



CARTF

May 3, 2024

Virtual

(V)Joshua Wickard- Public Defender (Chairman)	(A)Jennifer Tachell– Educator (Vice-Chairman)
(V)Andie Blackwood- DHW, Family & Children Services	(V)Susan Bradford, MD – Pediatrician
(V)Lena Biondolillo- Children with Disabilities	OPEN- Child Advocate Attorney
(V)Sheila Sturgeon Freitas, PhD– Mental Health	(A)Hon. Steve Clark- Civil Magistrate Judge
(A)Curtis Carper- Law Enforcement	(V)Kyle Bringhurst- Prosecuting Attorney
(A) Maddi Aimes– Foster Youth	(A)Tahna Barton – CASA
(V) James Curb – Homeless Education Liaison	(V)Hon. Mark Rammell- Criminal Magistrate Judge
(V)Jill Robertson– Parent	(A)Nadine McDonald – Juvenile Justice
(V)Susan Nalley– Victim Services Coordinator	(V)Teresa Vance- Administrator of the Courts

(V)Mindy Peper – Task Force Support

Indicates Absent (A) Virtual (V)

Guests: Mark Withers, Region 7 DAG, IDHW; Paul Peace, IDHW; Mahoney House/Lemhi MDT

Meeting Purpose:

Monthly meeting of the Idaho Governor's Task Force on Children at Risk to discuss updates, hear from speakers, and conduct business. Also, to hear from Region 7 stakeholders and MDT about how their MDT functions, challenges they face, and ways the task force can help support and improve MDTs across Idaho.

Key Takeaways

- The Lemhi County MDT struggles with getting consistent participation and buy-in from key partners like law enforcement, prosecutors, and the hospital.
- They have particular challenges around medical exams for child victims due to lack of trained nurses and facilities.
- They feel establishing standards or best practices for MDTs could help provide guidance for new partners joining MDTs.
- Outreach and education is needed, especially with new stakeholders coming in, to explain the importance and statutory mandates around MDTs.
- The budget is tight due to increased costs and some overspending, so grants will be denied this cycle and some cost-saving measures implemented.
- Recruiting and retaining child protection workers in remote, rural areas like Salmon is very challenging.
- Joshua Wickard is stepping down as Chair after 9 years, and Nadine McDonalds was voted in as the new Chair.

Topics:

CARTF Minutes

- **Action Item:** Motion to accept the April 2024 meeting minutes as is. 1st- Vance, 2nd- Rammell, all in favor and so moved.

Region 7 Overview

- Very rural area, isolated, tends to be independent
- Almost fully staffed but difficult to keep safety assessor position filled, despite offering it at a higher pay grade
- Current cases are divided up among other regions
- Cases are feast or famine- very few and then many all at once
- Trends include increase in moving children to state care due to lack of mental health resources, housing crisis has become a great barrier to reunification, 50% of open cases involve mental health issues of child, parent, or both

Participation in MDT

- The Mahoney House consistently participates in the MDT and helps coordinate the meetings.
- They have good participation from CPS but it's become harder with high turnover recently.
- Other partners like law enforcement, prosecutors, schools, hospital, probation attend sometimes but participation is inconsistent.
- The prosecutor and law enforcement often don't respond to MDT meeting notices.
- They will have a new prosecutor and sheriff soon, which provides an opportunity to educate on MDTs.

Pediatric Medical Exams in Region

- They currently only have one non-SANE nurse able to do exams, which is a major challenge.
- They've explored options like mobile units but transportation is difficult in winter.
- The local hospital struggles to employ and train SANE nurses.
- Law enforcement also has strained relations with the hospital.

Salmon/Rural Area Child Protection

- Very isolated area - workers drive 5-6 hours roundtrip for visits.
- Hard to recruit workers willing to live there long-term.
- Tried incentives like higher pay, overtime pay, 4-day work weeks but still struggling.
- Local resources are limited - main provider is Lemhi Valley Social Services.

- Do a lot of court hearings via Zoom now which helps.

Ways to Improve

- Increased participation and collaboration from all partners would help significantly.
- Funding for more staffing and resources could help with participation.
- Training on the goals and importance of MDTs would help get buy-in.

What's Working

- They have a good forensic interview room and process in place.
- They recently used grant funding to bring in a great training from Zero Abuse Project.

CARTF Budget Update

- Costs have increased due to inflation, increased travel costs, and new expenses like the child death reviews.
- The conference cost \$10,000 more than budgeted.
- The budget is basically spent for this grant cycle, so grants will be denied.
- Some cost-saving measures will be implemented like temporarily moving meetings to virtual.
- **Action Item:** Motion made to deny grants for this cycle and encourage to apply again in September. 1st- Blackwood, 2nd Bradford, all in favor and so moved.

New Chair Nomination and Vote

- Joshua Wickard is stepping down after 9 years as Chair.
- Nadine McDonald was nominated and unanimously approved as the new Chair.
- **Action Item:** Motion to accept the nomination of Nadine McDonald as CARTF Chair, 1st- Wickard, 2nd- Vance, all in favor and so moved.

Next Steps

- Reach out to the new incoming prosecutor and sheriff to educate on MDTs.
- Look into providing standards or best practices documents to help guide MDTs.
- Consider ways to improve access to medical exams for child victims in rural areas.
- Continue to gather perspectives from struggling MDTs to inform task force priorities and initiatives.
- Deny grant applications this cycle due to budget constraints.
- No June meeting - next virtual meeting scheduled for July 19.
- Nadine McDonald will take over as Chair.

Action Items

- **Announce open seats on CARTF at upcoming conferences, on website, and reach out to potential candidates**
- **Bringhurst will schedule to attend the next Lemhi Co MDT meeting to observe and provide support**
- **Deny grant requests from INCAC and BHT due to budget constraints**