

Children's Issues Committee, March 16, 2021, 1:00pm

Legislative Update – Alan Bolter

Alan reported that most activity in the Legislature is related to the federal COVID relief bill. \$900 Billion was passed, of which \$5.5 - \$6 Billion came to Michigan. The Legislature is battling over where these dollars are going. Many in the Legislature are not happy with how the Governor has handled the restrictions during the COVID pandemic. The Governor and the Legislature have gone back and forth on how to distribute these federal dollars. Alan reviewed 4 bills that were passed but with vetoes attached to them that removed tie-bars included in them. The supplemental bills included \$17 Million for SUD Block Grant and \$16 Million for GF Block Grant, as well as an extension of the Direct Care Wage of \$2.25/hr. Alan gave details of what tie-bar language was vetoed. The Senate passed a resolution allowing legal action to be taken against the Governor if she tries to spend the dollars that were not included in these supplemental bills. Alan reported the Elizabeth Hertel was appointed as Interim Director of MDHHS when Director Robert Gordon resigned. The Senate has 60 days to reject this appointment, but they will likely not have enough votes to do this by March 23rd (when the 60-day period is over). Alan then gave an update on the FY22 Budget. He reported that the proposed budget from the Governor's office included funding for CCBHC's, the KB Lawsuit and several other items. The House and Senate will come out with their versions of a budget after Spring Break, and a final budget is not anticipated until early Fall. Alan reported that the idea of integration is stirring back up again. He reported that once details are known regarding what direction the Health Plans may take, he will update this group. Group expressed concern for the Children's system that has been built, and the fact that privatization could destroy partnerships with Child Welfare, Schools, etc. There are more concerns than just funding mechanisms.

Children's Administrators Forum Update – Gwenda Summers – CEI

February Minutes

Gwenda reviewed the minutes that were distributed to the group. Discussions at the February meeting centered around MDHHS updates, COVID and how to manage mask refusal, struggles with staffing capacity, staff retainment,

March Minutes

Gwenda stated that Mary Chaliman and Dr. Scheid gave a presentation on Child Welfare partners at the March meeting. Other discussions took place on continued significant concerns that children are not being placed in hospitals. Placement seems to not get any better. With Hawthorn being full, the high needs kids are struggling more now than ever. Discussion turned to psychiatric bed crisis. Minutes continued under Item VIII(b). Connie asked Gwenda to if an advocacy document could be created for use with legislators. Gwenda asked to have this added to the next agenda to create data points to be included on this topic.

DHHS Updates – Justin Tate and Mary Chaliman – MDHHS

Mary stated that they are testing the independent assessments for QRTP. She reported that the KB Lawsuit has conducted stakeholder interviews. Today was the report out on this. Sheila reported on barriers, services looking different in parts of the State, reassessments when moving county to county, etc. She stated that there will be one more meeting on findings with Centers for Healthcare Strategies, then more details will be known. Justin reported that they completed environmental scan, and recommendations are being finalized now. This report should be to the Department by the end of March with suggestions on where they should be heading. Mary then reported that their Executive Director resigned, and they are interviewing for a new one. Home Care Services, Protective Services and Policy/Fiscal will be the three different bureaus within the Children's Department moving forward. With this, policy will be handled in that different department, so there will need to be a way developed to connect. Justin will forward the post-COVID telehealth chart to Monique to send to the group. He stated that the Family Driven/Youth Driven Policy has gone through contract negotiations process. Kim should have an update on this at the next meeting. Justin reported that Mary Ludtke wanted everyone to be aware that EBP training will continue virtually. Christine wondered about who was credentialed to do Autism testing and the elimination of this every year as it was a huge barrier. Obtaining staff who are credentialed to do reevaluations is difficult and the list of those waiting to be re-evaluated is growing. Justin will ask Morgan VanDenBerg about this and send an answer through Monique.

COVID-19 Roundtable Discussion

Children and Family Specific Data, Trends and Programming Needs

Connie stated that face to face appointments are increasing in her area. Gwenda stated that CEI is seeing the same – an increase in the need for services. Suicide ideology and attempts are increasing greatly around the state. Most in the group expressed the same rise in service needs regarding Suicide and Autism.

Telehealth Recommendations

Child Psychiatric Beds Crisis – Workgroup Focus

Discussion continued from CAF section of agenda. Pat Weighman provided statistics of those waiting for placement. Christine will be contacting Certificate of Need to see what the holdup is for opening beds at HealthSource Saginaw. Hospitals are refusing to take kids with high acuity, and this seems to be the crux of the matter. Group agreed that this was a huge problem for placement – even with adults. Connie shared information from a PowerPoint presentation on number of inpatient screenings of adults versus children, and the increases being seen since COVID conditions started roughly a year ago. Pat Weighman will send information to Monique to send out to the group on accessible beds. Group should share info with legislators and indicate the current crisis we're in. Group discussed where the staff were being lost to including telehealth, private practice, and those who simply aren't working anymore. Group then

discussed if the refusal according to acuity levels was legal, or if requirements could be established to limit reasons for refusal. Group felt that it was getting to the point that something like this may need to happen. It is being documented when refusals happen and why they are happening. Group discussed having a facility created by the State that was not a private facility, that would be a step-down before Hawthorn. Christine Gebhard will send meeting info for the Certificate of Need group that will have public testimony to Monique, and she will send out to the group.

Support for schools

Workforce issues and Child Psychiatric Beds/KB lawsuit recommendations– Workgroup Focus

Turnover, Burnout, Staffing pool shortage

Committee Focus Areas for 2021

Identified at previous meeting:., Policy, Advocacy, Gaps in Services, Collaborative efforts to support students, especially those expelled, suspended or at risk with mental health needs, Child Psychiatric Beds, Service Models for transition age youth

Other

Youth Suicide Summit information

Carl Rice gave details of Youth Suicide Summit 2, with was held on March 3, 2021. Youth Suicide Summit 3 will be held on June 2, 2021.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Issues Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 1:00pm. This meeting will be held via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 2:14pm.