

Office of the Child Advocate
Childhood Trauma Task Force Meeting Minutes
Monday November 1, 2021
1:00pm-3:00pm
Meeting held virtually

Task Force Members or Designees Present:

Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
Andrea Oliveira (DMH)
Yvonne Sparling (DYS)
Tammy Mello (Children’s League of MA)
Stacy Cabral (DESE)
Claudia Dunne (CPCS)
Dawn Christie (Parent Representative)
Laura Brody (DCF)
Nicole Daley (DPH)
Kate Lowenstein (CfJJ)

OCA Staff:

Maria Mossaides
Melissa Threadgill
Kristi Polizzano
Gabriel Sultan

Other:

Brooke Arrigo (Suffolk County DA’s Office)
Katherine Hughes (Parent Child Trauma Resources)
Rachel Gwaltney (Children’s League of Massachusetts)
Ryan Wilson (CfJJ)
Janice LeBel (DMH)
Aditi Subramaniam (MSPCC)
Audrey Smolkin (UMass Medical)
Carmel Craig (ABH)
Ivana Boyd (CfJJ)
Jennifer Hallisey (MassHealth)
Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
Mathieu Bermingham
Other Members of the Public

Meeting Commenced: 1:08pm

Welcome and Introductions:

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the attendees to the Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF) meeting. CTTF members and guests introduced themselves.

Review and Approval of Minutes from October 2021 Meeting:

Ms. Threadgill held a formal vote on the approval of the October 4, 2021, meeting minutes. Rachel Wallack, Janice LeBel, Yvonne Sparling, Tammy Mello, Claudia Dunne, Maria Mossaides, and Laura Brody all voted in the affirmative. No one was opposed or abstained from voting on the October meeting minutes.

The meeting minutes for October were approved.

Update on Center for Child Wellbeing and Trauma:

Ms. Threadgill introduced Ms. Smolkin who gave an update on the Center for Child Wellbeing and Trauma at UMass Medical School. Ms. Smolkin was excited to announce that the Center had officially launched, and that the Center's website is now live at www.childwellbeingandtrauma.org. She also announced the launch of a K-12 cohort study program in partnership with Thriving Minds to focus on trauma and resilience in K-12 students and educational professionals. Additionally, Ms. Smolkin discussed the launch of a program dedicated to a community approach to trauma, racism/racial trauma and resilience in Worcester. Director Mossaides noted that the initiative is receiving a positive reception from the public and the legislature.

Report to the Legislature on Trauma Screening and Referral Project:

Ms. Threadgill then updated the group on the timeline for the development and publication of the CTTF's Trauma Screening and Referral Project Report. An interim report is being targeted for completion by 12/2021. Once the interim report has been distributed, feedback will be collected for a revision period which will take place during the winter and early spring of 2022. Ms. Threadgill set summer 2022 as the target for the publication of the final report. Ms. Threadgill then presented outlines for part I and part II of the report and opened discussion on edits to Part I of the report.

Members gave feedback on Part I of the report, including:

- Adding a discussion re: complications of obtaining consent to participate in a screening for youth that are in the custody of DCF, when a youth is homeless, and when a youth wants to participate but a parent does not want them to.

- Adding a discussion re: special considerations for youth who are LGBTQ to the existing section on the impact of culture and prior experiences of racism
- Adding in a discussion of the impact of implicit bias in those administering a screening/assessment and developing a case/treatment plan
- Adding a discussion re: Positive Youth Development to the section on Positive Childhood Experiences
- Adding additional context re: creating a safe space for youth when administering a trauma screening
- Making it more clear that the need to establish a clear referral/follow-up process does not mean we should not ask about trauma; we need to concurrently develop a path to services.

Ms. Threadgill noted that she would make the edits as discussed at the meeting, and circulate an updated draft of the report – including Part II – for review at the December 6th meeting.

Closing Comments:

Ms. Threadgill thanked the committee members and other attendees for their time and their continued efforts, and set the next meeting date for December 6th, 2021.

Adjournment: 2:30pm