

**District IV Citizen Review Panel
707 N. Armstrong Pl, Boise, ID 83704
Star Garnet
Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

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Meeting Minutes

Members: Darcie Bobrowski, Kym Nilsen, Nicole Noltensmeyer, Allison Berkson, Britney Journee, Shannon McCarthy. Brian McCauley is absent.

Staff: Courtney Boyce (CDH), Misty Myatt, Nicky Flock, Chris Freeburne, Miren Unsworth, Roxanne Printz, Lori Wolff (IDHW)

Call Meeting to Order

Darcie Bobrowski, the Vice Chair of the Region IV Citizen Review Panel called the meeting to order at 4:02pm after determining quorum.

Motion: Britney motioned to amend agenda to add “Idaho CRP Leadership Conference Call” and consent Agenda as is after amendment. Darcie seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

Motion: Nicole motioned to confirm the meeting minutes from the February 2nd, 2021 meeting. Shannon seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

IDHW Administration Discussion

There were brief introductions. A new attendee present at the meeting is Christ Freeburne who is the Eastern Idaho Regional Director, managing Region 5, 6, & 7 for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.

Valley County

This portion of the meeting highlighted Kym’s report and recommendations. The priorities as identified by the Panel were to discuss IDHW expansion of services into Valley County, including the jurisdiction of public health districts given the blended nature of rural communities. Another priority would be if the Department would be willing to outsource resources or services to other agencies and develop partnerships to meet the needs of individuals they are serving. The Department discussed the historical nature of relationships and partnerships in Valley County. This conversation included discussing the recession and the closing of offices, where they were not able to maintain a staff person in Valley County or

a point person in the surrounding area. The Department said the informal recommendations that Kym provided in the report were viable. It was hypothetically asked, how do we re-engage and establish trust? The IDHW does not think they can hire a full time person for Valley or surrounding counties. Going through staffing challenges now, but is there a liaison or point person that would be available for the schools or providers? Discussed that there will be a new Prosecuting Attorney and the value of re-establishing multidisciplinary teams with all of the clinical stakeholders where they would share confidential information. It was discussed that having point persons would be helpful to start these relationships, as Valley County is very relational. In this discussion, IDHW reviewed Shepard's Home current model and needing to rekindle that professional relationship. It was also briefly presented that there is also an extension of Shepherd's Home that is looking to get started here in the Treasure Valley as well. It was mentioned by IDHW, that it sounds like the Shepherd's Home model needs to be shored up prior to expansion.

Using Kym's report it was asked if the IDHW can identify a liaison for that community while meeting current staffing needs. It was not known how quickly that could be. It was presented that they could reach out to school to have joint training, with a shared understanding about IDHW processes. The value of rekindling MDT meetings under the umbrella of the Prosecutor's authority, cannot be understated. It was also encouraged to reach out to the Shepard's Home to see what kind of professional working relationship that they would like to have. Kym's recommendations are viable and they would be happy to report back to the Panel about their progress regarding this process. It was also briefly mentioned that there were discussions of mentoring safety assessors in order to improve IDHW's internal processes.

Darcie recognized that this feedback from the IDHW would be helpful, and these recommendations were being discussed for planning and implementation in a timely manner. Darcie stated that this kind of relationship with IDHW was ideal in instigating change.

Monthly Foster Parent Feedback Form

Allison reviewed the intent, purpose and reportable value of a monthly foster parent feedback form. Allison indicated that this form would be an opportunity to have formal feedback from foster parents be entered into the report and case file. Allison asked the IDHW how to present the idea in the quarterly report, and how to manage hang ups. The IDHW referred to the quarterly planning progress through the Department and that this would be an opportunity to address how this could be implemented and communicated to foster parents, as well as knowing the disclosure of these records in court. They would need to provide a structure for families who chose to use it, so there would be informed consent for families that this documentation would be a part of the case records. Foster parents can still be summoned to present in court, not sure if the formal documentation is a hindrance, but an asset for continued formal communication. This was discussed as there was an incident where a foster parent did not know the communication that they provided would go into the case record, and the foster parent was accountable for addressing this in court. Had they known, the foster parent may have phrased things differently. By having this form, it provides informed consent to foster parents knowing where/how this documentation can be used. In reviewing documentation that enters into the cases, the IDHW stated that they do not put emails directly into the case review, given the larger legal implications under discovery.

Access to All Case Documentation (Foster Parent Emails)

Moved this priority area up as it was addressed under the Monthly Foster Parent Feedback Form, and not a formalized section in the agenda therefore it does not require a motion for amendment.

There was discussion regarding case reviews where Panel members see that there is a report from the court, guardian ad litem, and then the next report they receive - there might be a different outcome than what would have been assumed based on the trajectory of the previous reports. The caseworker notes can be valuable to fill in the pieces outside of formal documentation. IDHW discussed that updates to the system could include caseworker and visitation notes, and requesting documentation entered for case reviews from the IDHW liaison. The IDHW identified there are improvements to be made with the current system as it. They shared with the Panel that they were going to be coordinating additional staffing support for the Panel to have administrative support to work on a few things, including pulling data in case reviews

in time, and to help enter documentation into case reviews. This staff member would also go into the case reviews to make sure they are cleaned up, labeled, and ensuring there isn't missing documentation before case review information is submitted to the Panels for completion.

There was a discussion that since the courts have moved to the iCourts system, the Guardian ad litem reports are going to iCourt, so they are a part of the court record and not a part of the case system as developed and maintained by IDHW. It was asked, how do Panels get access to the Guardian ad Litem reports, as the statute clearly identifies IDHW only records and this would be a barrier to documentation access. A recommendation could be improving the statute to include the judge's documentation as well as the Guardian ad Litem reports, for what would be provided to the Panel when conducting case reviews. It was addressed that typically verbal reasoning is dictated in the court. Allison asked, is there a place where we put a narrative from the GAL or the judge into the case reviews, as it is not currently being documented. IDHW will speak with district attorney generals and see options they have and get back to the CRP.

Visitation Requirement & Safety Determination

Allison referenced standards for visitation. It was asked who determines safety, and what are the differences between physical and sexual abuse from a victim. This question asked about standards of practices around visitation. The IDHW stated that there needs to be a no contact order in a criminal order or an order to cease visitation, as their residual parental rights are outlined and upheld through the Child Protective Act. For no visitation at all, there has to be a court order in a criminal or CPS case. The IDHW manages and supervises visitations, and have a level of discretion on how this is done but essentially they require court oversight and approval in order to stop supervision. This is done in cases of aggravated circumstances including but not limited to, extreme physical abuse and sexual abuse. In those types of cases, they see pretty quickly an order to cease visitation. If disclosed and there is an allegation or concern of sexual abuse, regardless of the initial reason of removal, visitation would not resume until that is resolved. This requires approval from child's therapy often in consultation with the parent's therapist and by court order.

Unsupervised Visitation or Extended Home Visit Determination

Darcie discussed participating in a learning session regarding PRIDE and addressing improvements to the curriculum. Foster parents may be supervising during the supervised visits with bio parents, and they may not be prepared for what that means. She discussed the standard of visitation, but foster parents may not be educationally prepared or trained. There are cases where the visitation tech or the Department social worker, or another appropriate individual, is asked to conduct and supervise those visitations. The gap is that there is not a lot of structure in how they are prepared to fulfill that role, what that means to fill that expectation, as well as follow up. There is also an expectation and training gap between general and kinship foster families.

It was encouraged that the Panel read the "Standard for Visitation Between Parents, Siblings, Relatives and Children in Out-Of-Home Care" available here:

<https://publicdocuments.dhw.idaho.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=203&dbid=0&repo=PUBLIC-DOCUMENTS>

It was discussed that there is discretion on the progression of visitations from the Department as it cannot go over 48 hours. Part of the transition of the plan is to extend time of unsupervised visits, overnight, etc. They integrate into the case when to recommend a home visit -unsupervised visitation, based on other factors. Shannon presented a conflict in the 'best interest of the child' in a visitation situation that she experienced as a GAL, although this case is not one that the Panel reviewed. In child protection courts without other criminal case factors, exceptional or aggravated circumstances, they try to mitigate these factors through supervised visitation. To stop visitation all together, the judge needs to decide. There may be inconsistencies based on what that process looks like. In the case of extended home visits, there needs to be a substantiated police report that could indicate extended home visits are not otherwise appropriate.

There was a reflection that stepping up to make the determination of 'unsafe' it appears there may be some perceived hesitancy from the Department to do that. The Panel can extend this item, or get more information to definitely pass onto the Department as a recommendation.

Case Mapping

Allison believed that this was mentioned in the December 2020 meeting, but required more clarification and communication from the Department. This process would provide more supervision about what is happening in the field, in addition to more supervision for their workers. Roxanne discussed processes for expectations for regular case consultations and how that occurs, and a dashboard that is managerially managed to make sure that child is moved through the system successfully. The Department will be giving new tools for regular/frequent consultations and other praxis expectations. All levels through the organization have access to that. Shows where the cases are in terms of: assessments, family planning, cases that require consultation within 90 days, cases awaiting permanent places, cases with extended home visits, etc. They review the case on a worker, staff, regional or staff level regarding performance and this helps manage the case more effectively.

Documentation on Judge's Recommendations

This was addressed in another section.

Annual Legislative Foster Care Report

It was asked that the referral section discussed statutory guidelines, and the Panel would want to know how to screen and screen out, during the comprehensive safety assessment as it was assumed they have guidelines for how and when the staff makes that decision. This comes from life experience that Nicole has. It was asked that specific information including case information would be of assistance in the IDHW to discuss the precise details of that case. It was noted that one is not an open case and the other is not in our region. The Department indicated that once they have specific information about that case, they would be happy to follow up and inquire about how they could be communicated. It was noted that this could occur through Allison as the liaison or Misty, as this would help guide Miren and Roxanne.

Nicole asked the differences between 'congregate' versus 'treatment home.' Congregate means it is a residential group home setting (Ex. Patriot & Hays House) which means they are a licensed residential treatment facility or group home. For treatment homes, it means that they are a licensed foster home setting with additional supports. There are a few in eastern Idaho, with the Division for Behavioral Health going out for contracts to hopefully have another treatment foster home in Idaho.

Nicole also asked about a recent news release in the death of a two-year child, where a man is charged with killing his fiance's child, who is pregnant with his child and has partial custody of other children. This case will be open to the panel after 120 days, if still open and after investigations have been completed.

Reference:

<https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/crime/ada-county-coroner-releases-identity-of-2-year-old-boy-who-died-monday/277-1d705f3c-4334-48ba-bc21-5a14bb994519>

The Department indicated they appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Panel and exchange in a conversation. They shared that it was important for them to know the Panel's perspectives of having an objective view of their programs and practices, as this helps them identify places to improve. They also mentioned they want to make sure they have the right supports for all of the regional Panels. They said the offer to join meetings more regularly, on a quarterly basis would be helpful. They also mentioned that they are going to be joining the Idaho CRP Leadership Conference Calls.

It was also made known to the Panel that Misty has accepted a position for Central Office, so she will be transitioning out of the regional CRP liaison role from the IDHW. She will be transitioning out of the role until they have their position filled. It was discussed that IDHW can have consistent representation through Eastern Idaho Regional Director Christopher Freeburne.

The IDHW was thanked for their attendance, participation and communication and excused from the meeting.

The Panel discussed if anyone was opposed to having Christopher Freeburne join the District IV Citizen Review Panel meetings. No one was opposed.

Action Item: Courtney will provide the regular meeting schedule information to Christopher Freeburne. This was completed immediately after the meeting.

Executive Session: Case Reviews

Motion: Nicole made the motion per Idaho §16-647 (d) for the District IV Citizen Review Panel to enter into the Executive Session, to discuss items, exempt from public disclosure, as outlined in §74-105. Darcie seconded. Roll call: Darcie Bobrowski, Aye. Kym Nilsen, Aye. Nicole Noltensmeyer, Aye; Allison Berkson, Aye; Shannon McCarthy, Aye; Britney Journee, Aye.

The Panel entered into the Executive Session at 5:55pm.

Motion: At 6:07pm, Nicole made the motion per Idaho §16-647 (d) for the District IV Citizen Review Panel to exit Executive Session. Britney seconded. Roll call: Darcie Bobrowski, Aye. Kym Nilsen, Aye. Nicole Noltensmeyer, Aye; Allison Berkson, Aye; Shannon McCarthy, Aye; Britney Journee, Aye.

Idaho Foster Care Awareness Day 2021 Update

Nicole shared that the event was virtual this year, and provided different sessions, including listening to former foster youth, discussing kinship placements, GAL updates and providing more information regarding public awareness and education. Nicole shared that it was more of a presentation rather than a networking opportunity, given the electronic limitations it was more informative rather than interactive.

The Panel discussed the “Idaho CRP Leadership Conference Call” that will happen tomorrow. Nicole stated that she will go unless called in. Courtney has requested twice from the Secretary of the group, the information about the next meeting and has not received it. Chris Freeburne will be attending and will send that information to Courtney.

Courtney discussed the next meeting format. The last Quarterly Report the Panel submitted indicated they would continue to do their investigative reviews, and collect data through case reviews, which would determine future recommendations. The next report is due April 15th, which will cover activities from January, February, and March 2021. Courtney asked if the next meeting could be a work session with the Panel where they would bring forth their own recommendations, with conversation and consent from the Panel. This strategy would have the Panel more actively involved in the recommendation process. This was agreed to.

Courtney was asked to set up an online form for recommendations after it was presented that ‘Unsupervised Visitation or Extended Home Visit Determination,’ was discussed as a potential recommendation. This is a form that the Panel members would complete in order to come prepared to the meeting to discuss their recommendations.

Action Item: Courtney will send out a form for Panel members to submit their recommendation priorities to discuss at the next meeting.

This was done March 9th, with a request to complete the survey by the EOD March 24th.

Motion: Darcie motioned to adjourn the meeting. Britney seconded. The motion carries.

The District IV Citizen Review Panel adjourned at 6:18pm.

Meeting minutes prepared by Courtney Boyce, public health district liaison to the District IV Citizen Review Panel.