



# Department of Housing & Human Services

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## **Family Resource Network Regional Council Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, May 13, 2021

3:00-4:30pm, ZoomGov

**Present:** Rebecca Alderfer, Robin Bohannon, Danielle Butler, Marc Cowell, Suzanne Crawford, Dr. Perla Delgado, Kristen Hyser, Betsey Martens, Christina Pacheco, Janet Rasmussen (for Simon Smith), Karin Stayton, Julie Van Domelen, Dennis Whalen, Robert Williams, and Jeff Zayach (for Lexi Nolan)

**Absent:** Margaret Crespo and Diane Lauer

**Guests Present:** Jessica Bernett-Knight, Katrina Harms, Dawn Joyce, Schivonne Keller, Kristi Pellouchoud, Nick Robles, and Courtney Schwartz

**Staff Present:** Susan Caskey, Lane Volpe, and Whitney Wilcox

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### **Welcome and Introductions**

The regular meeting of the FRN Regional Council was called to order by Kristin Hyser. Kristin facilitated introductions.

### **Approval of March 2021 FRN Regional Council meeting minutes**

Kristin asked for approval of March meeting minutes. There were no questions or revisions, the minutes were approved.

### **Maternal Child Coordinated Services System (MCCSS) & Universal Home Visitation (UHV) Updates**

At the March meeting, Susan Caskey and Dawn Joyce provided updates on early childhood initiatives, including an overview of local universal home visitation and coordinated entry strategies currently being piloted with Clinica. Members continued discussion beginning with reflections from Clinica's Schivonne Keller, whose team is participating in the pilot. Schivonne said that the heavy lift was at the beginning of the project, which included identifying what data was needed to best inform referrals. Clinica had previously been referring to universal home visitation programs, the only change was the process by which they now refer. There has been some need for technical troubleshooting along the way, but referral process has gone relatively smoothly for Clinica staff. They are beginning to receive feedback about referral status and engagement rate, which is information they didn't have prior to the pilot.

Kristin asked if the group had questions. Betsey asked about lessons learned. Dawn shared that lessons are specific to the current population being served through the pilot, which has focused on patients being seen for prenatal care. The highest incident of uptake and follow-through with referrals have been with first time parents. They've seen higher enrollment rates with NFP and CIP and lower enrollment rates, up until the last 6 weeks, with PAT (which serves parents who already have children). Dawn said they're guessing the reason for this is because parents with children already have a support network in place. Dawn said she expects enrollment and referral rates to accelerate once the home visitation best-fit referral transitions from herself to a technology platform. Schivonne added that there is resistance to

relying on the current system for higher acuity referrals and that staff continue to connect with colleagues to ensure service connection for patients where there is a higher level of concern. She anticipates this will evolve with a technology platform that provides fast feedback about service connection.

Karin asked about follow-up with participating families and how pilot will be evaluated locally. Dawn said initially (pre-pandemic) they had various evaluation components built-in to the project, including participant surveys. They are currently determining which setting is appropriate to follow-up with families that have participated in the pilot, and whether that would be at Clinica, within home visitation programs, or a separate outreach to families that can provide feedback on their participation. Surveys will be administered in English and Spanish. They are working to identify translation for families that may speak other languages.

Julie asked if the uptick in referrals met expectations and whether there is capacity within the current home visitation programs to meet demand. Dawn said they saw about a 30% increase in enrollment, that most patients agreed to be referred, and that those that declined identified they had required supports in place. This is in line with New Jersey model and met expectations. In terms of capacity, as caseloads increased, there often wasn't a waitlist because services were being delivered remotely (because travel time was not a factor during the pandemic). This will change with in-person services resuming. Across the board, there is a shortage of bilingual and bicultural staff. This shortage could lead to waitlists.

Rebecca shared some of the home visitation work she is involved in at the state level. She was asked to sit on the state's Home Visiting Investment Task Force (and co-chairs the financing work group), which spent the past six months developing a statewide strategic plan around home visiting. Rebecca shared a [draft of the plan](#), which is going through the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) for approval and then final publication. The Task Force came out of legislation last session and included representatives from different home visiting programs, county partners and stakeholders, representatives from philanthropy, and others. Rebecca shared a few highlights, including:

- As a state, a tiny number of families with new babies (0-1) are connected with home visiting programs; the majority are families with toddler and pre-school aged children.
- Participants don't have awareness about which program they're participating in (NFP vs. PAT vs. HIPPY) – they just know they're receiving services and whether those services are valuable to them.
- Participants are looking for whole family engagement, moms want their partner or spouse to also be a participant.
- Culturally congruent care is critical.

Susan shared that leadership has changed at Tennyson. She also shared that fundraising efforts for the Rewiring project didn't meet their goals, there is no funding currently expected to come to Boulder County, and Rewiring is no longer a project they're involved with. Susan said she anticipates funding opportunities to become available through other efforts, including Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families and national partners.

## **LAC Updates and Discussion**

Katrina Harms, Peak to Peak Housing and Human Services Alliance Facilitator, provided update on behalf of the mountain region. Katrina shared that they have been successfully working in partnership with Boulder County Public Health and Boulder Community Health to provide vaccinations. She also shared that transportation and digital divides issues continue to be significant barriers. They continue to work with Via and Mobility for All and are establishing a Mountain Mobility Committee to address transportation barriers. Katrina shared that the Emergency Broadband Benefit program doesn't include any internet service providers that provide service to the Peak to Peak Region and will work to see if mountain-serving providers will participate in the program.

Suzanne asked if transportation issues were specific to local mountain communities or mountain to other Boulder County and metro communities. Katrina said they needed local and regional supports, including pharmacy, medical, and groceries that are not available in local mountain communities. Suzanne asked if digital divide is issue with access to internet, devices, and/or skill building. Katrina said all three are issues, but most significant is that the geography limits internet access. Katrina is in touch with Boulder County's IT Director to address.

Additional information about child care and workers' rights was presented as a follow-up from the March meeting. Updates were provided by ECCBC's Programs Director Jessica Bennett-Knight, Wild Plum's Family Engagement Director Kristi Pellouchoud, and BCPH's COVID-19 Resource Navigator Nick Robles.

Jessica provided brief overview of ECCBC's role and its relationships with providers. She shared information about its Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) work, which includes collecting information about child care slots and families that are looking for care. CCR&R was managed locally for many years until it was moved to Mile High United Way to manage around 2015. During COVID, there has been a realization that local-level expertise is needed to manage this work and there are some efforts from across the state from local areas to take on some of this work to provide enhanced referrals. ECCBC is in the process of building a new database.

The data Jessica shared currently comes from several sources and takes her about 16 hours a month to aggregate (see attached slide deck for data). There was discussion in chat that numbers for child care requested were lower than expected, which is because of the current fragmented mechanisms in place to aggregate that data.

Jessica also talked about CCAP data and economic impacts of quarantines on providers.

- Jessica reviewed data for CCAP. She noted that not all programs that have CCAP fiscal agreements have CCAP slots. Providers may have a fiscal agreement and 1) slots are filled or 2) they have chosen not to serve CCAP families because of the economic impact of that decision.
- Jessica also shared information specific to quarantines. To date there have been a total of 28 outbreaks in 27 programs. Programs have worked hard to keep cohorts together so in some cases a classroom will have to quarantine (and not the entire program). Since January, 68 classrooms have had to quarantine. Jessica surveyed Directors about the costs of quarantine, which include staff salaries and refunds to families.

Jessica also touched on funding needs identified by providers and shared [resource](#) from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment outlining recommendations for using American Rescue Plan Act funds to address early educator compensation and supports.

Kristi Pellouchoud shared impacts from the perspective of Wild Plum families and staff. Wild Plum serves Early Head Start and Head Start families in Longmont and the SVVSD area.

- Impacts to young children: family stress and fears, loss of school time (which widens learning gaps), diminished social and emotional connection, limited dental and medical visits, and inconsistent routine.
- Impacts to staff: extensive remodeling, limited preschool class size from 16 to 12, set up cohorts, implemented increased health and safety requirements, ramped up virtual engagement, and facilitated extensive outreach to families to connect with resources. Also, staff's fears/mental health, increased workload, and staff's family needs.
- Impacts to families: fear and loss, technology supports (including hardware, software, WIFI, and training), language barriers, health care access, financial impacts (for example, loss of meals and diapers previously provided in-person at Wild Plum), job loss, and child care. Kristi shared that alternate care for children (when quarantining or at home because of other illness) is almost not available. This is also a monetary concern, as some families may be able to find someone to care for a child but not be able to compensate them.

Nick Robles from BCPH shared information about workers' rights. He provided an overview of the different supports specific to paid leave and workers' rights, including:

- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Federal protections for workers to receive emergency paid sick leave)
- Public Health Emergency Whistleblower Act (Colorado protections that prohibits adverse actions against workers who raise concerns about workplace violations)
- Healthy Families and Workplace Act (reiteration at the state level that employer should provide emergency paid sick leave)
- Paid Sick and Safe Time (employees accrue sick leave)
- Business Tax Credits (business can receive tax credits for paid sick leave they provide as a result of the pandemic); and
- Proposition 118 (12 weeks of paid family and medical leave)

Nick also shared information reported through BCPH's Contract Tracing and Resource Navigation team, including:

- The number one most frequently cited concern related to isolation and quarantining is economic stability, followed by food and concerns about employment. In April and May, workers' rights issues surpassed food for those needing to isolate/quarantine.
- They also see employees having to miss work due to their own illness or because their child's classroom was quarantined. On average, one class per day is having to quarantine.
- Continue to hear from lower wage workers that they didn't know they would receive pay if they were unable to work because they were sick with COVID (and that's why they continue to work with COVID) and hearing from their supervisor that they will not be paid if they don't report to work.

- Enforcement team has received about 4000 complaints related to businesses during COVID, about 2000 have been substantiated and there have been examples of employers telling their staff to come in who have tested positive.
- With quarantines happening so frequently at child care centers, and employees not sure they will get paid, or families not able to take time themselves or with no other place to go, the family dis-enrolls with their child care center and the next day establishes care with a new child care provider, potentially impacting another cohort.

### **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Updates and Discussion**

Group discussed funding that is coming to Boulder County and municipalities through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Robin Bohannon provided update on Boulder County's process. Robin shared that Boulder County is having some pre-planning discussions amongst employee groups and community partners to ensure funds are used effectively to meet community needs. Funds can be spent through 2024. For the first phase, County staff can enter specific project requests to be funded up to \$5 million total. Similar to CARES Act funding, the County is looking at using funds to address unmet needs, including digital divide, economic vitality, early childhood, child care, education, and behavioral health supports. Staff are also hoping to use some of the funds to support larger systems transformation to address social determinants of health and core issues that continue to impact the community. This process will likely include focused community engagement.

Christina Pacheco Sims provided update on City of Longmont's process. Christina said they are in preliminary phases of identifying what the funds can be used to support and their policy analyst is meeting with City staff to identify potential partnerships so that they're able to leverage the funding. Christina anticipates that they will continue to reach out to the County, nonprofits, and other stakeholders to continue those discussions.

Kristin provided update on City of Boulder's process. They are also working to understand how funds can be used and determining priorities and criteria for how to use. Because of the City of Boulder's reliance on sales tax, their budgets were impacted significantly this past year. While they're prioritizing community needs, there may be discussion at the City about using some of the funds to support City programs and services that had been cut. Kristin added that there have been conversations amongst the County, Longmont, and Funders Collaborative partners about a regional approach, relying on the model used during flood recovery to assess the needs and leverage the resources that are available.

Members spent the remainder of the meeting in small groups discussing how funds should be prioritized to meet community needs. Groups were asked to identify notetaker and send notes to Whitney to compile to be shared with Robin, Christina, and Kristin to help inform discussion at the County and municipalities.

The meeting was adjourned.