



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Summary of Subcommittee Meeting

Subcommittee Committee:

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| Child and Family Services | 2:30 - 4:00 pm |
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Date: Thursday, December 15, 2022

Location: 5560 Overland Avenue, Room 171
San Diego, CA 92123

Facilitator: Stephanie Heying

Meeting Staff: Emily Lay

Child and Family Services Subcommittee Summary: 22 attendees took part in the Subcommittee.

Advisory Members Participating: Carolyn Griesemer, Cheryl Rode, Jeff Weimann, Joy Singleton, Sandra Mueller, Simone Hidds-Monroe, Stephen Moore

I, II. Stephanie provided a brief overview of the agenda and the purpose of the subcommittee. Stephanie then explained how the meeting was being conducted in-person due to the recent motion made by the Board of Supervisors regarding teleconferencing. Lastly, Stephanie encouraged participation from all attendees.

III. Educational and Mental Health Services at PCC

Stephanie opened the agenda item and passed it on to Norma Rincon of Child Welfare Services (CWS). Norma gave a brief overview of Polinsky Children's Center (PCC) and the goals of PCC. Norma then gave the following update:

- Behavioral Health Services at PCC
 - Services are offered through New Alternatives, Inc. (NAI).
 - Services include:
 - Diagnostic and treatment services
 - Crisis Intervention
 - Psychosocial and psychiatric assessments
 - Medication support and management
 - Therapy
 - Intensive services
 - In Home Based Services (IHBS)
 - Intensive Care Coordination (ICC)
 - Rehabilitative services
 - Telehealth After Care services
 - Child and Family team (CFT) meetings are held to help with placement decisions, transitions, and big picture items.
 - Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings are held weekly with various PCC staff, nursing

- staff, and psychiatrists to collaborate on care, case planning, and interventions for individual children.
 - Peer Partners are available to connect with youth to support them through PCC.
 - PCC Community Collaborations:
 - Recreation/Music Therapy
 - Pet Therapy
 - Achievement Center
 - Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Services
- Education at PCC
 - Many youths at PCC go to off-site schools.
 - San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) provide on-site schooling/education at PCC.
 - SDUSD's PCC school curriculum adheres to the California Common Core Standards and is provided for grades K-12.
 - The school is staffed similar to an off-site school. PCC school staff include, but are not limited to:
 - Site administrator (Principal)
 - Special-Education teacher
 - School Psychology
 - School Nurse
 - Speech/Language specialist
 - The PCC school provides many services to youths including but not limited to:
 - Special Education
 - Tutoring
 - Implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
 - Requests for educational records from prior schools
 - Educational team meetings to collaborate regarding students who are struggling
 - PCC Educational Liaison:
 - Employed by San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE).
 - Helps promote school stability.
 - Collaborates in CWS meetings such as CFT meetings and Treatment Team meetings.
 - Arranges school transportation, facilities enrollment, disenrollment, and online learning.
 - Identifies and assists with educational rights holders.
 - Help youth with returning to their school of origin.
- Questions and comments on the presentation:
 - Joy Singleton asked what behavioral health services are provided to help reduce calls to law enforcement. She asked what percentage of calls to law enforcement are for youth who leave the facility. She also asked for examples of types of interventions that might be used to support the youth at PCC. Norma shared that PCC is required to make a call to law enforcement if any youth leaves the facility without permission. She stated many youths that arrive at PCC have complex mental health needs and trauma that require PCC to call law enforcement due to insistence from Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT). She commented that rehabilitative staff are assigned to residential cottages and are trained to deescalate a variety of mental health triggers as well as educate the youths on coping skills.
 - Joy requested data on the number of calls to law enforcement for AWOLs vs. assault calls. Norma shared that there were 97 youth in 2020-21 who AWOL'd and 56 youth in 2022-

23 who have AWOL'd.

- Stephen Moore asked if the 97 cases of AWOL in 2020-21 were duplicated. Norma clarified that the data is reflective of 97 children, not cases, meaning 97 children AWOL'd during that time period. It is possible that they could have AWOL'd more than once.
- Carolyn Griesemer asked how quickly mental health services are assigned to each youth. She asked if the NAI satellite sites were still operating during the pandemic. Norma responded services are typically assigned within 24-48 hours of the youth's arrival at PCC, and NAI sites were operational during the pandemic.
- Simone Hidds-Monroe asked how youth and their families can request family therapy, and how many youths are currently participating in family therapy. She asked how behavioral services change or address recurring AWOLs. Norma stated youths and their families are allowed to request family therapy in collaboration with a social worker during CFT meetings. She clarified there are no youth currently participating in family therapy, but that that could be due to shorter stays at PCC. She stated many youths develop relationships with PCC staff that make it easier to address recurring AWOLs; when youth feel comfortable expressing their concerns/frustrations/emotions to PCC staff, the staff is able to connect with clinicians to support the youth through their emotions.
- A participant shared Peer Partners are helpful in reducing AWOL numbers because they work closely with the youth to ensure they are being safe (i.e., where they will be staying, what type of food is available, etc.). She stated having a Peer partner who has spent time at PCC is beneficial because they are familiar with PCC and challenges youth may face while at PCC.
- A participant asked if volunteers continued to help during the pandemic. Norma shared that many PCC volunteers are older retirees, and the pandemic impacted the volunteers' ability to come to PCC. Currently, there are a few volunteers willing to come back, but recruitment efforts for more volunteers will begin after the new year.
- Stephen Moore asked what the process is to determine educational needs for each youth, and if there are classrooms for each grade. Norma shared PCC must quickly determine whether a youth needs to attend off-site school or not. A good portion of the PCC youth who do not attend off-site school do not attend because of safety concerns. She stated the PCC school is no different than a regular, public school. The PCC school provides K-12 academic programs, and cohorts are grouped together; meaning high schoolers are often grouped together, middle schoolers are often grouped together, etc.
- A participant asked if the PCC school is designated as a home-hospital setting, and if that information needed to be included on an IEP. Norma clarified that PCC is a county facility that allows SDUSD to occupy some of the space. The PCC school is not licensed under Title 22 regulations but is regulated and operated by SDUSD. She stated the home-hospital setting would need to be included on any IEPs.
- Carolyn Griesemer asked if IEP assessments are done at PCC to assess each youth's educational needs. Norma shared that IEP assessments are being worked on at PCC but have not been incorporated into the initial assessments completed when youth arrive at PCC.
- A participant asked what the longest stay for a youth at PCC. Norma stated the current average length of stay is 10 days, but during the pandemic the average length of stay was longer.
- Simone Hidds-Monroe asked how many youths end up emancipating out of PCC. Norma explained that youth who are 16 and a half are transferred to extended foster care (EFC), where they are paired with an Independent Living Skills (ILS) worker and an EFC worker to help the youth work on their transition plan.
- Cheryl Rode commented San Diego County is lucky to have a facility like PCC to be able

to support our youth in need. She asked what PCC is doing to prepare for the future of PCC and congregate care. Norma explained PCC is adding more programs and partnerships with community organizations to further support youths at PCC, but many youths at PCC need more than typical behavioral and educational services.

IV. Family's First Update

Stephanie opened the agenda item and passed it on to Nikki Kelsay and Rachel Swaykos of CWS. Nikki gave a brief overview of the Family's First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), which is a funding source that provides funds to the state and the county to help develop prevention services and congregate care.

Rachel then gave the following update:

- Qualified Individual (QI):
 - CWS works closely with Behavioral Health Services (BHS) to complete QI assessments.
 - QI Definition and Purpose:
 - Trained, professional or clinician mental health professionals.
 - Determine whether a placement setting meets the treatment needs and goals of the youth.
 - Review reports related to youth's functioning.
 - Recommend appropriate placement settings and identify treatment goals.
 - QI Assessments:
 - Assessments are required when:
 - CFT's recommend placement in a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) or Community Treatment Facility (CTF) setting.
 - Changes of placement in STRTPs.
 - A youth is AWOL from a STRTP facility for more than 14 days.
 - A youth's anticipated placement is an STRTP or CTF.
 - STRTP/CTF Placement:
 - There are three bodies needed to approve an STRTP placement:
 - QI Assessor
 - Interagency Placement Committee (IPC): Determine whether youths meet base-level criteria for STRTP placement.
 - CFT's
 - The QI Assessor has 30 days from the time of referral to submit the QI Assessment Summary Report.
 - The social worker (SW) assigned to the case will then request an STRTP placement hearing, which is held within 60 days of placement.
 - QI process completion:
 - From January-July 2022:
 - 29 initial STRTP referrals were made with an average completion time of 25 days.
 - Of the 29 referrals, 1 assessment was completed on day 31.
 - 28 change of placement (COP) referrals were made with an average completion time of 25 days.

V. Workgroup Recommendations

Stephanie opened the agenda item and passed it on to Nikki Kelsay of CWS. Nikki shared the following update:

- There were 88 workgroup recommendations when the subcommittee started.
- In August 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved the workgroup recommendations as complete.
- Some of the recommendations are ongoing:

- Placement Integration
- Open Case Investigations (OCI)
- Questions and comments on the presentation:
 - Joy Singleton suggested providing an update on transitions and transition planning. Nikki shared that change of placement and reentry rates, but transition planning has many facets making it more difficult to track for data purposes.
 - A participant asked information on change of placement, specifically for youth with multiple changes in placement.
 - Joy Singleton asked if CWS is still sending out real-time surveys via text message. Alfredo Guardado stated he does not believe the surveys are currently being sent out.
 - Carolyn Griesemer suggested information on workforce development and retention, and how it has been impacted by the pandemic, would be beneficial. She stated secondary trauma from the pandemic could be impacting retention. Nikki shared that CWS is looking at secondary trauma and how supervisors can support staff by helping staff process trauma they are experiencing. Alfredo shared there have been many positive results regarding the secondary trauma support.
 - Joy Singleton asked PCC could present on their Peer Partners program with Promises2Kids.
 - A participant commented that data on youths with multiple placement changes could shed light on supports that are needed but not available.
 - Cheryl Rode suggested data on length of stays in STRTPs in-county and outside of county would be helpful.

Stephanie concluded the meeting by reminding everyone of the upcoming full advisory board meeting occurring on Friday, January 13th at 9:00 am.

VII. Next Meeting: February 23, 2023, 11:00 am