



CARTF

Virtual

March 4, 2022

## MINUTES

**Joshua Wickard**- Public Defender (Chairman)  
**Michelle Weir**- DHW, Family & Children Services  
**Ruth York**-Children with Disabilities Representative  
**Sheila Sturgeon Freitas, PhD**– Mental Health  
**Curtis Carper**- Law Enforcement Representative  
**Melissa Osen**– Foster Youth  
**James Curb** – Homeless Education Liaison  
**Jill Robertson**– Parent  
**Molly Vaughn**– Victim Services Coordinator

**Jennifer Tachell**– Educator (Vice-Chairman)  
**Susan Bradford, MD** – Pediatrician  
**Jennifer Bergin**- Child Advocate Attorney  
**Hon. Steve Clark**- Civil Magistrate Judge  
**Madison Miles**- Prosecuting Attorney  
**Tahna Barton** – CASA  
**Hon. Mark Rammell**- Criminal Magistrate Judge  
**Nadine McDonald** – Juvenile Justice  
**Teresa Vance**- Administrator of the Courts Representative

Mindy Peper – Task Force Support

Indicates **ABSENT**

**Guests:** CRP Regions 1,3,4,5,7

### Welcome

Wickard welcomes everyone. CARTF reviews the February 2022 minutes. Tachell makes a motion to approve the minutes, with clarifications to page 3 and 5, Robertson seconds, all in favor and so moved.

### Executive Order/ Vacancies Update

The executive order is updated and, in the binders, and on the website. The annual report that is submitted to CJA will be submitted to the governor's office. Regarding vacancies, we are going to gather all the appointment applications and submit all at once to the governor's office. Peper will email the task force requesting application and CV. We hope to have those gathered by April 1.

### Subcommittee Updates

**Grants:** We have received two mid-use reports so far for cycle 2-2021 grants. They are due by March 15, 2022.

**Conference:** Peper updates the task force about the conference, Day 1. CARTF discusses holding Day 1 in October and virtual in January. Speaker ideas include Anne Sharp, Jennifer Bergin.

**Legislative:** The legislative subcommittee is now formed and will meet for the first time on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

**CFRT:** Barton talks about the 2018 CFR Team annual report and the changes that the team would like to make to the upcoming report. She is requesting the task force to take

a close look at the report and give some feedback on what needs to be changed, added, removed, etc. What is repetitive? What graphics work? She encourages the task force to look at the national report online and compare it to the state report. CFR Team is thinking about using a marketing company to make changes but that may push the report out to September. Barton feels our report should be a catalyst for change. Weir asks if we have a summary page for 2018. Barton says no. Weir states that for the sake of not getting too far behind, go ahead with this year's report and for the following year, create a subcommittee and start working with a marketing firm to make changes for the next report. Wickard asks if we need to put an action item on a future agenda to hire a marketing firm. Barton says she feels their needs to be more discussion first. Weir mentions several options, such as using the IDHW marketing services, which may be free of charge. The group needs to start exploring all the options available for making the improvements to the future report. The group seems to feel that the report as a whole is very valuable and perhaps just some changes that help summarize the contents (using abstracts, infographics, etc) would be improvements, but they reiterate that as a whole, the report is very important.

Freitas mentions that in this review, it may be helpful to think about what audiences might need addressed specifically to bring their attention to the report, much like what Barton does now with the coroners and law enforcement groups.

Vance says she will be happy to help with the graphic design of the report. Wickard asks if we need to form that subcommittee. Nevada and Pennsylvania may be good examples of reports to consider. One suggestion is to utilize the publications subcommittee and add extra members to it for the CFR Team annual report publication. Barton suggests herself, Weir, Smutney. Barton will ask if there are others from CFR Team that are interested.

**Publications:** Peper updates CARTF about turning the Care Enough to Call brochures and DVD into digital files. CARTF recommends keeping the printed version of the brochures as well. Peper will bring DVD in April to watch. CARTF gives feedback on the new logo designs but doesn't seem imperative that we make any changes right now. We still need a redesign of current logo in a high-resolution format. Vance says she will try to recreate it. Freitas suggests we create a handout that would educate families and attorneys about locating other relatives and why it is so important as well as the timeline. CARTF weighs in on this issue. Weir recommends looking at what other states and the child welfare gateway have and perhaps duplicating those efforts.

#### **Review Goal 4**

Barton feels that they are meeting all the strategies, except for c. The group feels it still makes sense to keep that strategy and continue to work on getting CFR Team into statute. Weir suggests a potential strategy to add to goal 4 could be to look at near fatalities (subset of child abuse history, use federal definitions, medical finding of serious or significant injury), which reflects some of the changes taking place across the nation regarding child fatality reviews. After March reviews of near fatalities, CARTF can come back and look at this strategy in April.

## **Citizens Review Panel Regional Updates**

Wickard welcomes the CRP regional representatives.

Cindy Floyd- region 3; Allison Berkson- region 4; Amy Mingzhor- Region 7; Barbara Felty- region 3; Geri Rackow- region 7; Courtney Boyce- region 4; Anita Jones- region 5; Laura Hutton- region 5; EJ Poston- region 5; Don Duffy- region 1; Bob Thomas- region 6

Each regions explains more about their CRP is, who comprises the CRPs, what they are tasked with, and reporting requirements as well as what they are seeing in their region regarding challenges.

Barton asks for clarification on the statement made about the department only reporting homicides. Berkson clarifies she is referring to the national child abuse database.

York asks where we start with making real change to the system as it is now. Floyd mentions that it starts with bringing more partners to the table and the change needs to be made starting at the top. York mentions she sees this also on the mental health side of things as well. There have been strides made in getting more voices to the table and maybe a model that can be used in PS. Berkson mentions it seems there is some data that is not being utilized, such as near-fatality reviews. Berkson mentions that the child fatality reviews are supposed to include the CRP. Barton clarifies that every death of a child in Idaho are being reviewed and in March the near-fatalities are being reviewed as a collaborative effort with IDHW. Berkson says there is a discrepancy in the numbers reported by IDHW and the CFR Team. Barton mentions that maybe it would be helpful for her to explain how CFR Team and IDHW collaborate and communicate. York clarifies that her comments refer to the work that she is seeing in her work, not as a CARTF representative. Minzghor comments that the improvements made on the mental health side is due to a lawsuit that forced changes.

Thomas from region 6 states he has been on the panel for several years. He mentions that when the panels were reorganized, the involvement of CRP in the child fatality reviews, they were no longer included in those reviews. Once concern they see in the reviews is that they cannot tell if the case involves a criminal component, and if the abuser is brought to court. They region has seen several cases where multiple states were involved. Another concern is that there has been a rise in abuse, perhaps a result of COVID-19. York mentions that nationally the numbers are higher during the pandemic.

Rackow from region 7 reports that they have been closely tracking the cases that involve drug-abuse by parents as well as mental health issues. Minzghor adds they are also tracking suicides and/or suicidal ideation from parents.

Berkson mentions that they cannot see if a child was involved in the child welfare system, only if they were in foster care for more than 120 days.

Floyd feels there are kids not being removed when there is clear reasons for doing such.

McDonald asks the panel members if they can identify any strengths in the foster care system. Region 7 says that the response from their regional offices have been good and they are responsive to suggestions and changes. The region has been more involved with the CRP meetings. They have noticed that the department is looking at other ways to retain foster families and social workers. Floyd agrees that they have had the same reaction from their region- responsive and beginning to be more involved. They have started to see some response from upper management as well.

Jones from region 5 states that some of the positive things they are seeing is that the case workers are completing their plans and paperwork in a timely manner. They are doing this consistently, as well as doing a good job locating family members.

Berkson feels that there is hope in the system getting services to families before they get too far into the system. She is also excited that therapeutic foster homes are coming back to Idaho and feels that will be helpful for those high-needs kids who need additional support beyond a traditional foster home.

Minzghor feels that the community is stepping up with new and creative resources, such as community centers for teens, which are helping catch things sooner than later to help youth.

Wickard thanks the CRP panelists for sharing and extends an invitation to meet again and perhaps more often.

Weir explains her past history in working loosely with CRPs and shares how the role of the CRPs changed with the restructuring. They are to review CP cases opened more than 120 days and are supposed to be multi-disciplinary. They work under the same grant as CARTF, CAPTA, and are federally mandated. They are required and in statute to provide an annual report to which IDHW is to respond to the annual report and their recommendations. The legislature wanted there to be some degree of separation between IDHW and CRP, to the extent of being housed under a completely different department (CRP is under the health department), although it is funded via IDHW. Each regional liaison is to provide a list of the cases that are open to the department. In some regions, there are many, many cases and it is impossible to review all the cases that meet the criteria.

Several times the CRP said that there are many cases where kids are not being pulled out of the home until too late, after several referrals. Weir states that the data in referral volume prior to removal shows that there is only about 20 cases in Idaho that has more than 20 referrals. There are currently 1557 kids placed in care, which is down from Idaho average from two years ago. The question is how to share all this data and information in an easily digestible way and make the narrative complete. There is lots of

room for improvement but so much information is hard to get out to all the stakeholders. Freitas mentions part of what is being forgotten is that there is also value in family reunification and that it matters just as much as considering the trauma that kids have gone through. Idaho's reunification rates are high compared to national rates. Weir says that even though the departments only requirement in working with CRPs is to respond to their annual report they are doing lots of great things in regards to the CRP recommendations. For instance, the CRPs asked that foster parents could write case notes that go right into record without being filtered by any others. IDHW agreed and acted on that. Additionally, CRP asked that case history should be better reviewed and at some point, it should be brought to supervisors and to MDTs. IDHW is working on this issue and looking at when to bring it to the MDTs. Unfortunately, there are just some things that are wanted by CRP that cannot be done due to statutory requirements by the state and federal government. Madison states that sometimes the response by IDHW to CRP is that the recommendation is not in their authority and that they should get ahold of their legislators, etc.

York feels that this is an opportunity for us to reach out to CRPs and share with them in some areas that they may not understand or have inaccurate information.

Weir states that we now have 6 QRTP with 3 more coming up. Likewise, the reason therapeutic foster care homes left Idaho is because PATH left Idaho. It was not as a result of something IDHW did. PATH decided it was not profitable for them to be in Idaho.

Peper will connect Barton with the CRPs regarding the work being done with CFR Team and its case reviews.

### **Recommendations for CJA Annual Report**

CARTF discusses recommendations for annual report and will review the draft at the May meeting.

### **Spring Planning/ September Planning**

April- Wickard will invite a former parent involved with foster system and reunification; legislative update; annual conference; Weir will invite a social worker; re-visit goal 4 regarding adding near-fatality strategy; update on near-fatality reviews; IDHW annual progress service report program instruction; CARTF delegation to CDA; action item: budget increase for CFR Team analyst; conference speakers

May- McDonald update on probation services and protocol on children who disclose when in custody; Vaughn- victim compensation discussion; grant cycle one decisions; annual conference; review draft CARTF Annual Report for May 30 submission date; Court Improvement update

September- subcommittee updates; conference planning; Heather Cunningham with IDCVA

**New Business**

Weir states that if we are increasing the cost on something we spend money on, we should discuss as a group. There is a current request to increase the pay for the research analyst. It may be a future discussion item.

**Adjourn**

**Next meeting will be April 1, 2022. This will be a hybrid meeting.**

Peper- update roster, binder cover