



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Social Services Division
Child Welfare Services Branch
810 Richards Street, Suite 400
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

June 15, 2016

Ms. Jacqueline Perry
Na Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai'i, Citizen Review Panel
310 Ka'ahumanu Avenue
Kahului, Hawaii 96732

Dear Ms. Perry,

Thank you for Na Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai'i Citizen's Review Panel's (CRP) 2015 Annual Report. It included a report on "Child Welfare Services Reporting Line" with the Panel's recommendations, based on the SMS survey of mandated reporters from Hawai'i's Department of Education (DOE) and Hawai'i social workers. It also included a report on the "Caseworker Visits with Children: A conversation with CWS workers" and the Panel's recommendations based on the focus groups that Na Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai'i completed with Hawaii Child Welfare Services (CWS) caseworkers.

The Department appreciates the hard work that was done this past year by the Na Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai'i panel members on behalf of Hawai'i's children and families.

Please find below a list of the issues that the Panel identified, along with their recommendations, followed by the Department's response.

1. Child Welfare Intake (CWI) Response to Domestic Violence Cases

a. CRP Identified Issue

For domestic violence cases, the survey results showed that 56% of callers surveyed were not asked whether domestic violence was a concern for the family. (See page 9 of the CWI Reporting Line Report.)

b. CRP Recommendation

The Panel recommends that CWI staff be trained (or re-trained) to inquire of the caller whether domestic violence is involved in the child neglect or abuse report, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

c. DHS Response

The Department appreciates this feedback and has reissued to all CWS staff the *Guidelines for Screening and Assessing Families for Domestic Violence*. The Guidelines have also been incorporated into our New Hire Training, which is completed four times a year. The Section Administrator for CWI, the Program Development Administrator, and CWS' Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Team have been alerted to the problem in order to monitor and consider other possible remedies.

2. CWI Consistency & Protocol

a. CRP Identified Issue

Twenty percent (20%) of callers surveyed wanted to see a consistent protocol for addressing CWS reports, as the process is unclear, or seemed to vary by staff person. (See page 7 of the CWI Reporting Line Report.) Some respondents reported that they wait for certain CWI staff members to come on duty before calling in their reports to ensure their report will be adequately addressed.

b. CRP Recommendation

The Panel recommends that CWS address this concern with training (or re-training) CWI staff on intake protocol.

c. DHS Response

The Department appreciates the feedback of the CRP and is in discussion with the Section Administrator to address the concerns. We have planned a targeted review on intake assignments and decision-making, as part of CWS' CQI process. Through the review, we hope to identify patterns or trends that we can address through action planning, training, and monitoring of performance.

3. CWI Staff Politeness

a. CRP Identified Issue

Although most callers surveyed gave positive ratings to the CWI workers, one area where staff received lower ratings was "staff was polite." Along the same lines, 15% of callers surveyed stated that "staff was rude or inconsiderate." (See page 7 of the CWI Reporting Line Report.)

b. CRP Recommendation

The Panel recommends that CWS address this concern with training (or re-training) with CWI staff on how to respond to callers appropriately (with aloha), and perhaps training (or-retraining) on working with difficult callers. It is important

that callers feel respected and supported, so that they feel comfortable making a report of child neglect or abuse.

c. DHS Response

The CWI Section Administrator took this to heart and held a section-wide, full-day workshop for staff, with guest speaker Pono Shim, who shared his wisdom on the *Aloha Response*. The goal was to plant the seeds for change in the intake staff's response to the public.

As part of CWS' *Pono for Families* work, training will include the art of engagement for all CWS staff.

We are also discussing creating shift positions within CWI, so that all staff who respond to calls will be more focused and less stressed, since no one will be working overtime hours (aka standby).

4. Supervision

a. CRP Identified Issue

Inconsistent and/or untrained CWS supervisors

b. CRP Recommendation

Provide supervisor training to ensure effective leadership.

c. DHS Response

Child Welfare Services Branch, in partnership with the University of Hawaii, Maui College, developed and completed training on a new supervisor curriculum. All current CWS supervisors were trained from September 2015 to June 2016. The training included nine modules examining strengths-based supervision in CWS. Feedback from all trainees is being used to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of CWS leaders. CWSB is bringing on a trainer to build upon the model and incorporate it into CWS' ongoing training plan.

5. Monthly Caseworker Visits with Children

a. CRP Identified Issue

Caseworker visits with children are not occurring for every child every month. The problem seems to be tied to staff workload.

b. CRP Recommendation

Continue to look at the option of contracting service providers to assist CWS Sections that are understaffed in completing monthly caseworker visits with children

c. DHS Response

Child Welfare Services Branch continues to contract monthly face-to-face visits with families through executed contracts. Visits are coordinated with the service provider allowing a monthly alternating rotation of visits between the CWS worker and the contracted provider. As long as the need exists, the contracts will be funded and supported within the geographical area.

6. Staff Recruitment

a. CRP Identified Issue

Many CWS units are understaffed. There are positions that are difficult to fill and have been vacant for long periods of time.

b. CRP Recommendation

Create a plan to recruit viable caseworkers to fill vacant positions. It might be prudent to re-establish a relationship with the University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work to help recruit BSW and MSW graduates, providing incentives to working for Child Welfare Services.

c. DHS Response

Starting in the Spring of 2016, the Department is moving forward with the Hawaii Child Welfare Education Collaboration (HCWEC) offering second-year Masters of Social Work students a one-year stipend for a two-year employment commitment to CWS, post-graduation.

The Hawaii Child Welfare Education Collaboration (HCWEC) is a joint effort between the Department of Human Services and the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to train MSW students to work in public child welfare. HCWEC is currently accepting applications until June 15, 2016.

Plans are to expand the program to include first and second year students starting Fall of 2017. Students receiving the educational stipend for the two-year program will have a three-year commitment to CWS, post-graduation.

7. Staff Forms and Tools

a. CRP Identified Issue

CWS workers commented that some of the forms and tools that they are supposed to use are not helpful or effective. The *Monthly Worker Visit* form was mentioned by many caseworkers as being time-consuming and not effective in ensuring quality caseworker visits.

b. CRP Recommendation

Assess current forms and tools to evaluate their effectiveness.

c. DHS Response

In Fall of 2016, the Department, in partnership with the University of Hawai'i, Richardson School of Law staff, will begin a project to streamline CWS forms and tools to be more effective and user-friendly. Currently CWS' *Pono for Families – Assessment Hui* has made changes to the *Child Safety Assessment* tool and is piloting the revised tool in East Hawaii. The revised tool is more strengths-based and was developed in collaboration with line CWS staff.

The Department has enhanced our SHAKA system to allow staff to input logs-of-contact directly into SHAKA, which will then be transferred automatically into CPSS. Soon, CWS caseworkers will be able to complete the *Monthly Worker Visit Form* in SHAKA, and SHAKA will then save it in CPSS as a log of contact.

With the completion of the SSD Mobilization Project, all staff has been outfitted with laptop computers and access to hot spots (for internet access) to improve the documentation of worker visits.

8. Staff Input

a. CRP Identified Issue

Staff expressed ideas that they want to share with administration.

b. CRP Recommendation

Provide many opportunities and avenues for communicating directly with line staff, so that their voices can be heard. Further, consider including caseworkers' ideas and suggestions when creating and implementing forms, tools, and initiatives that affect their work.

c. DHS Response

The Department appreciates this recommendation and will work on setting up quarterly "talk story" meetings with staff. We realize that this is an important piece that is missing from our Department and one that will enhance practice and improve morale. Currently, the Department holds quarterly Management Leadership Team (MLT) meetings with all CWS Supervisors and Section Administrators and monthly Branch meetings with all Section Administrators.

Information shared and communicated in these meeting is passed down to staff through Morning Briefings that Section Administrators and Unit Supervisors have with their staff.

In 2015 -2016, at the request of the CWS Supervisors, CWSB approved and

funded the quarterly supervisor group meetings. This is a statewide supervisor-lead group which provides a forum for supervisors to support each other and to discuss, brainstorm, and share solutions to identified challenges. Speakers are invited to train on specific areas. Supervisor suggestions and recommendations are presented to the administrative staff for consideration.

The Department has various initiatives that we implement throughout the year. The CWS work group leads recruit CWS line staff, CWS supervisors, community partners, and other agency and department representatives who participate in these groups and develop our new programs, policies, procedures, and tools. Utilizing work groups comprised of CWS staff and community partners has become a part of the Department's practice. We understand CWS cannot do this work alone. We greatly value our staff and see their input into agency practice and program changes as vital to success.

9. State Vehicles

a. CRP Identified Issue

Staff identified that the availability of cars is a barrier to completing their worker visits with children. CWS staff also noted that some of the vehicles are in poor condition.

b. CRP Recommendation

Evaluate the need for more State vehicles to be used for caseworker visits with children. As soon as possible, evaluate present vehicles, ensuring the health and safety of caseworkers and clients.

c. DHS Response

We are working to have neighbor island staff properly trained and delegated in the State procurement process, which will allow them to purchase vehicles for their offices. Only Oahu and Maui islands have a motor pool through which vehicles are purchased by the Department of Accounting and General Services. Once delegated, we will be able to purchase new vehicles.

We look forward to working with you and CRP in the future. We are happy to meet with the Panel membership to discuss any of these issues in greater detail. Thank you all again for your important contributions to CWS' improvement.

Sincerely,



Kayle M. Perez
Child Welfare Services Branch Administrator