

**Office of the Child Advocate
Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2016**

Council Members or Designees Present:

Chair: Maria Mossaides (OCA)
Marylou Sudders (EHS)
Michele Cristello (DOR/CSE)
Suzin Bartley (Children's Trust)
Joan Mikula (DMH)
Jeff McCue (DTA)
Peter Forbes (DYS)
Joseph Ayoub, Governor's Appointee
James Slater (DCJIS)
Marian Ryan (Middlesex DA)
Russell Johnston (ESE)
Ann Reale (EOE)
Mike Dsida (CPCS)
Linda Spears (DCF)
Angela Ordoñez (Probate & Family Court)
Heidi Reed (MCDHH)

Other Attendees:

Christine Palladino-Downs (OCA)
Karen Marcarelli (OCA)
Edith Rathbone (OCA)
Maggie Cohen (OCA)
Judy Lee (Consultant)

Meeting Commenced: 3:00pm

Welcome from the OCA:

Maria Mossaides welcomed attendees to her first council meeting as Child Advocate. OCA staff, Council members, and other attendees introduced themselves.

OCA Statute Changes:

Edith Rathbone, Director of Policy and Legal Counsel, outlined revisions to the OCA's statute (Chapter 18C). These changes were effective July 2016. A handout outlining the changes was distributed.

These changes create more independence for the OCA and a broader area of focus which allow for the OCA to best serve its mission.

The appointment the Child Advocate was changed from a gubernatorial appointment to a majority vote of Governor/AG/Auditor from a list of three nominees from a nominating committee. The term of appointment is 5 years with a two term limit. The Child Advocate can be

removed for cause by majority vote of the appointing entities. The existing nominating committee is maintained with EOHHS now coordinating its work.

Another important statute change is the broadening of the definition of “Critical Incidents” to include all incidents at all executive agencies and their constituent agencies. This definition also now includes emotional injury.

Other key statutory revisions include the OCA now having access to relevant juvenile court records, changing the Advisory Board to Advisory Council, and adding the Commissioner for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Commissioner for the Blind to the Council.

Mapping Project Presentation:

Dr. Judy Lee, an independent research consultant hired by the OCA, presented the process of researching and mapping EOHHS agencies.

OCA staff sent a questionnaire to EOHHS Agencies, collecting information from DDS, DPH, DCF, DYS and DMH. Dr. Lee then aggregated the information and identified gaps and missing information to create maps, visually displaying the agency data.

Dr. Lee outlined to the Council how the maps are organized, displaying both agency services and processes. The maps are created online using SmartDraw software. Dr. Lee also shared with the Council her recommendations and observations including creating a glossary of terms, creating reports with the maps in a central location, and selecting an optimal model to use for future data updates.

Council members offered feedback on the maps. Dr. Lee noted this model is simply a starting point and the information can be focused and improved based on the intended audience.

Strategic Plan FY17:

Maria Mossaides led a discussion about planning for the upcoming year, centered on the OCA’s role as a neutral convener and reviewer of complaints. She mentioned recent projects of the OCA including the Residential Schools Working Group and participation in Child Fatality Review Teams.

Going forward, the OCA hopes to continue to take a “balcony view,” using its unique position to see the breadth of children’s services and trends across the state. The OCA will achieve this by having a core staff and bringing in subject matter experts based on areas of focus.

Going forward, this Council can help the OCA set priorities to help the OCA play a role in improving services to the children of the Commonwealth.

Wrap-up

Adjournment: 4:30