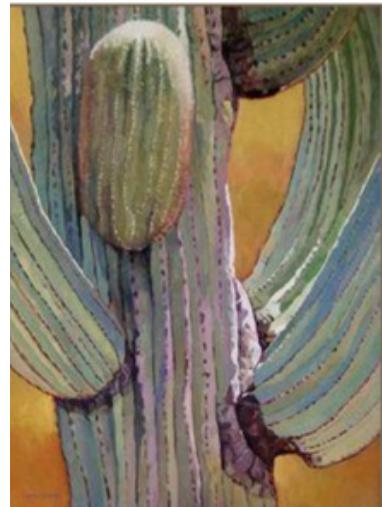
Dr. Diwakar Vadapalli

New Member of National CRP Advisory Board

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Diwakar Vadapalli to the National CRP Advisory Board. Dr. Vadapalli is an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage. His research focuses on service systems to prevent child abuse and neglect and the administration of child protection services. He worked as an Indian Child Welfare Act worker in remote areas of Alaska before earning his PhD in Social Welfare from Case Western Reserve University. He joined the Alaska Citizen Review Panel in April 2012, and has been the panel Chair l since April 2013, during which time he initiated a series of changes to improve the Panel's structure, functions, and visibility. Dr. Vadapalli is actively working on clearly identifying the purpose and functions of a Citizen Review Panel, and defining the nature and substance of a ‘citizen review’ in child protection. His other research includes assessing the availability of prevention services in Alaska, assessing the prevalence of repeat maltreatment in Alaska, and disproportionality in Alaska’s foster care population.

Registration will soon be open for next year's conference in Arizona!

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us June 6–9, 2016, at the Renaissance Resort and Spa. More information can be found at <https://socialwork.asu.edu/ncrconf>.



2016 NATIONAL CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL CONFERENCE

Hosted by: ASU Center for Child Well-Being

June 6 – June 9, 2016

Renaissance Resort and Spa, Glendale AZ