



Georgia Department of Human Services

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

DHS Board and DFCS State Advisory Board Meeting

November 29, 2023

Teams Live Event

Board members present: Chair Belva Dorsey (R8), Vice Chair Shondeana Morris (R14), Secretary Meredith Holt (R13), Dr. Fran Chastain (R2), Laci Tippins (R11), Allyson Christianson (12), Travis Niblett (R9), Nancy White (R6), Dr. Octavia Fugerson (R5), Jennifer Shinpoch (AL), Randel Hambrick (R3), Tommy Hill (R10), Jeff Mauer (AL)

Board members absent: JaNice VanNess (AL), Virgil Costley (AL), Judy Manning (AL), Susie Weller (AL), Vacant (R1), Vacant (R4), Deke Copenhagen (R7)

DHS staff: Commissioner Candice Broce, Craig Foster, Chris Apsey, MaryLea Boatwright-Quinn, Demetrius Taylor, LaMarva Ivory, Ann Burris, Regina Quick, Mary Havick, John Hallman, David Lenoir, Melissa Barwick, Jackie Tate, Dana Carroll, Christopher Henry, Wanda Houston, Emma McCullough, Sarah Hurst, Robin Herron, Christopher Ayers, Kenneth Bice, Pamela Carr-Cosby, Ramirez Evans, Chuck Inman, Scott Rogers, Sam Saric, Tommy Williams, Emily Hatchett

Welcome and Introductions, housekeeping. Meeting called to order at 1:03 p.m.

Presentation by MaryLea Boatwright Quinn, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Aging Services

Presentation by Christopher Ayers, Director of Operations, Child Support Services

Presentation by John Hallman, DHS Deputy Commissioner, OFI

- 2023 OFI Roadshow
 - Focused on improvements through people, processes, and technology
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects
 - Staff Retentions and Acquisitions (Completed)
 - D-SNAP Pre-Registration System (Completed)
 - QR Codes on Forms (Completed)
 - The Work Number- TALX Corporation (Completed)
 - UGA Hunger Study (Completed)
 - Field Staff Phone System (Ongoing)
 - Policy and Manual Management System (Ongoing)
- Medicaid Redetermination
 - Reached midpoint of 14-month federally mandated Medicaid Redetermination process
 - DHS and DCH are sharing information, action steps, and resources with members in the following ways:
 - Ongoing digital advertising and social media outreach campaign that has reached 111 million impressions so far.



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- Television and radio advertising that has reached 14 million impressions to date.
- Forging community partnerships and hosting community briefings to share information with and hear concerns from local service organizations and community leaders.
- Media outreach campaign that has resulted in more than 200 placements in outlets that reach millions of people per month.
- Outdoor advertising, including high-visibility billboards and bus stop signage.
- Direct mail sent to more than 130,000 difficult-to-reach Medicaid members across the state.
- DHS participation in baby fairs, public school gatherings, and community events.
- Outreach to health care providers and clinics around the state to provide key information and resources to share with their patients.
- Data Report- October 2023
 - Unduplicated Families Served Across All Programs: 1,437,136
 - Caseload Size: 964
 - Frontline Staffing Levels: 1,491
 - SNAP issuance totaled \$261,311,806. The average issuance per family was \$392.
 - SNAP Families: Total SNAP Families 666,098
 - 57,308 SNAP applications and 117,982 renewals were processed.
 - 1,042, 617 active Medical Assistance families
 - 164,709 Medical Assistance applications were processed.
 - TANF issuance totaled \$1,198,369. The average issuance per family was \$265.
 - 4,522 TANF families
 - 4,192 TANF applications were processed.

Presentation by Mary Havick, DHS Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare

- Technology Modernization
 - Argo Placements: launched statewide and was updated to allow placement search across all placement types
 - Argo Community Portal: 98 new delivered services providers were onboarded.
 - mCase: launched statewide to help case managers remotely manage cases
 - Georgia Communicare: phase one launched in Regions 2 and 5.
- Adoption Month
 - November is nationally recognized as adoption month.
 - Governor's Proclamation
 - State Adoption Unit hosted family matching event in Marietta.
 - Britney Sullivan was named Adoption Case Manager of the Year.



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- Several Regions hosted local adoption events to celebrate the month and raise awareness for children looking for forever homes.
- Adoptions in SFY23: 1275
- Adoptions by Month 2023
 - January: 76
 - February: 95
 - March: 104
 - April: 114
 - May: 143
 - June: 92
 - July: 93
 - August: 104
- Kinship Month
 - Celebrated in September of each year.
 - DFCS hosted a forum for kinship families at the Methodist Children's Home in Macon. 50 caregivers from across the state attended.
- County Director Summit
 - County Director Summits happen quarterly. In these meetings, County Directors receive important information on statewide child welfare initiatives, provide feedback, and brainstorm new ideas to improve DFCS.
 - The July summit was held in-person over two days. CD had the opportunity to update their professional headshots, attend in-person lectures and trainings and collaborate with their peers.
- Together Georgia Conference
 - Together Georgia is an alliance of children and family service providers. The conference was held in October 2023 with classes, trainings, and keynote speakers.
 - Lashana Taylor, a DFCS Case Manager from Laurens County, won the Outstanding Child Welfare Service Professional Award for State Agency.
 - Samantha Valentine, a DFCS Parent Advisory Council member, won the Community Partner Award.
- ACF Commissioner Visit
 - Rebecca Jones Gaston, Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families for the US Department of Health and Human Services, came to Georgia in early November to meet with human services and child welfare leadership throughout the southeastern US.

Office of Inspector General Presentations by Wanda Houston

DHS Proposed Rule Update by Dana Carroll

CPA Rule Change by Pamela Carr Cosby and Christopher Henry



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DHS Board Business and Action Items

DFCS Advisory Board Business and Action Items

- Attendance taken by Chair B. Dorsey. Meeting called to order at 3:30 p.m. Quorum met.
- Motion to approve today's agenda. All in favor. Approved.
- Vote for Executive Committee. 10/12 present members voted. Jennifer Shinpoch elected Secretary for 2024. Meredith Holt will serve as Vice-Chair for 2024. Shondeana Morris will serve as Chair for 2024.

Advisory Board Committee Reports

- Regional Trends Committee:
 - The committee would like a better understanding of the new bylaw amendment and recommends a training to assist members in navigating the process. Board liaisons are working with DHS education team to create a training for Advisory Board members, and this will be included.
 - Committees have become less active. The committee recommends re-evaluating current committees. Board liaisons are working on revamping committees and have asked Advisory Board members for their input and interests.

Advisory Board Member Regional Reports

- R2 – Dr. Fran Chastain
 - 134 adoptions finalized and 136 reunifications completed YTD 2023. End of October had approximately 870 children in foster care. Adoption matching event held on November 4th.
 - Stephens County is getting a new building and should be able to move by early 2024.
 - Dawson and Lumpkin County Director positions are to be posted.
 - Habersham and Dawson County partner with Place of Hope North Georgia through Promise686 for foster care community support. Lumpkin County works with Community Helping Place and has a thriving partnership allowing DFCS to send referrals for services and assistance needed for clients.
- R3 – Randel Hambrick
 - Paulding has brought on two senior community service employees who are paid for through a federal program and are also utilizing interns to help with clerical duties. Douglas approved year-end supplements for staff based on tenure of service to help with morale and retention.



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- Child behavioral health has been a challenge. Recruitment and retention of staff in counties without extra funds has been difficult- these counties would like an adjustment to fair-market salaries.
- R5 – Dr. Octavia Fugerson
 - Permanency Director reported that the adoption goal for the region had been exceeded. Communicare partnership is going well.
 - Emphasized the importance of having Board members with lived experience.
- R6 – Nancy White
 - Foster Family Recruitment is going well. Recent activities: Pickleball tournament in Milledgeville (plans for similar event in Bibb County), tabling at the Mercer University homecoming game (Bibb), booth at family movie event in Warner Robins (Houston County), First Friday participation in Jones and Baldwin counties
 - Getting foster homes for teens with complex needs and sibling groups is a challenge.
- R8 – Belva Dorsey
 - 48 adoptions finalized over the last year.
 - Lobbies are open for expended days and times to help customers in some counties.
 - In the process of hiring case managers and supervisors in 8 counties.
- R11 – Laci Gillis Tippins
 - As of November 9th meeting, no children in hotels in region.
 - Looking into county funds to help with staff retention.
- R13 – Meredith
 - Region 13 Director Holly Campolong was promoted to Metro District Director. They will miss her but are excited for her! Position for new director has been posted.
 - Next Level Leadership Series started in October with 16 Case Managers and Supervisors in the region. Meet monthly to focus on leadership development to prepare them for promotions and confidence in current role. 6-month program with the goal of retention and building new leaders.
- R14 – Shondeana Morris
 - National Adoption Day was celebrated in Dekalb County on November 17th. Commissioner Broce attended and there were numerous adoptions that day. Judge Morris presided over 4 adoptions herself.
 - Region 14 could use more staff and higher pay. Would like to look at overtime pay and raises. Banked time off is hard to use because of the workload.
 - Dekalb County Board is wanting to start sharing positive media as well- celebrate the wins and not only problems that occur.
- At-Large Member – Jennifer Shinpoch
 - Welcome to new Board Member Jeff Mauer
 - Attended TBRI trainer training in September.
 - Senate Foster Care and Adoption Study Committee report was released with recommendations that will go to the Lt. Governor. Many topics have been

Brian P. Kemp
Governor

Candice L. Broce
Commissioner



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covered by the Regional Trends Committee- Case Manager Retention,
Permanency, State IDs, Expanding Infant-Toddler Court System, Foster/Adoptive
Parent Retention, Handle-With-Care Program.

Closing remarks and parting words from Chair Fletcher and Chair Dorsey

Meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.